

Descriptive feedback

Descriptive feedback includes concise, strengths-based, written comments or documented conversations that are aligned with the learning standards and describe student learning, as well as identifying specific areas for future growth. A strengths-based approach recognizes that student learning is dynamic and holistic, and that students demonstrate their learning in different ways and at different rates. Feedback is focused on what the student can do and what they are working toward.

Parents' and caregivers' perceptions of the validity of student reporting are often directly related to the quality of the descriptive feedback. Teachers may use the following guidelines for the creation of comprehensive descriptive feedback:

- Write meaningful feedback that refers specifically to the student's strengths and areas for future growth.
- Include information on goals a student can work toward, both at school and at home.
- When commenting on areas for future growth, focus on what the student can do at that point in time (e.g., "Frances has a good grasp of sentence structure but continues to work on using punctuation correctly").
- Provide information on specific supports a student is receiving or could receive to move them forward in their learning.
- Describe ways in which the student's learning will be further supported by the teacher, and how parents and caregivers might help.
- Provide evidence by connecting feedback with examples from the classroom.
- Explain how the student approaches the learning process.
- Anticipate questions parents and caregivers may ask about their child's growth and learning.
- Use plain language, since parents and caregivers may vary widely in their educational experiences, familiarity with educational terms, and levels of English language proficiency.
- Avoid unfamiliar expressions, and if a word may be unfamiliar to parents and caregivers, provide an explanation in parentheses (e.g., instead of "...able to decode words and use context clues," say "...able to figure out unfamiliar words by using clues from surrounding words," and if you use a term like "high-frequency spelling words," add in parentheses "common words used often in writing").



Plain language suggestions

Instead of:	Try using:
a majority of	most
a number of	many, several
as a means to	for, to
assist, facilitate	help
communicate	talk, write, call
constitutes	is, forms, makes up
due to the fact	because, since
endeavor	try
exhibit a tendency	tend
factor	reason, cause
for the purpose of	for
in the course of	during
in the near future	soon
it will be necessary	I/we/you must/could
exhibits	shows, demonstrates

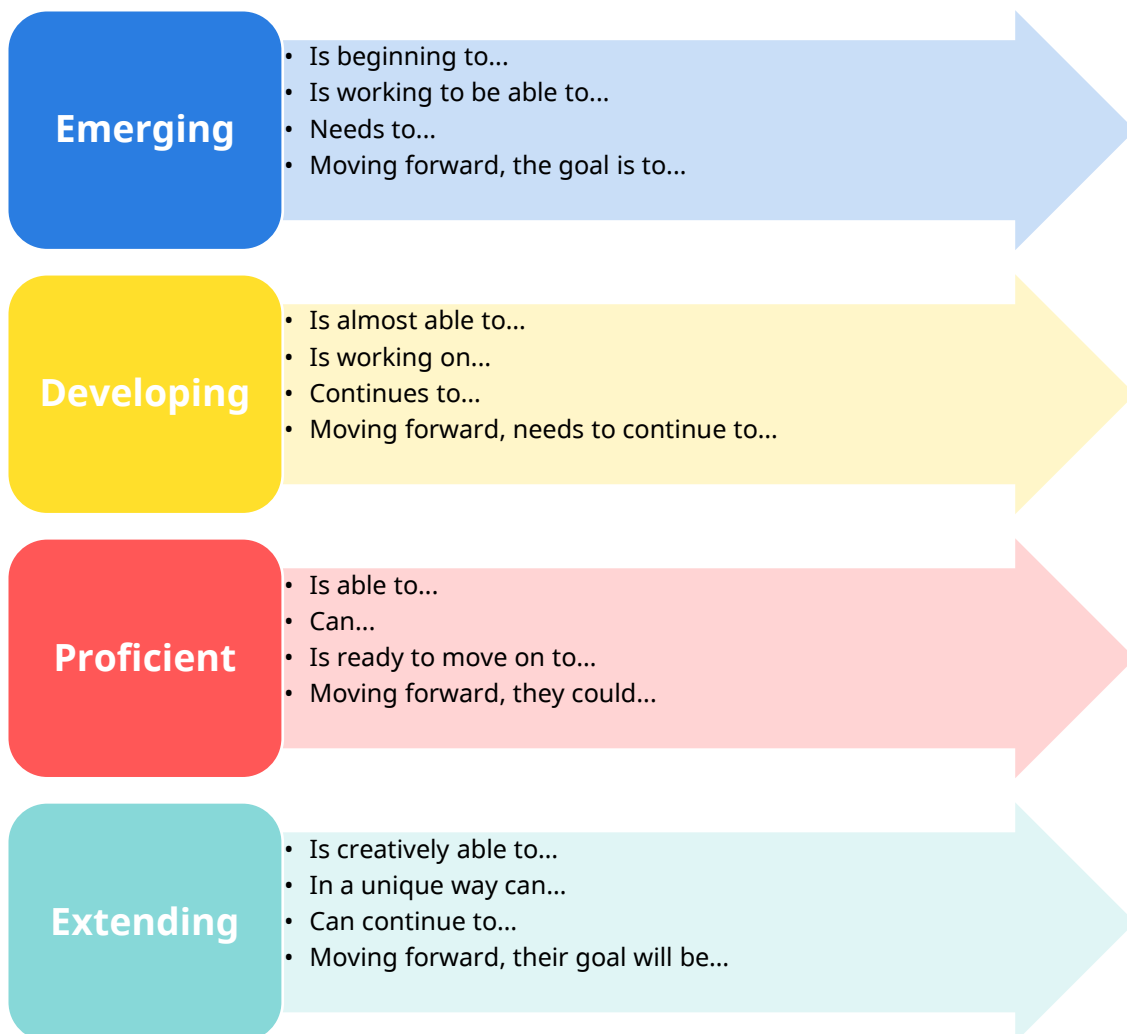
Writing descriptive feedback

Descriptive feedback about what a student can do should note significant events in the student's growth, development, and learning.

Feedback could include:

- Individual evidence of learning, using appropriate pronouns and name of the student
- Strengths-based language, recognizing that student learning is dynamic and holistic
- Language that is easy to read for parents and caregivers
- Highlighting of areas of significant growth in relation to the learning standards
- Opportunities for further development in relation to the learning standards
- Suggested helpful strategies and ways to support the student in their learning
- Information about student behaviour, engagement, and their approaches to learning

Optional sentence stems for descriptive feedback



Examples of descriptive feedback

Note that all of the examples provided below are for illustrative purposes only. There are no prescribed or mandated comments. Teachers are encouraged to use their professionalism and deep understanding of their students when delivering descriptive feedback. The intent of these exemplars is to emphasize that descriptive feedback can be provided in a variety of formats, and doesn't need to be lengthy and/or summarize the learning standards or a teacher's lesson plans.

For more examples of descriptive feedback, see the sample comments on the exemplars in [Student Self-Reflection on Core Competencies and Goal Setting](#).

Applied Design, Skills, and Technology

Kaylen demonstrated proficiency through all stages of the design process, as evidenced in our science investigation on bodily systems. Kaylen did require support during the idea stage, due to at times wanting to rush and not take the time to explore a variety of ideas, which meant they didn't always select the strongest idea to try. However, Kaylen is creative and generates ideas well, so with more opportunities to go through the design process, Kaylen will be better able to think critically about which idea is the strongest.

Career Education

Aidyn can recognize his strengths and set a SMART goal. When he met his goal, he was able to reflect on his success and identify how support from others contributed to his accomplishments. Moving forward, Aidyn can begin to work on how he can be a valuable support to others and help them reach their own goals.

Science

Cheyenne is:

- Curious and a hard worker
- Able to make keen observations and predictions
- Able to use strong planning skills to design their own inquiry

Cheyenne continues to need support in understanding and evaluating information, such as comparing data from a variety of sources. Cheyenne is good at advocating for their own needs, and by continuing to ask for help and getting more experience interpreting graphs, they will begin to build their ability to evaluate information.

Core French

Quinn:

- Is very engaged and actively participates in our everyday French language routines
- Can respond appropriately to simple commands and instructions
- Continues to develop in their comprehension of both written and spoken French language.

Quinn has a strong vocabulary that they can use, along with more exposure and practice, to build their comprehension.