

Literacy and English Cover Paper

Purpose

This paper explains some of the thinking behind the draft experiences and outcomes in literacy and English. It is intended to support discussion by practitioners in all educational settings and local authorities. It should be read alongside [Building the Curriculum 1i](#).

The related draft experiences and outcomes for modern languages, Gaelic, Gàidhlig and classical languages have been issued separately.

Introduction

Language and literacy are of personal, social and economic importance.

Our ability to use language lies at the centre of the development and expression of our emotions, our thinking, our learning and our sense of personal identity. Language is itself a key aspect of our culture. Through language, children and young people can gain access to the literary heritage of humanity and develop their appreciation of the richness and breadth of Scotland's literary heritage.

Children and young people encounter, enjoy and learn from the diversity of language used in their homes, their communities and the media and by their peers. Practitioners will build upon the languages, knowledge and skills which children and young people bring, challenging and supporting them by extending the range of contexts, purposes and audiences for using language.

Literacy is fundamental to all areas of learning, as it unlocks access to the wider curriculum. Being literate increases opportunities for the individual in all aspects of life, lays the foundations for lifelong learning and work, and contributes strongly to the development of all four capacities of *Curriculum for Excellence*.

The literacy and English framework is designed to develop critical and creative thinking as well as competence in listening and talking, reading, writing and the personal, inter-personal and team-working skills which are so important in life and in the world of work. The framework provides, for learners, parents and practitioners, broad descriptions of the range of learning opportunities which will contribute to the development of literacy, including critical literacy, creativity, and knowledge and appreciation of literature and culture.

Traditionally, all aspects of the language framework were developed by all practitioners in early years establishments and primary schools and by the English department in secondary schools. This will continue to be the case, but the framework recognises that all practitioners in secondary schools and in colleges and youth work settings have important responsibilities for and contributions to make towards the development of literacy.

Literacy for the 21st Century – important definitions

In defining literacy for the 21st century we must consider the changing forms of language which our children and young people will experience and use. The definition must take account of factors such as the speed with which information is shared and the ways it is shared. It needs to be relevant and, as far as possible, 'future proof'. Within *Curriculum for Excellence*, literacy is defined as:

the set of skills which allows an individual to engage fully in society and in learning, through the different forms of language, and the range of texts, which society values and finds useful.

The literacy experiences and outcomes promote the development of skills in using language, particularly those that are used regularly by everyone in their everyday lives. These include the ability to apply knowledge about language. They reflect the need for young people to be

able to communicate effectively both face-to-face and in writing through an increasing range of media. They take account of national and international research and of other skills frameworks, for example [SQA Core Skillsⁱⁱ](#) and the [An Adult Literacy and Numeracy Framework for Scotlandⁱⁱⁱ](#). They also recognise the importance of listening and talking and of effective collaborative working in the development of thinking and in learning.

In particular, the draft experiences and outcomes address the important skills of critical literacy. Children and young people not only need to be able to read for information: they also need to be able to work out what trust they should place on the information and to identify when and how people are aiming to persuade or influence them.

The definition of 'texts' also needs to be broad and future proof. Within *Curriculum for Excellence*,

a text is the medium through which ideas, experiences, opinions and information can be communicated.

Texts include those presented in traditional written or print form, but also orally, electronically or on film. Texts can be in continuous form, including traditional formal prose, or non-continuous, for example charts and graphs. The literacy and English framework reflects the increased use of multimodal texts, digital communication, social networking and the other forms of electronic communication encountered by children and young people in their daily lives. It recognises that the skills which children and young people need to learn to read these texts differ from the skills they need for reading continuous prose. Examples are given below.

Examples of texts
novels, short stories, plays, poems reference texts the spoken word charts, maps, graphs and timetables advertisements, promotional leaflets comics, newspapers and magazines CVs, letters and e-mails films, games and TV programmes labels, signs and posters recipes, manuals and instructions reports and reviews text messages, blogs and social networking sites web pages, catalogues and directories

In planning for learning in any curriculum area it is important for practitioners to ensure that children and young people encounter a wide range of different types of text in different media. As they progress in their learning, children and young people will encounter texts of increasing complexity in terms of length, structure, vocabulary, ideas and concepts.

Literacy: a shared responsibility

The literacy experiences and outcomes are applicable across the curriculum, in all aspects of learning and in all subject areas. The exact responsibilities and contributions of staff will differ, but all practitioners in each sector, in each department and in all settings have a responsibility to develop, reinforce and extend the skills which are set out in the literacy experiences and outcomes.

The importance of the development of literacy skills areas across all areas of the curriculum is stressed in *Building the Curriculum 1*. All practitioners – from the early years, through primary and secondary education, in youth work settings and in colleges – are in a position to make important contributions to developing and reinforcing young people's literacy skills, both through the learning activities which they plan and through their interaction with children and

young people. They can do this, for example, by finding opportunities, ‘to encourage children and young people to explain their thinking, debate their ideas and read and write at a level which will help them to develop’ (*Building the Curriculum 1*).

Schools and their partners need to ensure a shared understanding of these responsibilities and that the approaches to learning and teaching will enable each young person to make good progress in developing their literacy and language skills. An additional paper to support the development of literacy across the curriculum is being published to accompany this paper and the draft experiences and outcomes.

Structure of the literacy and English framework

The framework opens with a set of statements – ‘overarching experiences’ – which describe the kinds of activity which all children and young people should experience throughout their learning, to nurture their skills and knowledge in literacy and language. They are intended to be used in planning for learning and teaching, alongside the more detailed experiences and outcomes.

The experiences and outcomes themselves include both literacy and English statements.

- The literacy experiences and outcomes are the responsibility of all teachers and practitioners. They are written in italics and their codes include ‘LIT’.
- The aspects covered by the English experiences and outcomes relate to learning about how language works, and developing knowledge of and enthusiasm for literature. The English outcomes are presented in plain text and their codes are indicated by ‘ENG’.

The experiences and outcomes are written to emphasise that effective learning will be active. Experiences represent important continuing aspects of learning such as exploring and enjoying text, and outcomes describe stages in the development of skills and understanding.

The three lines of development within the literacy and English framework are the same as those used in the Gàidhlig, Gaelic learners and modern foreign languages frameworks:

- Listening and talking
- Reading
- Writing.

Lines of development are organised as follows:

Listening and talking	Reading	Writing
Enjoyment and choice	Enjoyment and choice	Enjoyment and choice
Tools for listening and talking	Tools for reading	Tools for writing
Finding and using information	Finding and using information	Organising and using information
Understanding, analysing and evaluating	Understanding, analysing and evaluating	
Creating texts		Creating texts

Information on how the structure of the draft framework connects to current frameworks is available through this the accompanying [Literacy and English Similarities and Differences paper^{iv}](#).

Skills in listening and talking provide the foundation for the development of literacy and language skills. To emphasise this, and to show the important links that are made between talking and listening, reading, and writing across the curriculum, many of the experiences and

outcomes are similarly worded. The framework takes account of the importance of literacy and language skills in the development of thinking and learning.

Enjoyment and choice experiences and outcomes are intended to foster a love of language and understanding of culture. The *tools* sections include important skills and knowledge. For example, in reading it includes such things as reading strategies, spelling and grammar.

The sections on *finding and using information* include, in reading, critical literacy skills. The *understanding, analysing and evaluating* statements have been developed to encourage progression in understanding of texts, developing not only literal understanding but also the ability to analyse, synthesise and evaluate.

Finally, the *creating texts* experiences and outcomes describe the kind of opportunities which will help children and young people to develop their ability to communicate effectively, for example, by writing clear, well-structured explanations.

The draft experiences and outcomes have been written as far as possible in an inclusive way which will allow practitioners to interpret them for the needs of individual children and young people who use Braille, sign language and other forms of communication. For example, the words 'engaging with others' and 'interacting' have been used within the listening and talking outcomes.

Texts and the English experiences and outcomes

Where children and young people enjoy reading and expressing their ideas, their skills and their confidence in applying their skills develop more quickly. Recognising this, the framework includes experiences which have the aim of fostering a love of language and of reading in addition to promoting independence and, for example, depth, relevance and personalisation and choice. These sit under the heading of 'enjoyment and choice'.

Reading and responding to literature and other texts play a central role in the way children and young people develop their knowledge and understanding. Through these experiences they can, for example, explore new ideas and consider other ways of looking at relationships, problems and issues. Through their reading and listening, and then through talking and writing, learners:

'will be able to explore other people's experiences, emotions and relationships within a safe context'

Building the Curriculum 1

The choice of texts will take account of young people's interests, and their cultural identity and background. This will include harnessing their interest in popular culture and the types of texts that they regularly use and create with ease in their lives beyond school.

Scots and Scottish texts

The languages, dialects and literature of Scotland provide a rich and valuable resource for children and young people to learn about Scotland's culture, identity and language. The draft experiences and outcomes therefore encourage appropriate emphasis upon Scotland's literature and the languages of Scotland.

Through engaging with a wide range of texts children and young people can develop their appreciation of Scotland's vibrant literary and linguistic heritage, and its indigenous languages and dialects.

Practitioners can build upon the diversity of language represented within the communities of Scotland, valuing the languages which children bring to school.

Learning and teaching

Throughout their education, children and young people should experience an environment which is rich in language and which sets high expectations for literacy and the use of language.

Children and young people need to spend time with stories, literature and other texts which will enrich their learning, develop their language skills and enable them to find enjoyment. Spoken language has particular importance in the early years. Practitioners will be aware of the need to balance play-based learning with more systematic development and learning of skills and techniques for reading, including phonics. The accompanying [Early Reading paper^y](#) describes how the experiences and outcomes might be used as the basis of planning for early reading. Further material will be published on early writing.

Throughout education, from 3 to 18, effective learning and teaching in literacy and English will involve a skilful mix of appropriate approaches including:

- the use of relevant, real life and enjoyable contexts which build upon children and young people's own experiences
- effective direct and interactive teaching
- a balance of spontaneous play and planned activities
- harnessing the motivational benefits of following children and young people's interests through responsive planning
- collaborative working and independent thinking and learning
- making meaningful links for learners across different curriculum areas
- building on the principles of Assessment is for Learning
- frequent opportunities to communicate in a wide range of contexts, for relevant purposes, and for real audiences within and beyond places of learning
- the development of problem-solving skills and approaches
- the appropriate and effective use of ICT.

The balance between these approaches will vary at different stages and across different sectors and areas of the curriculum. Continuing dialogue about learning and teaching approaches within and across sectors will help to ensure continuity and progression.

Progression within and across levels

The draft experiences and outcomes represent appropriate levels of proficiency at each level but do not place a ceiling on achievement. The range of experiences allows for different rates of progression and for additional depth or breadth of study through the use of different contexts for learning. Progression within and across levels will take place in a range of ways, including:

- continuing development and consolidation of the range of skills
- increasing independence in applying these skills, and the ability to use them across a widening range of contexts in learning and life
- gradually decreasing levels of support used by the learner (for example from teachers, classroom assistants, parents or peers), and reduced reliance upon techniques such as wordlists or writing frames
- in reading, the increasing length and complexity of text (for example the text's ideas, structure and vocabulary)
- in talking and writing, the increasing length, complexity and accuracy of response
- increasing awareness of how to apply language rules effectively.

At all levels the overarching experiences can be used by teachers to plan to enable learners to develop their skills with increasing depth over a range of contexts. This will be especially important at early level for those young people who may require additional support.

Connections with other frameworks

The experiences and outcomes draw upon the best of current practice, including early intervention strategies, and build on the strengths of the *Curriculum Framework for Children 3–5*, the 5–14 Guidelines, Standard Grade and National Qualifications and national and international research and comparisons. Close attention has been paid to matching with Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and to [SQA Core Skills^{vi}](#) expectations. The level of achievement at the fourth level has been designed to be broadly equivalent to that associated with SCQF level 4 (Standard Grade General and Intermediate 1). In addition, the framework has been developed to support essential skills within [Skills for Scotland^{vii}](#) and within the adult literacy skills within [An Adult Literacy and Numeracy Framework for Scotland^{viii}](#).

Links with other areas of the curriculum

In addition to the opportunities to develop literacy in all aspects of learning, there will be strong connections between learning in English and learning in other areas of the curriculum. There will be close links, for example, between the expressive arts and creative writing, and social studies and critical literacy. Interdisciplinary projects are likely to involve both research and a strong element of presentation and will provide valuable opportunities to extend language skills. In numeracy, information handling outcomes link clearly to the critical literacy outcomes where learners are asked to assess the reliability of information.

In secondary schools, for example, young people will be:

- engaged in talking together to deepen their learning and thinking
- working together to prepare for reading unfamiliar texts
- reading a wide range of texts to gather and analyse information for a range of purposes
- writing clear explanations
- communicating information or opinions.

Further exemplification and support for staff

Following engagement and trialling, additional guidance, explanation or exemplification will be developed where necessary, for example to ensure that practitioners across the country interpret the statements in a consistent way.

Questions for reflection and response

These questions should be used for reflection within and across departments, establishments and authorities. Groups of practitioners can use the reflective questions below to inform their planning, to discuss learning and teaching, to reflect on current good practice; or to reflect on the types of approaches that will help children and young people to achieve success and to develop the four capacities.

1. Understanding the draft experiences and outcomes

- What learning and teaching approaches do they suggest to you?
- How could the four capacities be developed through the draft experiences and outcomes?
- How could the principles of curriculum design within *Curriculum for Excellence* be developed through the draft experiences and outcomes?
- How can you ensure that children and young people understand the relevance of the experiences and outcomes to their lives?
- Which draft experiences and outcomes could be combined to provide a coherent experience for learners?

- Are there any specific experiences and outcomes which you feel would benefit from further elaboration to clarify expectations?
- What contexts could you use to help children and young people access the different experiences and outcomes?
- How can the experiences and outcomes be interpreted to meet the different needs of learners?

2. Progression

- Within the various draft experiences and outcomes, which words, skills or concepts indicate the progression from one level to the next?
- What are the prior knowledge, experiences and skills which have been developed in earlier levels?
- How appropriate do you consider the gradient of progression across all levels to be?
- What types of evidence could be gathered to show where children and young people have reached on their journey through a level and how could this be recorded?
- How would you use the draft experiences and outcomes to support the needs of all learners?
- Within a level, can you see opportunities for depth and breadth and opportunities for rich, challenging experiences for all learners?

3. Collaboration

- How could you collaborate with colleagues within your establishment and other stakeholders to develop relevant interdisciplinary projects relating to language and culture?
- In what ways will a leadership role, by yourselves and others, be needed to take these experiences and outcomes forward?

4. Current practice

- How do the draft experiences and outcomes build upon your current practice?
- What learning and teaching approaches do they suggest to you?
- How do we help learners to understand clearly what they are trying to learn, and what is expected of them?
- How are learners given feedback about the quality of their work and how do we fully involve them in deciding and planning for next steps?
- Where have we given learners opportunities to work together and communicate with each other in motivating and relevant ways, including the use of ICT as appropriate?
- Which learning and teaching approaches have been most successful in integrating different skills relevantly and realistically for the learner?

List of links to documents mentioned above

Building the Curriculum 1

http://www.curriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk/images/building_curriculum1_tcm4-383389.pdf

SQA Core Skills

http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/controller?p_service=Content.show&p_applic=CCC&pContentID=1518

An Adult Literacy and Numeracy Framework for Scotland

http://www.lc.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/cs_008875.pdf

Literacy and English Similarities and Differences

http://www.curriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk/images/similarities_and_differences_for_practitioners_tcm4-468624.pdf

Early Reading Paper

http://www.curriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk/images/early_reading_paper_tcm4-468621.pdf

Skills for Scotland

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/09/06091114/0>