

1. **GENERAL AIM OF JUNIOR CYCLE ENGLISH**

1.1 The essential aim of teaching English at Junior Cycle is to reinforce and continue the work of the primary school in nurturing the intellectual, imaginative and emotional growth of each student by developing hls/her personal proficiency in the arts and skills of language.

This personal proficiency involves three dynamically interrelated elements: personal literacy, social literacy and cultural literacy.

1.2 Although these three elements must be separated for full delineation of their curricular significance, in the living context of English teaching they form an organic wholeness of experience. The interdependence of these elements is the essential foundation for the successful teaching of English in the Junior Cycle.

1.3 The development of skills in speaking and listening should play as important a role as reading and writing skills in this English programme. Fostering an awareness in the student of the interrelationship of these skills, and of their central role in the learning and thinking processes, is an integral element of personal growth through English.

2. **SYLLABUS OBJECTIVES**

2.1 **Personal literacy**

Respect should always be shown for each student's linguistic competence and the community characteristics of hls/her language use. This will foster the confidence of the student to think, respond and communicate in the English classroom. This is the

living language base from which a gradual and integrated growth can take place in the students oracy and literacy skills.

Diversification and enrichment of this personal linguistic base are the central objectives of the English course at Junior Cycle.

- 2.1.2 The student should be encouraged to explore, order, express and symbolise a wide range of intellectual, imaginative, affective and sensuous experience.

The student should be given frequent opportunities:

- to speak and write about his/her experience in a variety of forms: diary, journal, anecdote, autobiographical sketch, story, description, essay, radio-programme, tape-feature, video film, song, poem, dialogue and drama
- to read and listen to accounts of other students' experiences and to respond positively and creatively to them

## 2.2 **Social literacy**

- 2.2.1 This element stresses that it is mainly through language that the individual person is equipped to participate fully in society in a variety of roles. The student should be introduced to the range of linguistic skills demanded by society and be encouraged to use them accurately. Particular attention should be paid to developing a sense of audience and language appropriateness: emphasis should be placed on fostering the student's knowledge of spellings, punctuation procedures, sentence structures and paragraph organisation.

- 2.2.2 The student should have frequent practice:

- in speaking to and writing for a variety of audiences such as peers, class groups, school, outsiders, parents, the public and teachers

- in using the following language functions for a real purpose: recording, reporting, persuading, arguing, organising, classifying, theorising, documenting, note-taking and letter-writing

2.2.3 The skills of reading and listening with understanding and discrimination should be introduced to the student. For example:

reading skills to cope with factual prose in such diverse forms as textbooks, manuals, brochures, application forms, newspapers and reports should be developed

reading strategies such as skimming, scanning, close reading and re-reading should be practised in appropriate and real contexts

listening skills such as remembering significant details, recalling sequences of words, ideas and events, seeking information, looking for evidence, and sensitivity to tone, irony and suggestion should be developed

2.3 Cultural literacy

2.3.1 The student should be introduced to the skills of reading, viewing and listening to a range of literary and media genre for aesthetic pleasure.

The student should be encouraged:

- to become aware of his/her own sensuous, imagistic, affective and intellectual responses
- to become aware of the pattern of words, forms, sounds and images which occasioned these responses
- to re-read, review and reflect as necessary disciplines
- to interpret orally and attempt performances and productions

2.3.2 The expression of the student's response should range widely over different modes of language.

The student should be induced:

- to give shape to his/her response in a creative manner:  
to interview characters, create additional scenes, write alternative endings and to compare the experience of different media
- to play and experiment with language so that he/she will discover the innate power of words to create and suggest meaning and energise thought
- to write within the discipline of literary forms, e.g. simple verse forms, dialogue plays, stories for radio, scripts for television and autobiographical episodes
- to rewrite and redraft to develop his/her writing craft

2.3.3 The student should be made aware of the selectivity of all language use, no matter what the medium or form.

The student should be encouraged:

- to develop a critical consciousness with respect to all language use
- to focus on the choice of words and the reasons for a particular choice of words in any medium
- to become familiar with varied patterns of sentence and paragraph construction
- to become aware of the concept of style and the effects of different styles

## **CONTENT OF PROGRAMME**

- 3.1 Teachers should aim to achieve a wide and varied language programme with their students. Diversity of texts, materials and approaches is a necessary condition for achieving the desired variety of linguistic experience.

A broad selection of texts and materials is outlined in the Teacher's Guide with guidelines for selection, programme planning, classroom approaches and assessment.

- 3.2 Teachers are free to choose from the Guide (or from elsewhere) the material they consider most suitable for their students' programme. The teacher's choice will be guided by his/her knowledge of the students' general stage of development, linguistic abilities and cultural environment. Every effort should be made to choose material which will invite the students into satisfying and meaningful experiences which extend the range and quality of their responses and provide opportunities for developing their oracy and literacy skills.

- 3.3 A programme integrating language and literature can be planned in a series of broadly outlined syllabus units.

A syllabus unit can be defined as an interrelated selection of literary texts, cultural materials and linguistic assignments which provide the substance, purpose and direction to work in the English programme for a period of time. The duration of a unit is variable; as a general guideline a unit might last a full term or half-term but longer and shorter units are possible.

Each unit should:

- invite the students to engage personally and creatively with literary and aesthetic texts and materials

- offer experiences to develop the student's **awareness and** understanding of personal, social and cultural **issues**
- provide opportunities for the student to explore these issues in oral and written forms and develop personally meaningful responses

3.4 Units can be planned and structured in various ways.

3.4.1 A unit could focus on a central text or group of texts; a novel, a play, a group of stories, a selection of poetry or any combination of these could be used to create the desired range of experience. Opportunities will arise during the encounter with these texts for diverse linguistic activities which facilitate the development of literacy and oracy skills. The teacher can give a general direction to the teaching of a unit by planning to achieve specific objectives in the areas of personal, social and cultural literacy. Obviously other possibilities for fostering the pupils' growth can be exploited creatively at the teacher's discretion, as these arise during the actual teaching of the unit.

3.4.2 A unit also could be planned and structured about a theme or cultural topic. General themes such as Heroes & Heroines, Adventures, People and Nature, Work and Play, Conflicts and Contrasts could form the central focus of experience. Texts and materials are chosen to provide a range of perspectives on the central theme. The variety of viewpoints and attitudes experienced will provide ample opportunities for pupils to become involved in exploring the theme in diverse oral and written forms. As in the previous example, the teacher can pre-plan certain oracy and literacy objectives while remaining alert to other possibilities that arise during the actual teaching of the unit.

3.4.3 Units could also be structured about such topics as advertising, an author's life and works, style, [autobiography, local literature] and films; the possibilities are manifold.

Examples of units and programmes are provided in the Teacher's Guide.

3.5 When planning a three-year programme, a teacher should ensure:

- that units in the programme are integrated clearly, building on previous units and preparing for future units
- that students encounter different types of unit ranging over a variety of literary genres: novels, plays, poetry, prose, short stories and other materials
- that the three areas of personal literacy, social literacy and cultural literacy are constantly encountered and explored in the four modes of speaking, listening, reading and writing

3.6 As an approximate guideline at the Ordinary Level, students might encounter six substantive units in their three-year programme. (A substantive unit would be similar to those illustrative units outlined in the Teacher's Guide.) This implies that students will experience a range of literary genres and other material, will be invited to respond creatively and will so develop confident and accurate use of language both oral and written.

3.7 As an approximate guideline at the Higher Level, students might encounter six substantive units ranging over a wide and varied range of literary genres and other material. Some acquaintance with pre-contemporary literature (pre-1900) and the study of one unit based on a Shakespeare text would normally be expected. Students should be invited and challenged to respond in depth and be encouraged to achieve a more accurate and sophisticated use of language, both oral and written.

#### 40 **ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES**

4.1 Since the programme in Junior English is an integrated course, stressing the interdependence of all forms of language activity, the assessment procedures as far as possible will also emphasise this interdependence.

4.1.1 **Assessment** of Junior Cycle English will be by terminal written examination at two levels, Ordinary and Higher.

Oral/aural components may be introduced.

#### 4.2 **Assessment objectives**

The above assessment procedures will provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their ability in the following areas.

4.2.1 Written composition skills in a variety of contexts: choice of appropriate language and register to suit specific contexts of point-of-view, audience and purpose.

4.2.2 Language awareness skills: the student's awareness of the selectivity of all language use in establishing specific meaning; the ability to use the conventions of paragraphing, sentence structure, punctuation and spelling

4.2.3 Reading and comprehension skills of different kinds: literal, factual, narrative, selective, structural, inferential, evaluative and appreciative.

4.2.4 Oral skills in a wide variety of personal and social contexts: overall coherence, richness of vocabulary, variety of idiom, structure of presentation, awareness of audience and register in both formal and informal contexts

4.2.5 Aural skills in a variety of modes: ability to locate information and evidence, to follow a line of thought and display sensitivity to tone and suggestion

**4.2.6** Recall, discussion and creative use of knowledge of texts and materials encountered in their English programme

4.2.7 Aesthetic response to unseen texts, pictures, patterns and shapes and sounds; different modes of response will be expected, engagement, perception, interpretation and evaluation.

4.2.8 Knowledge of fundamental literary concepts and forms: hero, heroine, villain, character, point-of-view, contrast, tension, shape, climax, mood, tone, atmosphere, theme, imagery, rhythm, texture, lyric, story/narrative, drama, theatre, satire, comedy, tragedy, pathos, romance, realism and melodrama. This does not imply the need for students to know strict definitions of the above but rather to be able to use the terms meaningfully in discussing literary experiences and in exploring their own responses.

5. **FINAL WRITTEN EXAMINATION - FORMAT OF PAPER(S)**

5.1 The Junior Cycle English programme will be examined at two levels: (a) Ordinary and (b) Higher. At both levels, every effort will be made to invite the student into tasks which are personally meaningful and interesting. An attempt will be made to create an experiential context for all written work so that the student feels there is a definite purpose to his/her reading and writing.

5.2 The papers will present a range of unseen material to which the pupils will be invited to respond in various ways.

Opportunities will also be provided for the students to display their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of texts and materials encountered in their own English programme.

5.3 In the past, examination-papers at this level were divided into two separate sections, language and literature. This practice will be discontinued, as such a distinction would run directly counter to the principles and philosophy underlying the new course.

6. **BASIS FOR DISCRIMINATION BETWEEN GENERAL AND ADVANCED LEVELS**

6.1 At the ordinary level, students will be assessed in their ability:

- to understand and convey information

- to understand facts, ideas and opinions, and to order and present them with clarity and accuracy

to analyse, evaluate and select what is relevant for a given purpose

to describe and reflect on experience and express what is felt and what is imagined

to recognise clear meanings and explicit attitudes and the more obvious, implicit meanings and attitudes

to show a sense of audience and an awareness of appropriate uses of language

to write in paragraphs, using sentences of varied kinds, and exercising care over spelling and punctuation

to show and express responses to a variety of literary genres

to show understanding of how language works in literature

6.2 At the Higher Level, students will be required to demonstrate a greater degree of proficiency in all the above skills and to show deeper insights into and more understanding of a wider variety of materials, texts, concepts and issues.

APPENDIX : SAMPLE UNITS

Each teacher is free to use these units at hls/her own discretion. Materials in each unit can be approached in any order, depending on specific class context. These units, if used comprehensively, each could form a term's English work.

(i) CENTRAL TEXT: The Iron Man by Ted Hughes

AESTHETIC AND IMAGINATIVE CONTEXTS	POSSIBLE LANGUAGE ASSIGNMENTS	SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS
1. Dramatic style: sound and rhythm of words	Dramatic reading by groups of students	WARM BABIES - K. Preston (poem); DANIEL JAZZ - V. Lindsay (poem)
2. Images and illustrations	Collect photos and illustrations from papers etc. - make out titles, headlines or summary of event	Reading pictures and cartoons
3. Good story-telling: tension and climax	Tell (or write) a ghost-story	Video of TV thriller - conversation and discussion
4. Iron Man and dragon: great conflicts in our world	Read war-story	YOUR ATTENTION PLEASE - Peter Porter (poem)
5. Iron Man: giving directions and commands	Write out the instructions you think the Iron Man gave to Hogarth	Read carefully instruction leaflet for operating any appliances
6. As modern myth: interpretation	Give personal understanding of text	Read other myths e.g. THE CYCLOPS and ODYSSEUS; THESEUS AND THE MINOTAUR

(11) CENTRAL TEXT: Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain

IMAGINATIVE & AESTHETIC CONTEXTS	POSSIBLE LANGUAGE ASSIGNMENTS	SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS AND MATERIALS: (To be used at the teacher's discretion for fuller exploration of a context and as a stimulus for student's work)
1. Relationship of Huck, Tom and Jim: friendship, loyalty, betrayal	<u>Newspaper</u> or <u>documentary</u> account of a betrayal - real or imagined - for presentation to class/audience	Read and discuss: GUESTS OF THE NATION - F. O'Connor (story); Teacher read: Extract from THE GREAT GILLY HOPKINS - K. Paterson (novel); Presentation to class/audience
2. Huck and Jim - attitudes to supernatural: superstitions, ghosts	Compose ghost-story set in local community and environment	Readings from an anthology of ghost-stories; local anecdotes and superstitions (oral)
3. General style of novel - ironic language use: parody and satire	Write <u>dialogue</u> parodying a TV personality's style or a specific newspaper's style	THE PLANSTER'S VISION - J. Betjeman (poem); MACAVITY - T.S. Eliot (poem). Language use in the press or a specific TV programme
4. Huck's "stretchers": tall stories and fantastic inventions	Make up <u>advertisement</u> for new fantasy invention; display poster or TV advert or radio advert	Read and discuss: THE DIAMOND MAKER - H.G.Wells (story); THE GREEN DOOR - O. Henry (story)
5. "Duke" and "King" episodes: humour and melodrama	Describe and evaluate in a review article an episode of a TV soap opera	Discuss approach of: (a) TV comedy (b) 'Soap' operas
6. Grangerford's and Sheperdson's feud; Jim's experience as a black	Class <u>debate</u> on: PREJUDICE IN OUR COMMUNITY. Write ballad/story on "Being left out"	Read and present: Extract from ROMEO AND JULIET - W. Shakespeare - (oral); Interpret - negro spirituals or freedom songs; TELEPHONE CONVERSATION - W.Soyinka (poem); MY PARENTS KEPT ME FROM CHILDREN WHO WERE ROUGH - S. Spender (poem)

For optional private reading by pupils during this unit

- (a) Roll of Thunder~ Hear my Cry - Mildred Taylor
- (b) The Cay - T. Taylor
- (c) Across the Barricades - J. Lingard
- (d) To Kill a Mocking Bird - Harper Lee
- (e) A Separate Peace - J. Knowles
- (f) How Many Miles to Babylon - J. Johnston
- (g) The Great Gilly Hopkins - K. Paterson

(iii) CENTRAL TEXT : Henry~ IV Part I by W. Shakespeare

IMAGINATIVE & AESTHETIC CONTEXTS	POSSIBLE LANGUAGE ASSIGNMENTS	SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS AND MATERIALS (To be used at the teacher's discretion for fuller exploration of a context and as a stimulus for students' work)
i. Hotspur and Hal: heroes and villains: ideals and motives	Compare the different kinds of language these two characters use. Discursive essay: "There are no heroes anymore"	(i) THE HIGHWAYMAN - A. Noyes (poem); (2) Newspaper items on courage of all kinds: discuss the language used to describe events; (3) Film: A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS
2. Falstaff - humour and farce: black comedy	Interview Falstaff. Make out wanted notices for each member of the gang: invent short biography and criminal record (based on text as far as possible)	THE SECRET LIFE OF WALTER MITTY - J. Thurber (story); Extract from CATCH 22 - J. Heller (novel)
3. Glendower - legends and myths	Write a mythical exploration in story-form for any contemporary natural event	WELSH INCIDENT - Robert Graves (poem)
4. Henry IV and Hal - father and son/power politics and people	Write dialogue or scene of other characters view of this father and son role friendship	THE WEB - James Plunkett (story)
5. Shakespeare's theatre	Write description of interpretative stage-set for some scenes. Suggest a range of interpretative costumes for major characters throughout the play	The BBC Television Shakespeare HENRY IV PI
6. Chosen scenes e.g. Gadshill/robbery; final battle	Group readings and presentation. Write press accounts of these chosen scenes	Discussion of interpretative approaches, Realism v. symbolism

For optional private reading by pupils during this unit

- (a) Catch 22 - J. Heller
- (b) The Good Soldier Svejk - I. Hasek
- (c) The Human Factor - G. Greene
- (d) I am the Cheese - R. Cormier
- (e) The Spy who Came in from the Cold - J. Le Carre