



Oracy
50 years of conversation

HANDBOOK

FOR ASSESSORS

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ASSESSOR'S CHECKLIST

On the day of the assessment remember:

- ✓ Name tag
- ✓ Working with Children Check
- ✓ Syllabus
- ✓ Name, address and phone number of school or centre
- ✓ Name of organiser/teacher

On arrival at centre at least 15 minutes before the commencement of the assessments:

- ✓ Go to reception

On being shown into the assessment room check:

- ✓ Placement of assessor's table (not in the centre but to one side of the group)
- ✓ Placement of candidates
- ✓ Placement of listening group
- ✓ Placement of supervising teacher's desk (not facing class)

With teacher/organiser check:

- ✓ Assessment report forms filled in with students' names and titles of their presentations.
- ✓ 1 group of candidates for all day or smaller groups
- ✓ Time of recess, lunch, end of school day

Keep to timing:

- ✓ 5 Primary students per hour 25 per day
- ✓ 4 Secondary students per hour 20 per day
- ✓ 3 Drama students per hour 16 per day

Before commencement of the assessment:

- ✓ Introduce yourself and speak to the listening group and the candidates (5 minutes)
- ✓ Make them aware of the importance of listening
- ✓ Students may present the sections in any order
- ✓ Questions will be asked by assessor and group because you want to know – not to test the candidate's knowledge

Be aware of the listening span and concentration levels of the group and allow "breathers" as required.

Control the listening group and any movement in and out of the room, to ensure that each candidate has equal opportunity to do well.

Make sure you relate to the last student with the same enthusiasm as you did for the first.

Conclude the assessment session with a brief comment on the sound work of the candidates and the teacher and thank them for the pleasing day.

Reports and assessment result forms to be returned to the administrator with 1 week.

INTRODUCTION

ORACY Australia Association was formed to promote and assess oral communication skills for all levels and all ages. The emphasis is very much on spoken English as a practical and enjoyable life skill and that effective oral communication is fundamental to the development of the whole person. The focus at the assessment is on the student, both as an effective speaker and as an active listener, sharing knowledge and ideas with others.

ESB Western Australian Association Inc., which is now named ORACY Australia Association Inc. was established in Perth, Western Australia in 1969. It grew from a belief in the value of personal relationships: a belief that these relationships could only develop truly through effective speaking and active listening.

The aim of ORACY is to work towards oral education as a central activity whatever the field of study. It was agreed if the subject of oral communication was to be educationally valid and valuable, the participants should have essential skills recognised and accredited by assessment in a friendly and encouraging environment.

Hence, the assessment of oral communication should be a direct or indirect testing of SPEAKING, LISTENING, COMPREHENDING, READING, SHARING, RESPONDING AND PRESENTING appropriate to context and level.

It is therefore implicit in an ORACY assessment that the listening group, the candidates and the assessor are of equal importance. Each is dependent on the other for effective communication to occur and each therefore, has a responsibility to the other.

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

The following persons may be approached to join the ORACY Assessment panel by the Executive Board

- English or Speech & Drama teachers
- Teachers who have presented candidates for assessment over a period of five years
- Members of the community who have gained recognition in the fields of oral communication and/or dramatic arts
- Professional individuals with good communication skills

The Executive Board will recommend that potential assessors be approached by a member of the Board. Those persons will be invited to become trainee assessors for ORACY once their credentials have been evaluated and then approved by a majority vote at a meeting of the Board.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job title Assessor of ORACY Australia Association Inc.

Reporting to The Executive Board ORACY Australia Association Inc.

Job Summary An assessor for ORACY is required to listen, to, encourage, question and assess candidates with reference to ORACY criteria, and to give a written report on each candidate. An assessor may also be called upon to discuss and advise on the selection of the syllabus and/or teaching methods for an ORACY course.

MAIN AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

Assessment of Candidates

- To be familiar with ORACY philosophy, criteria and syllabuses
- To set a relaxed atmosphere in which candidates feel at ease to give of their best
- To encourage and promote effective communication
- To listen and respond to each candidate with an open mind and free from prejudice
- To question and discuss from genuine interest
- To ensure that the listening group is involved throughout
- To ensure that each candidate is given the time set out in the relevant syllabus
- To assess each candidate fairly and with due attention to ORACY criteria
- To write a report on each candidate, giving constructive criticism, encouragement and clear goals for future development
- To ensure that the achievement levels and comments are compatible.

Administration

- To reply promptly to invitation to assess
- To agree acceptance of an invitation to assess constitutes a professional commitment
- To ensure that reports are returned to the Administrator promptly

Training and Development

- To attend at least **one** moderation session a year
- To attend assessor meetings and in-service courses where appropriate
- To agree to appraisal and moderation procedures
- To keep up-to-date with syllabus changes and development
- To consider opportunities for further training and development

IMPORTANT - To maintain currency as an Oracy Assessor you must attend one moderation session each calendar year. You will be required to write reports at these sessions which must be submitted to ORACY for comparative studies. Additional training will be provided to assessors who require it.

General

- To carry out the above with reference to ORACY philosophy and criteria
- To accept a trainee (at the request of ORACY Administrator) and/or another member of ORACY nominated by the Board for moderating or appraisal purposes
- To refer to Administrator immediately any points or disagreements regarding assessments which cannot be resolved at the time of the assessment

IMPORTANT - Please send a current copy of your *Working with Children Check* to the Administrator at the beginning of every year. All assessors must be financial members of ORACY

THE ASSESSOR

Qualities

- A genuine interest in and respect for people
- Warmth of personality
- An open attitude, free from prejudice
- Sincerity and sensitivity
- Sense of humour
- Patience and understanding

Abilities

- To listen attentively
- To communicate with confidence, clarity and vitality
- To create an enthusiastic atmosphere so that enjoyable sharing takes place
- To sustain interest and energy to the last candidate
- To make each candidate feel valued
- To empathise with the candidate
- To be sensitive to nervous or reserved students
- To give assistance if a candidate is experiencing difficulties
- To be receptive to diverse interest and enthusiasms of the candidate
- To involve the listening group
- To achieve a successful program of oral communication

Techniques

- To introduce yourself, explain the format of the session and create a positive relaxed atmosphere before each group assessment.
- To question from genuine enquiry and not with the intention of exposing gaps in the candidate's knowledge. The intention is to encourage discussion and instil confidence.
- To question searchingly, to enable the candidate to go more deeply into the thinking process
- To frame questions so that the candidate is able to 'take-over' and develop the point from the subject matter
- To respect the candidate's choice of material even though it may seem simplistic or inappropriate
- To recognise and assist a candidate who is struggling with the formalities of the assessment and is experiencing undue stress or muscular tension. Here the use of role-play or improvisation can create a more comfortable exchange of the candidate's thoughts and feelings on a subject
- To contend with the candidate's lack of preparation or confusion with the requirements of the assessment and to initiate some exchange or discussion
- To involve the audience as responsive listeners interacting with the candidates
- To be ready to give informal feedback and assistance to organisers and/or teachers on the day regarding preparation and presentation of candidates

Ethics

- The assessor is reminded that professional ethics require that his/her conduct is in accordance with the requirements of a public examining body. Communication and dress should be appropriate to the occasion
- The aim is for comparability of assessment standards therefore the assessor is expected to assess strictly in accordance with the syllabus requirements and be thoroughly conversant with all criteria and guidelines
- Personal knowledge concerning individual teachers and the standard of their work should not influence the assessment of the candidates

TRAINING

The trainee assessor will be briefed by an experienced assessor and given the opportunity, before he/she is expected to assess, to discuss and clarify the following

- The aims of ORACY Australia
- The format for sequencing and timing of the assessment
- The expected standards for the levels of achievement
- The assessor's responsibility in creating the appropriate atmosphere in the assessment room
- The familiarisation of the Handbook and expectations of the ORACY syllabus
- The variety of reports and the requirements of the reporting procedure
- An opportunity to review and study previous reports on various assessment levels.

You will be required to complete the following steps to become a qualified Oracy assessor.

Step One

Become a financial member of Oracy Australia. Refer to [/www.oracy.org.au/membership/](http://www.oracy.org.au/membership/) for information on annual membership fees.

Bankwest Claremont

BSB: 306 046

ACC: 415 910 8

Step Two

Complete the Assessor application form. Attach your CV including your qualifications (Speech & Drama, English or Communication based) and work experience; and a copy of your Working with Children Check.

Step Three

Attend an information and moderation session introducing you to the philosophy of Oracy as an organisation that promotes effective speaking and active listening. This will include clarification of the syllabus, assessing and reporting techniques. You will have the opportunity of viewing and evaluating students' Oracy presentations and to participate in discussion with qualified assessors. 2-3 hours.

Step Four

Observe two half day assessments conducted by an experienced assessor preferably conducting different assessment programs. The trainee assessor will be required to mark and write notes during the assessment and to discuss results with the supervising assessor.

IMPORTANT - During the second seating the trainee will be required to write a report for each candidate observed. These reports will be sent to the Administrator and will be compared by the Executive Board with the reports prepared by the assessor of the day.

Step Five

Conduct two half day assessments under the supervision of an experienced supervising assessor. The trainee will be required to write a report for each candidate observed. Reports will be handed to supervising assessor who will write a report for the board. At the end of these sessions of assessing a trainee may have his/her position as an assessor confirmed by the executive board.

You are now qualified to conduct assessments unsupervised for the standard fee. However, should you feel inadequately prepared we can provide further training.

The trainee assessor

- Must abide by the rules and regulations of ORACY Australia
- Must be familiar with the current syllabuses
- Must be a financial member of Oracy
- Must attend assessors' meetings and be current with all specific literature and amendments.

The length of training and number of observation sessions will vary from one individual to another, depending on experience, ease of matching criteria and skill in report writing.

THE ASSESSMENT

The Administrator will provide the assessor with the following forms

- Assessor's availability form
- Assessment notification form

It is essential that the assessor is punctual. The assessor must arrive 15 minutes before the commencement time of the assessment.

LAYOUT OF THE ROOM

The Assessor should check that candidates' report forms plus the results form have been completed by the teacher and placed on the Assessor's table.

It is implicit in an ORACY assessment that the listening group, the candidates and the assessor are of equal importance. Each is dependent on the other for effective communication to occur and each has a responsibility to the other.

As far as possible the seating should be arranged in a horse-shoe or semi-circle, with the Assessor toward the side where he/she can see all the candidates, to help an easy interchange between candidate, Assessor and listeners.

The location of the entrance to the room should preferably be behind the listening group and the teacher should sit with the listening group not facing them.

The Assessor must be prepared to re-arrange the room if necessary, so that there is an appropriate presentation space and seating for the listening group.

INTRODUCTORY TALK *not to exceed 5 minutes, please wear ORACY Badge, take working with children card and ensure all mobile phones including yours are on silent.*

At the beginning of the session, the assessor should set the scene and create a positive and relaxed atmosphere.

- The assessor should introduce him/herself and explain the format of the session, making particular mention of the value of supportive listening and participation in questioning and discussion.
- Explain that questions are asked because you want to know – not to test the candidate’s knowledge.
- Explain that candidates may present their program in any order (success is often gained from starting with the item with which he/she feels most confident and at ease).
- Individual candidates should present the complete program – not all talks presented then all readings etc. However, the order of the presentation may vary where sections are shared.

New groups of candidates and listeners may arrive during the day so the assessor may need to renew the atmosphere by further encouragement and explanatory remarks.

The assessor should feel free to discipline any disruptive behaviour.

TIMING

Assessors should keep as closely as possible to the time allowance per candidate indicated in the syllabus, without unsettling the candidate.

- 5 Primary candidates in one hour.
- 4 Secondary candidates in one hour.
- 3 Drama candidates in one hour.

For other assessments refer to the appropriate syllabus.

Candidates who run seriously overtime in any section should be tactfully reminded of time and asked to conclude. If a candidate is under time, then extra questioning may help the development of the subject. **NB** Assessors may wish to have a small clock on the table, but stopwatches should not be used.

INTERRUPTING CANDIDATES

Significant intervention in the prepared talk should **ONLY** be done to help the candidate who is floundering or too tensely script-bound. It is preferable to allow the candidate to finish before introducing questions, as an assessor’s intervention may only increase a candidate’s nervousness and may distort timing.

QUESTIONING

Although most questions may take place after Section 1, note that questions may be asked about all sections – check syllabus requirements for each year assessment. The assessor should ask questions and involve the listening group and encourage participation of all present, particularly the other candidates, as it is part of their assessment to show interest in the other presentations. This is how their achievement as listeners/communicators is assessed for Section 4. **Ask questions because you really want to know, not because you already know the answer.**

REPORTS

On the assessor's table there should be:

- Report Forms for each candidate filled out with the appropriate information. That is, name of student and Title of Talk, Prepared Reading and Memorised Item.

The assessor will complete the Report Forms and the Assessment Result Forms (sent to the assessor by the administrator electronically) and return them within a week to the Administrator ORACY Australia Association Inc. It is preferred that all copies are electronic.

LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT

Remarks on report forms should be addressed to the candidate with constructive critical comments that will be understood by the candidate and will help him/her with future oral communication situations.

Primary and Secondary Programs

The levels of Achievement for each of the four section are:

Satisfactory

High

Very High

Outstanding

- The assessor is to assume the candidate is Satisfactory until he/she proves otherwise.
- The assessor must write in each box the full word. Interpolated levels (S/H H/VH) may not be used at all in any section.
- The final result is based on an average of four sections, but Section 1 carries double weighting.
- Reports should be completed on computer and electronic copies sent to the Administrator.
- The reason for the level of achievement should be clearly demonstrated. The assessor must be explicit.
- It is vital that levels of achievement and comments on the report should match and that the comment should explain the level. If Outstanding is not awarded but Very High, High, Satisfactory or Not Demonstrated is achieved in a section there must always be guidance for future improvements and development.

It is not easy to achieve an overall Outstanding.

If a comment "reads" as an Outstanding achievement but one is not awarded it is not fair to the candidate and can be reason for complaints or queries.

The following phrases may be of assistance:

- Aim to slow down a little more ...
- Give your audience time to understand all you have to say ...
- Try to project more energetically ...
- Next time ...
- Aim to convey your enthusiasm a little more ...
- Work now on your focus/eye contact ...
- You made a very good attempt to communicate. However ...
- Have confidence in your own ability ...
- Relax and enjoy telling us about ...
- A carefully memorised poem – now use your imagination and aim for even greater variety ...

RESULTS

Care should be taken not to penalise excellence, not to over mark mediocrity. The result list should reflect the achievement of each group of candidates in accordance with ORACY criteria.

ORACY does not subscribe to the notion that each school or centre must have a quota of Outstanding, Very High, High or Satisfactory levels of achievement.

- All ORACY assessors should guide, strengthen and encourage candidates. If, however the required criteria for a syllabus are not met in two or more sections the candidate must be graded as Unsatisfactory with clear, constructive guidance given as to possible areas for improvement on the report and the result may be discussed privately with the teacher.
- In cases where the criteria have not been met, but where there is evidence of real endeavour a **Certificate of Participation** may be awarded. This should be stated as an overall result and section levels should be disregarded.

AWARDING THE LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT IN EACH SECTION

SECTIONS 1-3

7 Criteria

For each section calculate the total using the following guide:

Not Demonstrated	0 points
Satisfactory	1 point
High	2 points
Very High	3 points
Outstanding	4 points

The total points result in the level of achievement as follows:

Not Demonstrated	0 - 3
Satisfactory	4 - 10
High	11 - 17
Very High	18 - 24
Outstanding	25 – 28

SECTION 4

3 Criteria

For each section calculate the total using the following guide:

Not Demonstrated	0 points
Satisfactory	1 point
High	2 points
Very High	3 points
Outstanding	4 points

The total points result in the level of achievement as follows:

Not Demonstrated	Below 2
Satisfactory	2 - 4
High	5 - 7
Very High	8 - 10
Outstanding	11 -12

AWARDING THE OVERALL LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT

The level of achievement for each Section is:

SATISFACTORY 1 **HIGH 2** **VERY HIGH 3** **OUTSTANDING 4**

The final result is the aggregate for the four sections with Section 1 carrying double weighting. Each of the other sections carry equal weighting.

EXAMPLES:

Double Section 1 and add to other totals:

Section 1	HIGH	4 (2+2)	Section 1	VERY HIGH	6 (3+3)
Section 2	SATISFACTORY	1	Section 2	VERY HIGH	3
Section 3	SATISFACTORY	1	Section 3	SATISFACTORY	1
Section 4	VERY HIGH	3	Section 4	OUTSTANDING	4
		<hr/>			<hr/>
		9			14

Overall: **HIGH**

Overall: **VERY HIGH**

FINAL RESULTS:	SATISFACTORY	3 - 7
	HIGH	8 - 12
	VERY HIGH	13 - 18
	OUTSTANDING	19 - 20

IMPORTANT - To gain an overall mark of Outstanding, a candidate must receive Outstanding in Section 1 and Outstanding in at least two other sections, and no lower than Very High in the remaining section. A candidate must achieve Outstanding in three sections to gain a final mark of Outstanding.

GUIDELINES FOR LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT

The following criteria are suggested qualities/skills that are being measured in Sections 1, 2, 3 and 4. Obviously there are many more to consider than those suggested. Those chosen are simply there as a possible guide to assessment. Refer to the ORACY Syllabus for further guidelines.

SECTION 1

TALK

Not Demonstrated	Opening sentence only. An unwillingness to get started despite encouragement from the assessor. Reading an essay with no connection with the listeners.
Satisfactory	Diligent. Some weakness in content, composition, presentation and/or delivery. Audible but not animated. Attempt to share information. Too much reliance on notes.
High	Clear presentation of material. Research obvious. Clear articulation. Awareness of verbal and non-verbal communication skills. Relevant reference to visuals. Notes used for reference only. Appropriate timing for listeners' reception. Sound vocabulary and syntax.
Very High	Qualities of High but more extensive and richer in content, composition, presentation and oral delivery. Enthusiastic sharing of facts and own ideas.
Outstanding	Outstanding in content, composition and presentation. Excellent application of verbal and non-verbal communication skills. Appropriate and skillful use of visuals. Vital and enthusiastic in sharing. A memorable presentation.

SECTION 2

READING ALOUD

Not Demonstrated	No book. No attempt.
Satisfactory	Partial comprehension with some faulty phrasing. Vocal limitations. Some incorrect pronunciation. Limited audience contact.
High	Comprehended. Sensibly phrased. Audible. Some vocal or diction weaknesses. Attempt at eye-contact. Attempt to communicate passage to listeners.

	Competent but lacking in vitality.
Very High	Text well understood. Significant phrasing. Pleasing vocal tone. Alert rhythmic response. Content and moods communicated effectively. Energetic and enthusiastic.
Outstanding	As above but with heightened insight into interpretation and communication. Imagination used to lift the printed word off the page and give it life. A definite sense of style. A memorable impact.

SECTION 3

VERSE SPEAKING

Not Demonstrated	Not memorized.
Satisfactory	Poem is memorised, but possibly inflexible in rhythm and intonation. Phrasing inaccurate. Metrical delivery. Weakness in understanding and/or communication.
High	Poem understood. Language follows the poet's order. Audible. The delivery is in harmony with the sense.
Very High	The qualities of High plus the moods are established by the speaker's sensory awareness. Communication of the poet's thoughts and intentions effectively to the listeners.
Outstanding	Heightened sensibility making the poem a complete personal experience. Voice and speech are such that the poet's imagery and music are truly communicated. An imaginative and meaningful interpretation. An outstanding re-creation.

DRAMA

Not Demonstrated	Not script free.
Satisfactory	Able work but possibly weak in physical and/or vocal expression. Some contribution to the activity but inability to focus and to enter into the role.
High	Significant concentration and projection in role. Sincere attitude. Body and voice responding to the dramatic situation.
Very High	Heightened perception. Alert reaction. Appropriate and effective body response.

	Controlled, sensitive and sincere in characterization. Line delivery meaningful with natural speech rhythms. Understanding of relationships.
Outstanding	Outstanding imaginative response in every situation. Excellent physical and vocal control. Total focus and character involvement. Energetic and vital. Creates a role that engenders audience belief.
SECTION 4	DISCUSSION
	<i>(This section relies heavily on the communication skills of the assessor)</i>
Not Demonstrated	Not Demonstrated is only given if there is no evidence of the specified criteria noted on the Report form.
Satisfactory	Some ability to listen and respond. Adequate but brief answers to questions. Limited contribution to discussion.
High	Attentive listener. Adequate but brief answers to questions. Clear response to questions.
Very High	Listens alertly and responds with extended information. Enthusiastic contributor to discussion.
Outstanding	Attentive and supportive listener. Communicates convincingly, fluently and relevantly with appropriate command of language. Vital and enthusiastic in discussion.

REMUNERATION

Fees will be paid by ORACY in accordance with the number of assessments completed.

Assessments are scheduled according to the time taken for a candidate to complete the program e.g. 5 Primary students per hour, 4 Secondary students per hour and 3 Drama students per hour.

Payment is based on an hourly rate which is set down by the Executive Board.

Payment is made for the number of candidates listed on the Assessment Results Form.

Assessments are conducted at various centres in the Metropolitan Area and assessors may also be approached by the Administrator as to their availability to travel to Country and Regional Centres. A car allowance is paid for all metropolitan and country travel and must be authorised by the Administrator before travel is undertaken. Accommodation costs and meals for country travel are met by the organisers in each district.

An invoice for time and expenses must be submitted to the Administrator within one week for payment to be made at the end of the month.

While the assessor is in attendance at a school or centre or travelling to and from this location he/she is considered employed by ORACY Australia Association Inc. In the event of an accident ORACY holds suitable insurance to cover the assessor.

COMPLAINTS

It is the policy of the Executive Board to make every effort to resolve any complaint or appeal quickly, efficiently and fairly. The Administrator has the responsibility to refer such complaints to the assessor involved and to the Executive Board.

If an assessor thinks a complaint may arise, the Administrator should be notified as soon as possible, with a full, written account of the situation.

Oracy Australia Association Inc.

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