JUNIOR CYCLE ENGLISH

Rationale:

Language gives students the opportunity to access the understanding, knowledge and skills to promote their personal growth and effective participation in society.

The study of language enables students to build on their learning in primary school and further develop their skills and enjoyment in using it effectively. Through language learning and use, students discover information, develop thinking, and express ideas and feelings. They learn about language, and how to use it well in all areas of their studies.

Respect is shown for students' competence in their home language and the community characteristics of their language use together with their literacy practices outside of school.

Learning about language in texts, including digital texts, is important to social development and as part of this process students develop the competence and confidence needed to meet the demands of school, employment, further education and life. Knowledge and command of language are also essential to their contributions to political, social and cultural life and as thoughtful and active citizens.

As learners, it is important that they become aware of where and how they are improving in their use of language and conscious of where further improvement is necessary. As a route to this knowledge, they develop greater competence in the conventions of spelling, punctuation procedures, sentence structures and text organisation.

Students are actively involved in the integrated skills of oral language, reading and writing and in discussing and comparing a wide variety of texts and forms of English. As study is a social activity as well as a personal one, students have opportunities to work in groups to achieve appropriate language goals.

The ability to appreciate literature from different cultures is important in developing the whole person and to this end students read literature with insight and imagination not only in class but privately as well.

Finally, as their mastery of language grows, so too will the opportunities to enjoy their world and give of their best to society now, and in the future. They will fully appreciate their success in language when pleasure and growth in it continue in their lives long after school is done.

Aim

English in junior cycle aims to develop students' knowledge of language and literature, to consolidate and deepen their literacy skills and make them more self-aware as learners.

More specifically it encourages all students:

- to be creative through language and to gain enjoyment and continuing personal growth from English in all its forms
- to develop control over English using it and responding to it with purpose and effect through the interconnected literacy skills of oral language, reading and writing
- to engage personally with and think critically about an increasingly broad range of spoken, written and multimodal texts
- to develop an informed appreciation of literature through personal encounters with a variety of literary texts
- to use their literacy skills to manage information needs, and find, use, synthesise, evaluate and communicate information using a variety of media
- to gain an understanding of the grammar and conventions of English and how they might be used to promote clear and effective communication

Structure

Learning outcomes in the English specification are organized into three strands: Oral language, Reading and Writing. There are three cross-cutting, integrated strand elements, as displayed here:

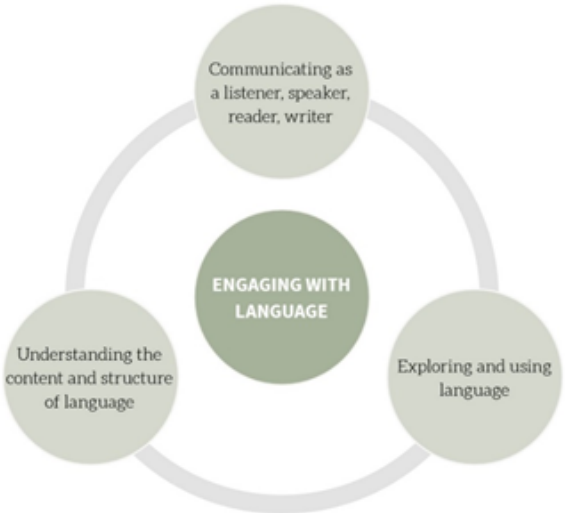


Figure 1: The elements of English showing the components as interactive and interdependent

In general, the learning outcomes in junior cycle English are broad, skills-based and process-oriented. The scope for LGBTI+ inclusion is therefore dependent upon the professional capacity, interest, and disposition of the teacher. The flexibility of text choice in junior cycle English means that teachers can choose texts which are authored by LGBTI+ people or deal with LGBTI+ themes and can be led by student interest in engaging with this content. Junior cycle English is an open door for teaching, learning and assessment about LGBTI+ content and perspectives and teachers are key to ensuring these opportunities are capitalised upon.

STRAND: ORAL LANGUAGE

ELEMENT: Communicating as a listener, speaker, reader, writer
5. Deliver a short oral text, alone and/or in collaboration with others, using appropriate language, style and visual content for specific audiences and chosen purposes

ELEMENT: Exploring and using language
8. Listen actively in order to interpret meaning, compare, evaluate effectiveness of, and respond to drama, poetry, media broadcasts, digital media, noting key ideas, style, tone, content and overall impact in a systematic way

STRAND: READING

ELEMENT: Communicating as a listener, speaker, reader, writer
3. Use a wide range of reading comprehension strategies appropriate to texts, including digital texts: to retrieve information; to link to previous knowledge, follow a process or argument, summarise, link main ideas; to monitor their own understanding; to question, analyse, synthesise and evaluate

STRAND: WRITING

ELEMENT: Communicating as a listener, speaker, reader, writer
3. Write for a variety of purposes, for example to analyse, evaluate, imagine, explore, engage, amuse, narrate, inform, explain, argue, persuade, criticise, comment on what they have heard, viewed and read

ELEMENT: Exploring and using language
8. Write about the effectiveness of key moments from their texts commenting on characters, key scenes, favourite images from a film, a poem, a drama, a chapter, a media or web-based event

IDEAS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING:

Facilitate your student to:

- engage with relevant work by poets, novelists, and playwrights such as Adrienne Rich, Aphra Behn, Alice Walker, Alan Bennett, Allen Ginsberg, Audre Lorde, Christopher Isherwood, E M Forster, Emily Dickenson, Gertrude Stein, Jackie Kay, James Baldwin, Jeanette Winterson, Jewelle Gomez, Lorraine Hansberry, Noel Coward, Oscar Wilde, Patricia Highsmith, Paul Bowles, Paula Vogel, Robert Lepage, Sarah Waters, Siegfried Sassoon, Stella Duffy, Tenessee Williams, Terrence Rattigan, Tony Kushner, Truman Capote, Virginia Woolf, Walt Whitman, Wilfred Owen, William Shakespeare. For example, Oscar Wilde's Ballad of Reading Gaol. See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=03XpNoMVeak

- participate in drama activities to develop an understanding of the impact of bullying on LGBTI+ people and the importance of bystander interventions

- find online news reports, stories and features discussing LGBTI+ lives, identities, and key issues. Use these to study language, style, structure and format, content selection and audience.

- write their own articles using headlines relating to LGBTI+ people or themes, afterwards comparing their article with the original.

- review films with characters who challenge gender and other stereotypes, for example Billy Elliot (2000)

- find out about the life and work of Alan Turing (1912-1954), mathematician and logician by participating in activities inspired by the 2014 movie starring Benedict Cumberbatch and Keira Knightly about Turing, The Imitation Game. See:https://d3ddkgxe55ca6c.cloudfront.net/assets/t1449066196/a/32/61/imitation-game-resource-sheet-1432387.pdf