

Initial Diagnostic Assessment

Reading, Writing and Mathematical Reasoning. One hour, timed.

STUDENT	YEAR LEVEL	ASSESSMENT DATE
Student A	Year 5	12 August 2026
FORMAT	ASSESSOR	PREPARING FOR
In person at Epping	Nelson Zhou	Selective and scholarship

Summary

Student A sat the Zhou Education initial diagnostic on 12 August 2026, in person at Epping. The assessment was timed and covered Reading, Writing and Mathematical Reasoning. All three sections were completed independently before any guidance was given.

Reading is currently the strongest of the three areas. Retrieval was accurate and straightforward inference was secure without prompting. Questions asking why a writer had made a particular choice were answered in terms of what happened in the passage rather than what the choice achieved.

Writing showed the clearest gap between planning and execution. The premise was specific and well chosen, and the plan was followed, but sentence boundaries broke down under time and the response stopped before its resolution.

In Mathematical Reasoning, single step questions were secure. Multi step questions broke down where the method had to be chosen rather than applied. When the first step was named during the guided section, the remaining work was completed without further help.

The order of work is set out on page three.

Profile

AREA	POSITION AFTER THIS ASSESSMENT	CURRENT EVIDENCE
Reading	Secure on retrieval and single paragraph inference. Not yet reading for effect.	Independent work, timed.
Writing	Ideas and structure ahead of sentence control. Response unfinished at time.	Independent work, timed, followed by one guided revision of three sentences.
Mathematical Reasoning	Calculation secure. Method selection on multi step problems is the constraint.	Independent work, timed, with one guided prompt on the final item.
Thinking Skills	No position stated.	Not assessed in this session.
Prior preparation	No position stated. Prior exposure is not evidence of current capability.	Reported by the family: a selective preparation workbook worked through at home.

Detailed findings

Reading **INDEPENDENT WORK, TIMED**

Two passages, one narrative and one informative, with comprehension questions across retrieval, inference, vocabulary in context and author's purpose.

- Retrieval was accurate throughout. No question was left blank and no answer contradicted the passage.
- Inference was secure where the evidence sat within one paragraph. Where an answer required combining a detail from the opening with one near the end, the response used only the nearer detail.
- On the questions asking what a writer achieved by a choice, Student A explained what the words meant rather than what the choice did to the reader. Asked why a phrase was repeated, the answer restated the phrase's meaning.
- Vocabulary in context was largely handled from surrounding sentences. Two responses used a word's common meaning where the passage required a narrower one.

Reading is not the constraint on this profile. The base is sound enough that the remaining work is a shift in what the student is asked to notice, not additional comprehension practice.

Writing **INDEPENDENT, THEN ONE GUIDED REVISION**

A timed narrative from a stimulus, planned and drafted in the session.

- Planning took about two minutes and produced four beats. The draft followed the plan, which is not typical at this year level.
- The premise was specific and unusual, and the opening established a situation rather than describing a setting.
- Six sentences joined two independent clauses with a comma. The same fault recurred in every paragraph, including the opening.
- Tense moved from past to present twice within paragraphs and was not corrected on the page.
- The response stopped mid scene when time was called. The resolution appeared in the plan but was never written.
- In the guided section, Student A was asked to repair the first three sentence boundary errors and corrected all three without further explanation.

The knowledge is present. What is missing is monitoring while drafting, which is a different problem from not knowing the rule, and it responds to different work.

Mathematical Reasoning **INDEPENDENT, ONE GUIDED PROMPT**

Timed problems across number, fractions and proportion, mixing single step and multi step items.

- Single step questions were secure. Arithmetic was accurate and working was set out clearly enough to follow.
- On multi step problems, the breakdown occurred before the calculation. Student A began working forwards by default, including on a problem that required working backwards from a total.
- On reaching an inconsistency, the response was to restart the problem rather than check which step had produced it. Two restarts consumed most of the remaining time.
- Answers were not checked against the question. One completed answer gave a number of items that could not be whole, and this was not noticed.
- When the first step of the final multi step item was named, the remaining work was completed independently and correctly.

The calculation is not the limiting factor here. Marks were lost in the decision about how to begin and in the absence of a check at the end, and both of those sit before and after the arithmetic rather than inside it.

Technique, priorities and next steps

Technique

Two habits account for most of what was lost, and both appear only under time. In writing, Student A drafts without rereading the sentence just written, so a fault that is understood in isolation survives to the finished page. In mathematics, Student A starts calculating before deciding on a route, which works on single step questions and fails as soon as the first step has to be inferred.

Neither habit is a knowledge gap. Both were corrected within the session once attention was directed to them, which is the reason they sit at the top of the plan below.

Priorities, in order

1 Sentence boundaries during drafting

The rule is already known, as the guided revision showed. The work is building the check that happens while writing rather than after.

2 Choosing a method before calculating

The arithmetic is secure, so these marks are lost before any calculation begins. A deliberate pause to decide the route is the highest value change available.

3 Finishing a narrative within the time

An unresolved response gives up marks the ideas and structure have already earned.

4 Reading for effect rather than content

Retrieval and inference are strong enough to build on, so this is an extension of a working base rather than a repair.

Next steps

These four priorities form the basis of the first block of lessons, and the work is set and marked in lessons in the order above. On this profile, paired lessons are the suitable format: the writing priorities need individual marking, and the mathematical reasoning work is well suited to a partner at a similar stage.

Conclusion

Student A reads better than the writing currently shows and calculates better than the problem solving currently shows. In both cases the ceiling is set by a habit rather than by missing knowledge, and both habits changed within the session when they were named. That is the reason for the order of the priorities above, and it is a reasonable basis for expecting visible movement over a term rather than a year.

Scope of this assessment

This report covers Reading, Writing and Mathematical Reasoning as observed in one timed session. Thinking Skills was not assessed and no position on it is stated above. Where the family has reported prior preparation, that is recorded as reported rather than as assessed capability. A single session shows how a student works under time on one set of tasks, and the priorities above are set on that basis.

Nelson Zhou

Assessor

Zhou Education

Report issued 19 August 2026