

ELLA Language stimulus: *Letter to the Editor*



Literacy skills assessed by ELLA

In the ELLA Language task *Letter to the Editor*, students were asked to:

- identify the function of a statement in a factual text
- identify that the purpose of paragraphs is to organise text
- identify a noun as a nominalisation
- identify type of text (argument).

Literacy in the context of the Geography Syllabus

Students should be able to:

- undertake geographic investigation by collecting information from a range of sources
- present information clearly.

Strategies to address literacy in geography

Teaching strategies which can assist students to read and write arguments are shown below.

1. Using background knowledge to develop solutions to problem solving

Before students read a text, the teacher poses a problem for the class to solve, eg salination. Groups work out possible solutions to the problem, then compare. Class then reads the text together and compares solutions to the problem with those offered by the author.

2. Recognising a point of view

Select an exposition for students to read as a model to recognise the point of view of the writer. Teachers show students how to recognise the writer's point view by identification of:

- modal words in the exposition (*It is a type of water pollution and should be stopped.*)
- nominalisations (identifying which words are nouns made from a verb: *pollution* from *pollute*)
- conjunctions that link arguments or show cause and effect (*therefore prevent salt rising to the surface...; which can lead to ...*).

3. Understanding purpose and perspective

Choose different texts about an issue, eg, water pollution. Compare and contrast the purpose of the two writers. Address such questions as:

- Who would write such a text?
- Who would read such a text?
- What is the function of the text
- How does the text achieve this purpose?
- What language devices has the writer used to make the text effect? (ie modality)?
- What makes the texts different?