Route map through learning, teaching and assessment

Course: English   Level: Higher

This route map is intended to assist staff in planning and delivering the overall vision for Curriculum for Excellence. It has been developed to signpost the relevant support materials available to assist staff in the planning of learning, teaching and assessment of Higher English.

The vision for the new qualifications is to create assessment opportunities that follow and support learning and teaching. This follows the principles laid out in *Building the Curriculum 5* and makes assessment a natural part of learning and teaching.

Education Scotland has published support materials to help staff develop programmes of learning drawn from three sources: course materials commissioned by Education Scotland, other support materials produced by staff seconded to Education Scotland and course materials provided by staff through their education authorities. Further materials will be added as they become available.

These support materials are not intended to constrain staff, hence they are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive. They provide suggestions on approaches to learning and teaching which will promote development of the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills for Higher English. Staff are encouraged to draw on these materials, and existing materials, to develop their own programmes of learning which are appropriate to the needs of learners within their own context.

The link to Education Scotland's support materials can be found below together with a number of other subject-specific links staff may find helpful as they develop **programmes of learning** for Higher English. These links are followed by a sequential list of the key guidelines, advice and support for the Higher English **qualification**. This information is intended to support staff in deciding the most appropriate ways to generate evidence and assess learners.

### Useful links for learning and teaching Higher English

Education Scotland NQ Course materials on Glow (login and password required)
Learning and teaching resources designed for Higher English, including materials for each of the set Scottish texts can be found at:
http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/nqcoursematerials/subjects/english/index.asp (copy and paste this link into your browser)

SQA Course and Unit Support notes providing advice and guidance on learning and teaching
http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_CourseUnitSupportNotes_Higher_Languages_English.pdf
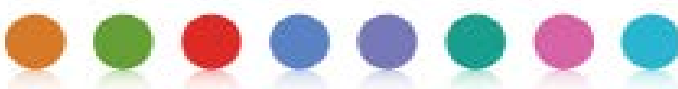
National Assessment Resource on Glow (login and password required)
Materials that inform planning for learning, teaching, moderation and assessment
https://www.narscotland.org.uk/

Scottish Book Trust
Find resources here to support the learning and teaching of some of the Scottish set texts at Higher level. The site includes videos of contemporary writers talking about *The Trick is to Keep Breathing* and *Sunset Song*.
http://www.scottishbooktrust.com/learning/teachers-librarians/teaching-resources-cpd/senior-phase

Times Educational Supplement English Resources
There are resources on this site that support writing in different genres as well as group discussion skills. Literature resources include Carol Ann Duffy, Norman MacCaig, Liz Lochhead and Robert Burns (Scottish texts) as well as other playwrights, poets and writers that may be studied for the critical essay section of the Critical Reading paper.
http://www.tes.co.uk/english-secondary-teaching-resources/

Teachit
A wealth of useful resources that support writing and listening/talking skills. The literature section includes resources on Carol Ann Duffy (Scottish text), as well as Shakespeare, Arthur Miller and other writers that may be studied for the critical essay section of the Critical Reading paper.
http://www.teachit.co.uk/

Education Scotland's online community for English teachers (Glow username and password required)
Resources can be shared and downloaded.
https://bit.ly/englishplhome.

Higher English course content

Most of the SQA information on the new national qualifications in English can be found at:
http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45672.html.

All of the information relating specifically to Higher can be found at:
http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/47904.html. Staff should also regularly check the updates and announcement section of this page.

Throughout this course, learners will develop their skills in reading, writing, listening and talking in order to understand and use **detailed and complex** language.

The course consists of two Units:
- Analysis and Evaluation, which develops the receptive skills of reading and listening
  http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_Unit_H_English_AnalysisandEvaluation.pdf
- Creation and Production, which develops the productive skills of writing and talking
  http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_Unit_H_English_CreationandProduction.pdf.

Learners must pass both Units and the Course assessment.

During the Course learners will read and listen to a range of detailed and complex texts in order to understand, analyse and evaluate them as appropriate to purpose and audience, in the contexts of literature, language and media. **This study must include one of the mandatory Scottish set texts.** The list of options for the Scottish texts can be found at http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/ScottishtextlistSQPN5.pdf. Learners will also create and produce detailed texts in talking and writing, as appropriate to purpose and audience in a range of contexts.

SQA general information for centres preparing candidates for the portfolio Component can be found at: http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/GAInfoHigherEnglish.pdf

Internal assessment

The Course comprises two mandatory units:
English: Analysis and Evaluation: http://sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_Unit_H_English_AnalysisandEvaluation.pdf
English: Creation and Production: http://sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_Unit_H_English_CreationandProduction.pdf

Learners must pass both the mandatory units and the course assessment to gain the full course award. A number of unit assessment support packs (UASPs) have been created by SQA. These outline a variety of tools that can be used to gather evidence across each of the outcomes and assessment standards in each unit. Some UASPs suggest a unit-by-unit approach while others suggest a combined approach. The latter, in particular, are designed to lessen the assessment burden on learners and staff by providing learners with the opportunity to generate evidence for multiple assessment standards across both units within one assessment activity.

UASPs may be adapted by centres in order to better fit the needs of their learners. This can be done without prior SQA verification provided that similar question types are used and the same assessment standards are applied and minimum requirements are not exceeded. SQA strongly recommends that staff submit newly devised or significantly changed Unit assessments for prior verification before using them for assessment purposes. This is a free service from SQA and, if you give permission, SQA will publish these assessments on their secure website on an anonymised basis. Any assessments submitted for Prior Verification should have been internally quality assured by centre staff beforehand.

Units are assessed on a pass/fail basis. A pass is not based on a minimum score and assessment questions are not assigned a set number of marks. Instead, assessors will exercise their professional judgement about whether learners have met each assessment standard. This approach is particularly significant in the assessment of reading and listening. Staff should also note that the assessment of reading must be based on a learner's reading of an unseen text. Critical essays completed as part of a class literature study cannot, therefore, be accepted as evidence of achieving assessment standards in reading. When assessing listening, assessment judgements must be based on the learner's ability to examine the features of spoken language. A learner's analysis of media techniques will not serve as evidence of their listening abilities. Judging evidence tables are built in to the UASPs in order to support staff and centres as they make assessment decisions.

Evidence of learners' achievement might also arise naturally from day-to-day learning activities. A learner may, for example, meet some of the assessment standards for talking and/or listening during a group discussion activity.

Course assessment

Question papers

The Course assessment at Higher comprises two question papers and a writing portfolio. The first question paper, Reading for Understanding, Analysis and Evaluation, is worth a total of 30 marks. Learners will apply the reading skills they have developed during the course, responding to one, unseen, detailed, non-fiction text. Learners will have to answer questions that show they understand the writer's ideas and that they can analyse and evaluate the language used by the writer to convey those ideas. Learners have 90 minutes to complete the assessment.

The SQA specimen question paper for Reading for Understanding, Analysis and Evaluation can be accessed via the following link: http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/EnglishReadingforUAESQPH.pdf.

The second question paper, Critical Reading, comprises two sections; each section is worth 20 marks. The assessment will last 90 minutes.

In section 1, learners will demonstrate their knowledge and skills in relation to the Scottish set text that they have studied. Learners must select the extract and accompanying questions for the text or author that they have studied. If, for example, learners have studied the poetry of Robert Burns, they would locate the Burns poem selected for the paper and answer the accompanying questions; if learners have studied *The Cone Gatherers* they would locate the extract from that novel and answer the accompanying questions. It should be noted that in the case of poetry and short stories learners should have had the opportunity to study all the poems or short stories specified for the writer/poet, as they may be required to use their knowledge of at least one other poem from the selected texts in this section of the course assessment.

In section 2 learners are required to write a critical essay drawing on their knowledge of one of the texts studied during the Course. A range of essay questions will be provided, organised by genre (drama, prose, poetry, language, and film and television drama). Learners may not respond using the Scottish set text they have used to answer Section 1.

In Section 2, learners may not use another text of the same genre as the Scottish text they used to answer Section 1.

If they have studied more than one of the Scottish set texts they may use a second Scottish text in Section 2 but only if it is of a different genre to the one used to respond to Section 1.

The SQA specimen question paper for Critical Reading can be found by following this link:
http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/EnglishCriticalReadingRedactedSQPH.pdf.

The SQA Course Assessment Specification provides further information on course assessment:
http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_CourseAssessSpec_Higher_Languages_English.pdf.

Portfolio of writing

Learners will select two pieces of writing for external assessment. These will evidence their ability to write for different purposes and audiences. One of the pieces will be broadly discursive and the other broadly creative. The portfolio will be sent to SQA for external assessment.15 marks are available for each written piece.

Verification

The verification process is intended to be supportive to staff.

Internal verification is the process of ensuring standards are applied uniformly and consistently within a school, in line with national standards. External verification is the process of ensuring that national standards are maintained consistently across schools and is carried out by SQA.

Information on quality assurance can be found at: http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/58448.html.

The following links will also support staff when preparing evidence for verification purposes including prior verification, as well as internal and external verification:

http://www.sqa.org.uk.files_ccc/Prior%20Verification%20Centre%20Guidance%20FINAL.pdf
http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/InternalVerificationGuideforSQAcentres.pdf
http://www/sqa/org/uk/sqa/files_cccEvidence_required_for_verificationevents.pdf
http://sqa/org/uk/sqa/files_ccc/SQA_Evidence_retention_requirements_A3_table.pdf

Results services

http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/FA6669_SQA_Results_Services_A5_8pp_brochure_web.pdf
http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/65427.html

SQA offer two services to replace the appeals service:

- Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service (details to be provided to SQA within ten days of the learner sitting the external assessment)
- Post-results Service – this consists of a clerical check and/or a marking review if the centre has concerns about the results of an individual or group.