

Diagnostic Assessments for Numeracy

This document includes a series of diagnostic interview assessments. I designed them be used to collect a 'snapshot' of basic number sense skills, knowledge, and understandings of primary students. My background teaching experience is in NSW schools where I used the NSW Department of Education SENAs (Schedules for Early Number Assessment) as diagnostic interviews at the beginning of each year with my students. Other states and countries use similar diagnostic interviews such as in Victoria where many schools use Ann Gervasoni's Mathematics Assessment Interview (MAI) from the Extending Mathematical Understanding (EMU) program – a great resource.

I still use the SENAs, but I didn't want to use the same assessment repeatedly throughout the year, so I needed an alternative. I also often get asked by teachers, *do you have any other assessments?* Designing assessments can be difficult so I tried to come up with a way to write assessments that simplified the process. The assessment essentially just focuses on one number, 16. I will give credit to Peter Gould who first introduced me to the '16 tiles' task. In the 16 tiles task students have to count out 16 tiles, write the number 16, then explain what the 'one' and the 'six' mean. I really like the simplicity of focusing on one number and asking a variety of questions to discover students' conceptual understanding. I took the 16 tiles task and designed several other questions all using the number 16. I have made three different assessment versions (a, b and c) that overlap and increase in sophistication so they can be used from Year 1 to Year 6. Teachers can choose which assessment to use, you also do not need to use all the questions.

By asking questions related to different number concepts but using the same number, it makes it easier to write alternative assessments. For example, I could now write a version of the assessment with very similar questions but using a different number such as: 12, 24 or 36. The structure of the assessment can remain the same, the numbers just change.

These assessments should be conducted one-to-one by the classroom teacher as students' reasoning is important to hear/collect along with the strategies they use. If time does not permit for one-to-one interviews, small groups can be used. Videoing or audio recording the interviews are also beneficial for later analysis or for collaborative validating of teacher judgement. I hope teachers find these assessments helpful! Feel free to adapt and add to them as required.

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Diagnostic Assessment for Numeracy- Number Sense and Algebra 16 (Version a)

Student name:

Date:

Class:

Task question	Comments/ possible student responses	Numeracy Progression levels (Version 2)	NSW Syllabus links and AC descriptors
Quantifying numbers What number comes after 16?	 Starts count from one Counts from a few before 16 Counts on from 16 "16, 17" Says 17 	QuN3 – QuN6	MAe-4NA ACMNA001
What number comes before 16?	 Starts count from one Counts down from a few after 16 Counts down from 16 "16, 15" Says 15 	QuN3 – QuN6	MAe- 4NA ACMNA001
Can you get 16 tiles for me?	 Uses one-to-one to count a few tiles (up to 10) Counts tiles out one-by-ones to 16 Counts tiles out by twos 	QuN2 - QuN5	Mae-4NA ACMNA002 ACMNA289
Can you write the number 16?	 Attempts to write 16, may write 61 Writes 16 	QuN6	MA1-4NA ACMNA013



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Task question	Comments/ possible student responses	Numeracy	NSW	
		Progression levels	Syllabus links	
		(Version 2)	and AC	
From Quantifying numbe	ers to Additive strategies		descriptors	
Using the tiles can you	Is unable to count out 6 tiles to represent	QuN2 – QuN8	MA1-4NA	
show me what the 6	the 6, may use one tile		MA1-5NA	
	• May count out six tiles and place them in		MA1-2WM	
means?	a visual '6'		ACMNA014	
	Counts out six tiles		ACMNA015	
Prompt if needed:	• Says 16 is ten and 6 ones so then gets			
"You counted out 16 tiles	out 6 tiles from the counted pile			
and wrote the number				
16, what does the 6	May draw place value 'columns' on page			
mean (point to the 6)?"				
"Can you show me,				
using the tiles?"				
Using these tiles can you	• Takes one tile to represent the 'one' or	QuN8	MA1-4NA MA1-5NA	
show me what the one	'ten' (needs bold prompt question)		MA1-2WM	
means?	 Moves all the remaining tiles to represent the one but may not make connection to 			
	the 'ten'		ACMNA014 ACMNA015	
Prompt if needed:	Counts out all remaining tiles (10) and		ACIMINAUTS	
"What does the one	says the 1 means 10			
mean?" "In 16?"				
"Can you show me using				
the tiles?"				
"You counted out 16 tiles				
and wrote the number				
16, what does the 1				
mean (point to the 1)?"				
<i>If students get out one tile - Point or gesture to remaining tiles the student counted – "What about these ones?"</i>				



Took question		Numeracy	NSW
Task question	Comments/ possible student responses	Progression levels	Syllabus links
		(Version 2)	and AC
			descriptors
If I had 16 apples and I	Starts count from one for 16 then does	AdS3 – AdS6	MA1-5NA
buy 5 more, how many	the same for 5 and is unable to solve the		MA1-1WM
do I have now?	task		ACMNA015
	• Says 16, then counts on by ones to get		ACMNA030
How did you work that	21Says 5 and 6 is 11 and 10 more is 21		
-	 Says 5 and 6 is 11 and 10 more is 21 Says 16 and 4 is 20 and one more is 21 		
out?			
If I had 16 apples and I	Counts up from one to 16 then back	AdS3 – AdS6	MA1-5NA
ate 7, how many apples	seven (may use fingers) to get to 9		MA1-1WM
	Counts down from 16 by ones to get to 9		ACMNA015
do I have left?	Counts up from 7 to 16		ACMNA029
	• Says I took 6 away from 16 to get 10		ACMNA030
How did you work it out?	then one more to get 9		
	• Says if it was 17 that would be ten but its		
	16 so it's 9		
What is the difference	• Students talk about what is 'different' e.g.	AdS5	MA1-5NA
between 12 and 16?	12 is smaller than 16		
			ACMNA015 ACMNA029
How do you know?			ACMNA030
lf atudanta da natualata			
<i>If students do not relate to subtraction and do not</i>			
get 4, ask this:			
	Attempted to count up or down from 12 or 16 but counted the starting number on		
I played netball on the	or 16 but counted the starting number so got 5		
weekend and we lost 12	 Counted up from 12 to 16 and got 4 		
to 16.	 Counted down from 12 to 10 and got 4 Counted down from 16 to 12 and got four 		
What was the difference			
in scores? (Or How			
much did we lose by?)			



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Task question	Comments/ possible student responses	Numeracy Progression levels (Version 2)	NSW Syllabus links and AC descriptors		
From Additive to Multipli	cative strategies				
Think about the number 16. How could I divide 16 tiles into equal rows? How many tiles would be in each row?	 Says 2 groups of eight (8 tiles in each group) Says 2 rows of 8 (8 tiles in each row, may say 2) Says 4 rows of 4 (4 tiles in each row) Says one row of 16 (16 tiles in the row) 	MuS3- MuS6	MA1-6NA ACMNA012 ACMNA032 ACMNA031		
Here are 16 tiles, can you show me what the equal rows look like? How would you describe what you have done?	 Makes 2 groups of 8 Tries to make groups of 3, 5 or other numbers Makes 2 rows of 8 Makes 4 rows of 4 Continues to make other representations and relates it to known multiples or factors 	MuS1 – MuS7	MA1-6NA MA1-2WM ACMNA012 ACMNA032 ACMNA031		
Is there another way to put the tiles in equal rows? What about another way?	See above suggestions	MuS4- MuS7	MA1-6NA MA1-3WM ACMNA012 ACMNA032 ACMNA031		



Diagnostic Assessment for Numeracy- Number Sense and Algebra 16 (Version b)

Student name:

Date:

Class:

Task question Quantifying numbers Can you get 16 tiles for me?	Comments/ possible student responses Uses one-to-one to count a few tiles (up to 10) Counts tiles out one-by-ones to 16 Counts tiles out by twos 	Numeracy Progression levels (Version 2) QuN2 - QuN5	NSW Syllabus links and AC descriptors Mae-4NA ACMNA002 ACMNA289
Can you write the number 16?	 Attempts to write 16, may write 61 Writes 16 	QuN6	MA1-4NA ACMNA013
From Quantifying nu	mbers to Additive strategies		
Using the tiles can you show me what the 6 means?	 Is unable to count out 6 tiles to represent the 6, may use one tile May count out six tiles and place them in a visual '6' Counts out six tiles 	QuN2 – QuN8	MA1-4NA MA1-5NA MA1-2WM ACMNA014 ACMNA015
Prompt if needed: "You counted out 16 tiles and wrote the	• Says 16 is ten and 6 ones so then gets out 6 tiles from the counted pile		
number 16, what does the 6 mean (point to the 6)?" "Can you show me,			
using the tiles?"			



Tasland		Numeracy	NSW
Task question	Comments/ possible student responses	Progression levels	Syllabus
		(Version 2)	links and AC
		0.110	descriptors
Using these tiles can	 Takes one tile to represent the 'one' or 'ten' (needs bold prompt question) 	QuN8	MA1-4NA MA1-5NA
you show me what	 Moves all the remaining tiles to represent the 		MA1-3NA MA1-2WM
the one means?	one but may not make connection to the 'ten'		
Prompt if needed:	Counts out all remaining tiles (10) and says the		ACMNA014 ACMNA015
"What does the one	1 means 10		
mean?" "In 16?"			
"Can you show me			
using the tiles?"			
_			
"You counted out 16			
tiles and wrote the			
number 16, what			
does the 1 mean			
(point to the 1)?"			
If students get out one tile - Point or gesture to remaining tiles the student counted – "What about these ones?"			
If I had 16 apples	Starts count from one for 16 then does the same	AdS3 – AdS6	MA1-5NA
and I buy 5 more,	for 5 and is unable to solve the task		MA1-1WM
how many do I have	• Says 16, then counts on by ones to get 21		ACMNA015
now?	• Says 5 and 6 is 11 and 10 more is 21		ACMNA030
	• Says 16 and 4 is 20 and one more is 21		
How did you work			
that out?			
What are two	• Attempts to say two numbers, may say 10 and	AdS6 – AdS7	MA1-5NA
numbers that add to	10 or 6 and 6 or other response		MA1-8NA
make 16?	• Says 10 and 6		ACMNA015
-	• Says 11 and 5 etc		ACMNA030
	 Is unable to use 3 numbers to make 16 		ACMNA036



Task question	Comments/ possible student responses	Numeracy Progression levels (Version 2)	NSW Syllabus links and AC descriptors
Can you tell me another two numbers that make 16? What about three numbers that add to make 16?	 Uses guess and check or working through from a random number (e.g. 3 and 9 and 4?) Uses knowledge fo 10 as a base and makes combinations of 10 and adds 6 (e.g. 7 and 3 is 10 then 6 more is 16) Uses info above (e.g. 10+6 to then say 5 and 5 and 6) 14 and 1 and 1 or other responses 		
If I had 16 apples and I ate 7, how many apples do I have left? How did you work it out?	 Counts up from one to 16 then back seven (may use fingers) to get to 9 Counts down from 16 by ones to get to 9 Counts up from 7 to 16 Says I took 6 away from 16 to get 10 then one more to get 9 Says if it was 17 that would be ten but its 16 so it's 9 	AdS3 – AdS6	MA1-5NA MA1-1WM ACMNA015 ACMNA029 ACMNA030
What is the difference between 12 and 16? How do you know? If students do not relate to subtraction and do not get 4, ask this:	 Students talk about what is 'different' e.g. 12 is smaller than 16 Attempted to count up or down from 12 or 16 but counted the starting number so got 5 	AdS5	MA1-5NA ACMNA015 ACMNA029 ACMNA030
I played netball on the weekend and we lost 12 to 16. What was the difference in scores?	 Counted up from 12 to 16 and got 4 Counted down from 16 to 12 and got four 		



Task question	Comments/ possible student responses	Numeracy Progression levels (Version 2)	NSW Syllabus links and AC descriptors
From Additive to Mult Think about the number 16. How could I divide 16 tiles into equal rows? How many tiles would be in each row?	 tiplicative strategies Says 2 groups of eight (8 tiles in each group) Says 2 rows of 8 (8 tiles in each row, may say 2) Says 4 rows of 4 (4 tiles in each row) Says one row of 16 (16 tiles in the row) 	MuS3- MuS6	MA1-6NA MA2-6NA MA2-8NA ACMNA012 ACMNA032 ACMNA031
Here are 16 tiles, can you show me what the equal rows look like? How would you describe what you have done? <i>If students make</i> <i>'groups of ' ask</i> <i>them to make rows.</i> <i>Prompt: Can you put</i> <i>the 16 tiles into equal</i> <i>rows, so that each row</i> <i>has the 'same amount'</i> <i>of tiles? Like an array.</i>	 Makes 2 groups of 8 Tries to make groups of 3, 5 or other numbers Makes 2 rows of 8 Makes 4 rows of 4 Continues to make other representations and relates it to known multiples or factors 	MuS1 – MuS7	MA1-6NA MA1-2WM ACMNA012 ACMNA032 ACMNA031
Is there another way to put the tiles in equal rows? What about another way?	See above suggestions	MuS4- MuS7	MA1-6NA MA1-3WM ACMNA012 ACMNA032 ACMNA031



Task question	Comments/ possible student responses	Numeracy Progression levels (Version 2)	NSW Syllabus links and AC
Interpreting fractions			descriptors
Interpreting fractions Teacher note: (Arrange the 16 tiles in 4 rows of 4 for the student.) Using the tiles, can you show me what half of 16 is?	 Takes all the tiles away and shares them out into two piles Similar to above, starts moving tiles into two piles from the rows Puts their hand down the middle to show 'halfway' and says "8" Moves half of tiles away either vertically or horizontally and says "8" Note: students may be able to show half physically but not be able to say that half of 16 is 8 Shares out the tiles into groups of 4 Halves both halves to show four quarters 	InF1_2, InF2_1	MA1-7NA MA2-7NA ACMNA016 ACMNA033 ACMNA058
What about one quarter? What number is 16, a quarter of?	 Halves one of their halves to make 4 Says 4 Says I need to add 16 four times Says 16 and 16 are 32 and double 32 is 64 16 is half of 32 therefore 16 is a quarter of 64 	MuS6 – MuS7 InF3 – InF6	MA3-7NA ACMNA127
Quantifying numbers Can you write the decimal: one point 6? Teacher draws a	 (decimals) Student attempts to write the decimals but may write .16, 0.16, 1.06 etc Writes 1.6 	QuN9 – QuN10	MA2-7NA MA3-7NA ACMNA079 ACMNA104
number line with ends marked 0 and 2.			ACMNA105 ACMNA130



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Task question	Comments/ possible student responses	Numeracy Progression levels (Version 2)	NSW Syllabus links and AC descriptors
On this number line, where would you put 1.6? Have students draw a mark and write 1.6 (if they didn't write 1.6 correctly above, write it for them) If I multiply 1.6 by 10 what does it equal?	 Incorrectly places 1.6 close to 0 Incorrectly places 1.6 close to 2 Correctly place 1.6 somewhere past halfway (may say, "1.5 would be halfway so its past that") Says 1.60 thinking when you multiply you 'just add zero' Says 10.6 or other incorrect response that shows lack of place value knowledge with decimals Says 16 (may say they 'move the decimal' or say I'm making the number 10 times bigger or larger) 		
What if I divide 1.6 by 10, what does it equal?	 Says 1.60 or other incorrect response Says 0.16 (either by 'moving the decimal' or knowing that I want to make the number ten times smaller, so numbers change place value) 		



Diagnostic Assessment for Numeracy- Number Sense 16 (Version c)

Student name:

Date:

Class:

Task question	Comments	Numeracy Progression levels (Version 2)	NSW Syllabus links and AC descriptors
Quantifying numbers	(decimal place value)		
Can you write the decimal one point 6? <i>Teacher draws a</i>	 Student attempts to write the decimals but may write .16, 0.16, 1.06 etc Writes 1.6 	QuN9 – QuN10	MA2-7NA MA3-7NA MA4-5NA ACMNA079 ACMNA104
<i>number line with ends marked 0 and 2.</i> On this number line,	 Incorrectly places 1.6 close to 0 Incorrectly places 1.6 close to 2 Correctly place 1.6 somewhere past halfway (may say, "1.5 would be halfway so its past that") 		ACMNA104 ACMNA105 ACMNA130
where would you put 1.6?			
Have students draw a mark and write 1.6 (if they didn't write 1.6 correctly above, write it for them)	 Says 1.60 thinking when you multiply you 'just add zero' Says 10.6 or other incorrect response that shows lack of place value knowledge with decimals Says 16 (may say they 'move the decimal' or say l'm making the number 10 times bigger or larger) 		
If I multiply 1.6 by 10 what does it equal?	 Says 1.60 or other incorrect response Says 0.16 (either by 'moving the decimal' or knowing that I want to make the number ten times smaller, so numbers change place value) 		
What if I divide 1.6 by 10, what does it equal?			



Task question	Comments	Numeracy Progression levels (Version 2)	NSW Syllabus links and AC descriptors
(Cards needed for this task- see end page) Can you put these decimals in order from largest to smallest? 0.16, 0.6, 1.6, 0.016 Explain why you placed them in that order. How did you make your decision where to put them?	 Incorrectly arranges by length of decimal e.g. 0.6, 1.6, 0.16, 0.016 Incorrectly arranges seeing decimal part as whole number e.g. 0.016, 0.16, 1.6, 0.6 Other incorrect method of arranging Correctly arranges from largest to smallest 1.6, 0.6, 0.16, 0.016 May describe misunderstandings above Talks about place value or that one number has a whole number and a decimal so that's largest etc may mention 6 tenths, 16 hundredths 	QuN10 – QuN11	MA2-7NA MA3-7NA MA4-5NA ACMNA079 ACMNA104 ACMNA105 ACMNA130 ACMNA156 ACMNA157
IF the student can correctly order the decimals, ask this question: How much larger is 0.16 compared to 0.016?	 Unsure or provides incorrect response e.g. no larger as they both have the number 16 in them Ten times larger, may include – 0.16 is 16 hundredths whereas 0.016 is 16 thousandths, or, 16/100 is larger than 16/1000 	QuN11_6	MA3-7NA MA4-5NA ACMNA104 ACMNA105 ACMNA130 ACMNA154



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Task question	Comments	Numeracy Progression	NSW Syllabus
		levels (Version 2)	links and AC
		(10.0012)	descriptors
Multiplicative strateg	ies		
Think about the	• Uses repeated addition to solve the task e.g. 4 + 4	MuS4 – MuS7	MA1-6NA
number 16 what 2	+ 4 + 4 is 16 so 4 fours		
number 16, what 2	Says 8 times 2 or 2 times 8		ACMNA012
numbers can you	Says 4 times 4		ACMNA032
multiply to make 16?	Says 1 times 16 etc		ACMNA031
De very breeve tour			MA2-6NA
Do you know two	• Suggests 16 x 1 x 1		MA3-6NA
other numbers that			MA2-8NA
multiplied make 16?	• Suggests 2 x 8 x 1		MA3-8NA
	Uses solutions above to make an additional factor		MA4-4NA
	e.g. 8 x 2 is 16 so (4 x 2) x 2		ACMNA056
What about three			ACMINA056 ACMNA057
numbers that multiply			ACMNA037
			ACMNA076
to make 16?			ACMNA081
			ACMNA082
			ACMNA101
			ACMNA123
			ACMNA121
			ACMNA151
		MuCA2 MuCC	ACMNA183
Think about the	Says 2 rows of 8	MuS43 – MuS6	MA1-6NA MA2-6NA
number 16.	8 rows of 2		MA3-6NA
How many ways can	Says 4 rows of 4		MA3-8NA
	Says one row of 16		MA4-4NA
I divide 16 to make	Says 16 rows of 1		
equal rows? (with no			
remainder)	 Just says "I know the factors of 16" 		ACMNA056
	• Says can't be any odd numbers e.g. 3 or 5 as 3		ACMNA057
	fives is 15 and 3 sixes is 18 or talks about 16 as		ACMNA075
How do you know	a square number		ACMNA076 ACMNA081
you have them all?	Uses a halving and doubling strategy to justify		ACMINA081 ACMNA082
			ACMNA101
	solutions		ACMNA123
			ACMNA121
			ACMNA151
			ACMNA183



Took quotien	Commente	Numeracy	NSW
Task question	Comments	Progression	Syllabus
		levels (Version 2)	links and AC
			descriptors
How would you solve 16 x 9 In your head (without pen and paper) Talk through how you are working it out.	 Imagines the vertical algorithm to complete the multiplication e.g. uses language of algorithm e.g. 6 x 9 is 54 write the 4 then 'carry the 5' 'one times 9' 9 and 5 is 14 Similar to above but Says 6 x 9 is 54 and 10 x 9 is 90, 90 + 54 is 144 Uses partial products (similar to dot point 2 but starts with tens) 10 x 9 is 90, 6 x 9 is 54 Uses compensation, 16 x 10 is 160 then take away one group of 16 is 144 Uses factors to work out 16 x 3 is 48, x 3 is 144 (120 + 24) Uses doubling and halving technique 16 x 9 is the same as 8 x 18 or 4 times 36 (120 + 24) 	MuS6 – MuS7	MA2-6NA MA2-8NA MA3-6NA MA3-8NA MA4-4NA ACMNA056 ACMNA057 ACMNA057 ACMNA075 ACMNA075 ACMNA076 ACMNA076 ACMNA082 ACMNA082 ACMNA101 ACMNA123 ACMNA121 ACMNA151 ACMNA183
Interpreting fractions	-		
Teacher note: (Arrange the 16 tiles	Takes all the tiles away and shares them out into two piles	InF1_2, InF2_1	MA1-7NA MA2-7NA
in 4 rows of 4 for the	two pilesSimilar to above, starts moving tiles into two piles		
	from the rows		ACMNA016
student.)	 Puts their hand down the middle to show 'halfway' 		ACMNA033 ACMNA058
Using the tiles, can you show me what half of 16 is? What about one quarter?	 and says "8" Moves half of tiles away either vertically or horizontally and says "8" Note: students may be able to show half physically but not be able to say that half of 16 is 8 Shares out the tiles into groups of 4 Halves both halves to show four quarters Halves one of their halves to make 4 		



Task question What number is 16, a quarter of?	Comments Says 4 (incorrectly) Says 1 need to add 16 four times Says 16 and 16 are 32 and double 32 is 64 16 is half of 32 therefore 16 is a quarter of 64 	Numeracy Progression levels (Version 2) MuS6 – MuS7 InF3 – InF6	NSW Syllabus links and AC descriptors MA3-7NA ACMNA127
What is three quarters of 16? How do you know? Draw a diagram to support your solution	 Says 12 (need to ask <i>How</i> question) Breaks 16 into 4 and says one quarter is 4 so three quarters is 3 x 4 which is 12 Uses answer to above question and multiplies 3 x 4 to get 12 May use halving half strategy – half of 16 is 8, half again is 4 so 8 + 4 is 12 Other response 	InF7_3	MA3-7NA MA4-5NA ACMNA127 ACMNA155

Cards to use for decimals task (cut out and give to student)

