## Suggested initial diagnostic assessment activities for secondary teachers of EAL students

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| **Mode** | **Activity** | **Purpose** | **EAL support** | **Next steps** | **Links** |
| Speaking and Listening | Find someone who | * ‘ice breaker’ activity at the start of the term * help teacher to get to know students * help students to learn names and get to know each other * informal way to assess students’ conversational skills * can also be used during the term to revise key concepts, allowing students to demonstrate their knowledge orally and in writing | * model the correct way to ask and answer questions * write sentence stems on the board | * take opportunities to have short, informal conversations with the students where possible * provide opportunities for students to talk and work in pairs and small groups if they lack confidence | * [Video explanation](http://www.theteachertoolkit.com/index.php/tool/find-someone-who) * [Worksheets](https://en.islcollective.com/english-esl-worksheets/search/find+someone+who) * [Getting to know you activities](https://teal.global2.vic.edu.au/files/2019/12/Getting-to-know-you-activities.pdf) |
| Reading and Viewing | Reading and Vocabulary Assessment for EAL students (RVEAL) | * to gather baseline data about students’ reading and vocabulary skills and knowledge * intended for students in Years 3 - 10 | * explain the purpose of the assessment * administer the 5-item sample assessment so that students can complete the actual assessment independently | * during the assessment, sit with students and ask them to read some of the material in order to assess their decoding skills * after the assessment, ask the students about what they found easy/difficult * review the Student Profile reports to see the students’ EAL curriculum levels and other patterns in their responses, e.g. correct responses for imaginative vs persuasive items | * [Reading and Vocabulary Assessment Tool (RVEAL)](https://teal.global2.vic.edu.au/assessment-tools/common-reading-and-vocab-tasks/rveal/) |
| Writing: personal | Letter  /email to the teacher | * help teacher to get to know the students at the start of the term * no pre-teaching of content required * assess students’ ‘raw’ writing skills | * brainstorm ideas as a class * check students’ understanding of letter/email writing conventions, i.e. greetings, introductions, separating ideas into paragraphs, signing off examples | * suggested teacher response – focus on the positives and use the activity to get to know the students, do not ‘assess’ the piece of writing for errors but start to build students’ confidence in their writing abilities | * [How to write a personal letter](https://www.forteachersforstudents.com.au/site/wp-content/uploads/KidsMedia/LetterWriting-P/pdfs/letterwriting-p-personal-howto.pdf) |
| Writing: recount | Blog: The most exciting day of my life  (recount) | * assess students’ ability to write a personal recount * allow students to demonstrate writing skills without the need to develop an understanding of other content * can be compared to a similar activity at the end of the semester to track growth * help teacher to learn more about the students’ lives | * introduce/revise: use of simple past tense to talk about past activities, time phrases to sequence events, superlatives to talk about the most exciting, the best etc. | * provide feedback about what was done well and areas for improvement * choose one or two aspects of the student’s writing that most impede readability and provide specific feedback * ask students to redraft work and use this piece of writing to start a portfolio of their work * students can review their portfolio before the next writing assessment to remember areas they are working on | * [Blog: The most exciting day of my life](http://teal.global2.vic.edu.au/assessment-tools/common-writing-assessment-tasks/choosing-an-assessment-task-2/15-blog-the-most-exciting-day-of-my-life/) * [correction code for EAL students](https://teal.global2.vic.edu.au/files/2019/12/Correction-code-for-EAL-students.docx) |
| Writing: narrative | * Fitness for Ever * The Dinner Disaster | * assess students’ ability to write a narrative, a key genre in all years of schooling | * provide students with an opportunity to discuss their ideas before writing * introduce/revise: time phrases to sequence events, use of pronouns (he, she, they) | * choose one or two aspects of the student’s writing that most impede readability and give students an opportunity to self-correct | * [Fitness for Ever](https://teal.global2.vic.edu.au/wp-login.php?redirect_to=https%3A%2F%2Fteal.global2.vic.edu.au%2F) * [The Dinner Disaster](https://teal.global2.vic.edu.au/files/2019/12/Dinner-Disaster-diagnostic-assessment.doc) |
| Writing: persuasive | Should mobile phones be used in the classroom? | * suitable for more advanced students * assess students’ ability to write an essay and use persuasive language techniques | * brainstorm ideas as a class * provide a planning sheet * discuss the effectiveness of certain persuasive techniques, e.g. expert opinion | * provide feedback about what was done well and areas for improvement | * [planning page](https://teal.global2.vic.edu.au/files/2019/12/Planning-page.docx) |

NOTES

The ‘ice breaker’ activities will allow teachers to get to know the students and the students to get to know each other, an essential part of building a positive and supportive learning environment. Taking the time to carry out one-on-one assessment activities, such as the speaking and listening tasks, may take some time and organisation, however, they will greatly contribute to the teacher developing a solid understanding of the language proficiency of all of their students at the beginning of the term.

Teachers could note down one or two dot points for each student in relation to how they manage each assessment activity and particular strengths and/or weaknesses. Understanding the language learning needs of all students, not just EAL students, will be key to achieving successful learning outcomes in the classroom. These notes can added to throughout the semester and provide the teacher with opportunities to monitor and record student progress.