

## End of Primary Benchmark Guidelines

2021

1. The Head of School is the Head of Centre and is fully responsible for the smooth running of the End of Primary Benchmark in his/her school.
2. On specific days prior and during the Benchmark assessments, schools will be receiving the relevant examination papers together with USBs which will be used during the Listening component of Maltese and English and for the Mental Mathematics paper. The audio files on the USB are to be copied on all the computers/laptops that will be used during the assessments. **The test is to be run from the file that was copied onto the computer and not from the USB.** Schools are to ensure beforehand that the necessary electronic apparatus for playing the audio files is fully functional in every classroom and that teachers are familiar with its operation. If, on the day of the test, the audio file or the equipment do not function properly, the school may use the transcript that will be provided by the Educational Assessment Unit. If the envelope containing this script is opened, a note should be written to inform the Educational Assessment Unit why this has been opened.

USBs will also be provided for the Reading Comprehension for those students requiring a Reader as part of their access arrangements.

Spare USBs are sent to each centre to ensure that there are enough spares for emergencies. All USBs will be checked before being sent to schools; however, if a school finds a fault with a USB, the EAU is to be informed immediately.

3. The examination papers will be packed in envelopes containing the number of papers needed for each class. An envelope containing additional papers to replace any faulty ones will also be provided to the Head of School. At the end of the session, the scripts must be sorted **according to the Attendance List. All scripts, used and unused, must be put back in the appropriate envelope and sealed.**
4. Schools will receive the Benchmark material from an authorised person. At the end of each session, school personnel should be available to hand over the envelopes containing the scripts, including any extra papers, to the authorised driver calling for their collection.
5. The paper used will be cream in colour and the font will be Andika size 13 version 1.004. It can be downloaded from:

[http://curriculum.gov.mt/en/Benchmark/General-Information/Pages/andika\\_font.aspx](http://curriculum.gov.mt/en/Benchmark/General-Information/Pages/andika_font.aspx)

6. The Speaking component will not be taking place this year due to Covid-19 mitigation measures. Students will be awarded full marks.
7. The Benchmark Assessment sessions will take place as follows:

Monday 24 May 2021	—	Mathematics Mental Mathematics Written
Wednesday 26 May 2021	—	Maltese Writing Maltese Listening Comprehension Maltese Reading Comprehension
Friday 28 May 2021	—	English Writing English Listening Comprehension English Reading Comprehension

The End of Primary Benchmark 2021 assessments will be spread over four days, with some 'breathing space' in the exam sessions from one subject to the next. The aim is to make the assessment more student-friendly, giving students more time to prepare themselves better from one subject to the next and thereby help reduce unnecessary anxiety.

8. During the End of Primary Benchmark sessions, teachers are to ensure that students write in **blue** or **black** ink while work can be crossed out in pencil. **Pens with erasable ink, correcting fluid and correcting rolls are not allowed.**
9. Before each Benchmark session, teachers are to instruct students to check their scripts to ensure that they have all the pages and that no pages are unprinted.

## 10. ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

- The duration of each component includes **Extra Time**. This implies that Extra Time is being provided to all candidates.
- The class teacher needs to act as a **Prompter** in the classroom being invigilated, if and whenever required.
- For children with writing difficulties due to physical conditions (e.g. a broken arm) the **Amanuensis** needs to be provided by the school.
- Enlarged prints** and other special examination requirements will be provided as per Letter Circular DLAP 257/2020.
- Hearing-impaired candidates may be assigned a **Communicator** (provided by the Students' Services Section).as per Letter Circular DLAP 257/2020.
- For students with reading difficulties, an electronic reader will be provided for the Reading Comprehension (in both Maltese and English). A USB will be provided by the Educational Assessment Unit but the school needs to provide the personnel to operate the equipment and invigilate the students (as per Letter Circular DLAP 257/2020).

It is important to note that for this access arrangement provision:

- The texts will be read twice, electronically at a speed which is slightly slower than normal speed.
- Questions will be read twice and there will be long pauses which will allow students to answer the questions.
- The text will be projected on screen and highlighted as it is read.

- In the Maltese and English Writing components, a **Scribe** (to transcribe illegible words) may be provided as per Letter Circular DLAP 257/2020. This Scribe, if needed, will have to be provided by the school.

It is important to note that the procedure to be followed when a Scribe is provided is as follows:

- The student must be allowed to complete the task first.
- Then, the Scribe can ask the child to read out all the words which are totally illegible.
- The Scribe writes, in a green pen, the word that the child intended to write, using the correct spelling.

- In the case of Mathematics, a **Reader** for the Written session may be provided as per Letter Circular DLAP 257/2020. This Reader, if needed, will have to be provided by the school.

- Reader pens are allowed as long as the student has used it as part of his/her learning process in Year 6. The permitted examination reader pen should not have any in-built dictionary or thesaurus, or data storage facility. The EAU Reader Pens in Examination Policy needs to be adhered to. Check the following link for the policy:

[https://curriculum.gov.mt/en/Benchmark/General-Information/Documents/reader\\_pens\\_policy.pdf](https://curriculum.gov.mt/en/Benchmark/General-Information/Documents/reader_pens_policy.pdf)

## 11. STUDENTS ATTENDING THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL

Arrangements for students attending the Virtual School to sit for the Benchmark 2021 will be announced at a later date.

## 12. EXEMPTIONS

All pupils are expected to sit the assessments. However, pupils who fulfil specific criteria may be exempted from all or parts of the End of Primary Benchmark as per Letter Circular DLAP 257/2020.

Class invigilators are to ensure that children who are exempted or absent from any component should be marked as such on the attendance sheet and the word ‘Absent’ or ‘Exempted’ written on the front cover page on both the top and bottom sections. The candidate’s full name and index number should be written on the top part of the front page. The script should be inserted in the envelope with the other scripts in Index Number order.

### 13. EXAMINATION SYLLABI

The End of Primary Benchmark will be based on the State Primary Syllabi for Maltese, English and Mathematics. These syllabi may be retrieved from:

<http://curriculum.gov.mt/en/Curriculum/Year-1-to-6/Pages/default.aspx>

In addition, the following guidelines regarding the format of the Benchmark papers are to be noted:

#### ENGLISH and MALTESE

The language papers will consist of **four** components, as shown in the table below:

Component	Weighting	Duration of Examination
Listening / Smigh	20%	30 minutes
Speaking / Taħdit	20%	<i>Not applicable this year</i>
Reading / Qari	30%	50 minutes
Writing / Kitba	30%	60 minutes

#### Listening (20%)

There will be **two** listening tasks:

- The first task will consist of a short text or a small number of short texts of about 300 words such as: *dialogues; conversations; announcements; monologues; instructions; directions; descriptions; and news bulletins, including weather reports.*
- The second task will be about 500 words long and will consist of a: *monologue; dialogue; or conversation.*

Students will be asked to: *write words or numbers in gaps; mark a statement as True or False; underline, circle, or tick the correct answer; match; complete grids with information; and label pictures or simple diagrams.*

Students will listen **twice** to the recordings of both texts, including questions.

Students will be asked to:

1. listen to the text and they may begin to work out the task/s as they listen;
2. listen to the questions and answer as they listen;
3. listen to the text for a second time;
4. listen to the questions for a second time and complete the task/s as they listen.

Students will be allowed some time to check their answers.

### **Speaking (20%)**

*Not applicable in Benchmark 2021 due to Covid-19 mitigation measures*

### **Reading (30%)**

The reading component will comprise two parts:

- The first part will consist of one of the following texts: *a diagram or picture or set of pictures with some text; simple timetables and schedules; short texts such as notices, signs, posters, instructions, directions, advertisements, blurbs, and messages.*

Students will be asked to carry out any of the following tasks: *write words or numbers in gaps, underline, circle, tick, match, complete grids with information, and label pictures or simple diagrams.*

- The second part will consist of a text, fiction or non-fiction, of approximately 500 words. The text will be split up into sections with questions set on each section. Questions will also be set on the whole text.

Students will be asked to answer a range of comprehension questions requiring them to *write words or numbers in gaps; underline, circle, or tick the correct answer; match; mark a statement as True or False, complete a grid; and construct a response.* Knowledge about language may also be assessed. For the constructed response questions, answers need not be in full but they need to show comprehension.

### **Writing (30%)**

There will be a short writing task (10%) and a long writing task (20%). Conventions of spelling, punctuation, and grammar apply in both writing tasks and will be assessed accordingly. The pre-writing task (the plan) will not be assessed for accuracy.

- The short writing task will require students to write between 50 and 60 words on one of the following: *a note / message; an informal email; an invitation; a notice; an advertisement; a short dialogue; instructions; directions; or a short paragraph about a topic.*

Students will choose one of two writing tasks. Both writing tasks will be of the same text type (for example, a short dialogue) but will consist of two content areas (such as, a dialogue about a missed school outing or a dialogue about planning to meet for sport practice).

- The long writing task will require students to write between 140 and 200 words on one of the following: *an informal letter; a write-up of an event; an article; or a short story for the school magazine or a similar publication intended for young students.*

In the case of Maltese, in line with the primary syllabus, the long writing task may also include *a dialogue.*

Students will also choose from two writing tasks both representing the same text type but having a different content area. Students will be asked to plan their writing. The pre-writing task (the plan) is to allow students to use the range of strategies available to them to plan their work. The pre-writing task carries 2 marks out of a total of 20 marks allotted to the long writing task.

More information on the pre-writing task can be found on:

<http://curriculum.gov.mt/en/Benchmark/General-Information/Documents/prewriting.pdf>

## MATHEMATICS

The Mathematics Benchmark Assessment is made up of two papers:

- a **Mental paper** which carries 20% of the marks and is 15 minutes long;
- a **Written paper** which carries 80% of the global mark and is 1 hour and 30 minutes long.

At the beginning of the Mental Paper, there is a practice question which is not awarded marks. This is to help students focus on the speaker's voice and familiarise themselves with the test. Additional time is allocated for this question.

In the Written Paper, working space has been introduced in questions that require working. Candidates are encouraged to use this space for their working.

### **The Mental Paper (20%)**

The Mental paper is made up of a practice question and twenty short questions which are read twice, in succession. The questions are graded and divided into three sections. There are some easy questions at the beginning and some harder ones at the end.

The time interval between one question and another for answering each question in each section is as follows:

- the first 5 questions ..... 5 second intervals
- the next 10 questions ..... 10 second intervals
- the remaining 5 questions ..... 20 second intervals

Students will neither be penalised nor awarded extra marks if they jot down notes and do their working on the Mental paper.

### **The Written Paper (80%)**

The written paper covers all the four strands of the mathematics curriculum, that is, Number and Algebra; Measures, Shape and Space; Data Handling and Problem Solving. The paper is made up of 16 questions. The first four questions carry a total of 16 marks and test simple basic skills. The following eight questions carry a total of 40 marks and test the pupils' mathematical competences in the four strands of the syllabus. The last four questions have a total of 24 marks. In questions 15 and 16, two marks per question will be awarded for showing the working, which can include pictorial representations.

Grading happens throughout the paper and most questions require the application of mathematical knowledge and reasoning to solve challenging problems.

## **14. RETURN OF SCRIPTS**

A sample of scripts will be kept by the Educational Assessment Unit for archiving and research purposes. The rest of the scripts will be returned to schools in October 2021 to be used formatively by each school.

## 15. REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE

The school may request a review of performance if there is evidence of a discrepancy between the student's performance in Year 6 Annual Continuous assessment and the performance in the Benchmark, (at least a 35% performance discrepancy). Such request for a review must be received by the Educational Assessment Unit within **five working days** after the school receives the result.

### **Summary of Changes introduced in the End of Primary Benchmark 2021**

- The **Speaking components** in Maltese and English will not be taking place due to Covid-19 mitigation measures. Students will be awarded full marks in these components.
- The option 'No Information Given' will no longer feature in the **Listening** and in the **Reading components**. Therefore, if such a task features in the paper, students will be asked to state whether a statement is True or False.
- In the **Mathematics paper**, the six marks awarded for Questions 15 and 16 will now be awarded as follows: four marks for a completely correct answer and two marks for the working shown. This change will also be reflected in the Marking Scheme.