

English Language Syllabus for Grade 7

Aim

To enable learners to communicate confidently, fluently and effectively in English.

A) Introduction

In the process of designing this syllabus for the Sri Lankan secondary curriculum where English is taught as a second language, the syllabus revision committee considered the following language acquisition principles in depth.

Underlying Principles

- Language is primarily used for interaction and communication.
- Learning is facilitated in a relaxed and stress-free environment. Building relationship in and among students is very important. A relationship of mutual trust between the teacher and the students is considered necessary to the learning process. Students learn best when they feel secure.
- For language acquisition to take place maximum exposure to the target language and meaningful interaction in the target language is required. Activities that engage learners in meaningful and authentic language use increases motivation and support language learning.
- Language learning should always be linked to using it. To learn it, do it.
- Activities that promote cooperative learning encourage students to work together in groups learning from each other. This promotes initiative and independence among the learners. Students should be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Learning involves transferring what one knows to new contexts.
- Activating learners' imagination will aid learning.
- Initially teacher should look for progress, not perfection. Learning a language takes place over a long time.
- Reflecting on what they have learnt helps learners to learn about their own learning and about the language. Students should be encouraged to maintain journals/learning logs.
- Feelings of success and a sense of achievement among learners facilitate learning. The more confident the students feel the better they will learn.

B) Competencies Related to Subject

1. Identifies the sound system of the English language
2. Uses mechanics of writing with understanding
3. Engages in active listening and responds appropriately
4. Builds up vocabulary using words appropriately and accurately to convey precise meaning.
5. Extracts necessary information from various types of texts.
6. Uses English grammar for the purpose of accurate and effective communication
7. Uses English creatively and innovatively in written communication
8. Communicates clearly, fluently and concisely

C) Competency Levels Related to the Grade

- 1.2 Identifies the properties of different sounds
- 1.3 Pronounces English words properly

- 2.3 Uses apostrophes and inverted commas

- 3.3 Listens and follows instructions
- 3.4 Asks and answers questions after listening to a text

- 4.1. Uses English words accurately and appropriately
- 4.2 Infers meaning of unfamiliar words
- 4.3 Uses English words in their proper contexts

- 5.2 Extracts specific information from a text
- 5.3 Selects relevant information from a dialogue

- 6.1 Identifies the agreement between subject and verb/ referent and reference word
- 6.2 Identifies the grammar of a sentence
- 6.4 Constructs simple sentences
- 6.4 Participates in conversations using language appropriately and accurately
- 6.5 Constructs compound sentences

- 7.3 Rewrites the main events of a story or a short passage using own words
- 7.4 Writes short poems /stories based on given guidelines

- 8.6 Describes places and people using proper adjectives
- 8.7 Expresses likes and dislikes with reasons
- 8.8 Understands and conveys short messages
- 8.9 Gives and asks for information appropriately

D) English Language Syllabus for Grade 7

Competency 1. Identifies the sound system of the English language

- 1.2 Identifies the properties of different sounds
- 1.3 Pronounces English words properly

Content and activities

Students should be able to identify different sounds properly. They should now be able to differentiate between vowels and consonants, and how vowel consonant combinations help pronounce words.

Eg. Combinations like words starting with ‘q’ which students find difficult to pronounce should be treated especially here – ‘question, quiet, quite, quarrel’

Competency 2. Uses mechanics of writing with understanding

- 2.3 Uses apostrophes and inverted commas

Content and activities

Students should be able to use the apostrophe properly. They should be exposed to the shortened forms as well as possessive forms.

Eg.

Shortened forms

It’s – It is

He’s- He is

Possessive forms

Eg.

Saman’s

Students’

The use of inverted comma in direct speech in writing should also be introduced through simple texts. Students should be exposed to a variety of texts where the above are used and they should be given ample time to practise them.

Competency 3. Engages in active listening and responds appropriately

- 3.3 Listens and follows instructions
- 3.4 Asks and answers questions after listening to a text

Content and activities

Students should be exposed to a variety of active listening tasks where they have to listen to and follow various types of instructions. Further they should be able to listen to a text, remember important information found in a text and retrieve such information when answering questions. Here, they are expected to answer different types of questions (e.g. Convergent and divergent questions). Students are expected to produce language as much as possible.

Competency 4. Builds up vocabulary using words appropriately and accurately to convey precise meaning.

- 4.1. Uses English words accurately and appropriately
- 4.2 Infers meaning of unfamiliar words
- 4.3 Uses English words in their proper contexts

Content and activities

Vocabulary level should encompass 2000 words at this stage (350 words should be in their productive vocabulary). In addition to further practice in nouns and verbs adjectives and prepositions should be introduced at this stage. Inferring the meaning of unfamiliar terms with the help of contextual clues should also be practised at this stage. Spelling the words accurately and the use of the correct form of the word are also important here. It is recommended that a standard dictionary should be introduced at this stage. A variety of activities should be used to make them familiar with the dictionaries.

Competency 5. Extracts necessary information from various types of texts.

- 5.2 Extracts specific information from a text
- 5.3 Selects relevant information from a dialogue

Content and activities

Here the students are expected to read and to listen to various types of texts in order to extract specific information and relevant information as well. They should be given enough practice to find specific information quickly. Listening to others for relevant information in order to perform various tasks should also be practised properly.

Different text types

- Advertisements
- Announcement
- Schedules.
- Processes.
- Simple narratives
- Informal letters
- Notes

Competency 6. Uses English grammar for the purpose of accurate and effective communication

- 6.1 Identifies the agreement between subject and verb/ referent and reference word.
- 6.2 Identifies the grammar of a sentence
- 6.4 Constructs simple sentences
- 6.4 Participates in conversations using language appropriately and accurately
- 6.5 Constructs compound sentences

Content and activities

At this stage students are expected to engage in further practice of the grammatical items they acquired in the previous year. Especially they are expected to produce the structures they were exposed to in the previous year.

Following items should be introduced to them

- The Present Perfect and Past Perfect Tenses
- Modals; ought to, need, have, have to, am able
- Sentences with conjunctions of reason and result; because, since, so
- Adjectives to modify nouns
- Determiners; articles, demonstrative pronouns, and possessive forms
- Simple phrasal verbs; give up, come across, set off, etc.

Competency 7. Uses English creatively and innovatively in written communication

- 7.3 Rewrites the main events of a story or a short passage using own words
- 7.4 Writes short poems /stories based on given guidelines

Content and activities

At this stage students should be guided to write both logically and creatively. Process writing should be encouraged in order to identify the importance of writing paragraphs logically. Guided writing activities to give students understanding that writing is a process should be utilized. Writing should be made an enjoyable experience to them.

Competency 8. Communicates clearly, fluently and concisely

- 8.6 Describes places and people using proper adjectives
- 8.7 Expresses likes and dislikes with reasons
- 8.8 Understands and conveys short messages
- 8.9 Gives and asks for information appropriately

Content and activities

Students should be exposed to various types of effective communication tasks at this stage. Use of adjectives properly to describe people and places should be dealt with here. Students should be able to give reasons using words like because, since, as. Better interaction among each other should be encouraged through the use of English appropriately.

E) School Policies and Programmes:

E.1 Time table:

- There are 154 periods to complete this syllabus. Number of periods has to be divided according to the number of units in the Pupils Text.
- Within these 154 periods, time should be allocated for continuous assessments and to attend to the activities in the workbook.

E.2 Qualifications expected of the English teachers:

- To teach English Language effectively as a second language, English teachers must be trained English teachers. Especially they should have a thorough knowledge of teaching methods.
- English teachers should participate in the workshops which are conducted by the provincial departments and Zonal Education authorities (ISA's, RESC's and the Teacher Educators) in order to enrich their knowledge.
- In some special situations, the National Institute of Education conducts workshops to enhance the teachers' knowledge on new trends, and the teachers are welcome to participate in those workshops.

E.3 Guidelines to facilitate the instructional leadership:

- Initiate necessary steps to create an English-speaking environment within the school where students are motivated to use English.
- Take necessary action to train some English News readers within the school. News including special activities of the day has to be announced in English in the morning everyday
- The guidance, support and the supervision of the Principal is essential for the English Language Teachers to accomplish the following activities in terms of improving English language skills of the students;
 - School English Day
 - Computer assisted English Language Teaching
 - Inter school English competitions
 - English Literary Associations
 - Establish some ground rules to lend and read one English book per week
 - Availability of children's news papers in the library
 - School exhibitions
 - Maintaining a language lab
 - Presenting some activities to the media
 - Conducting surveys and projects in English

E.4 Co-curricular activities:

Learning English should be a very enjoyable activity and it should not be limited only for the classroom teaching and learning process. If the students are engaged in more meaningful co-curricular activities, which help them to uplift their English language skills, it may bring about an immense advancement in English language learning. Further

they will develop their learning to learn ability while they are given opportunities to participate in the following activities;

- Maintaining a wall paper in English language
- Maintaining a notice board in English language
- English speaking society
- Watching English Dramas, novels using CDs and Videos
- One of the items to be presented in the morning assembly (Grade wise)
- Inter school debates
- English drama competitions
- Quiz programmes

F. Recommended Method of Teaching English as a Second Language

An Eclectic Approach to English language teaching based on the following underlying principles drawn from various methods and approaches used to teach English is recommended.

The eclectic teacher aims to achieve “the maximum benefit from all the methods and techniques at his/her disposal, according to the special needs and resources of his/her pupils at any given time.” Girard (1986) An eclectic teacher should be flexible and adaptable in order to be able to select among a variety of approaches, methods and techniques those elements that are appropriate to the needs of a given group of students at a given time. However, Teachers should be warned that ‘eclectic’ is a convenient term but vague. So one should not blindly adopt techniques and teaching procedures from various methods without a clear understanding of the theoretical principles underlying them. Details of the eclectic approach are given below with a view to helping the teachers to use this approach successfully in their classrooms.

F.1 Teaching/Learning Process

- Every lesson should end with the learner feeling confident that he can do something in the target language, which he could not do at the beginning, and whatever he has learnt is communicatively useful.
- Target language should be the language of the classroom. Mother tongue could be used sparingly where necessary to make meaning clear.
- All the four main language skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing should be taught systematically. As far as possible activities and tasks done in class should aim at integrating the four skills.
- Special attention should be paid to teaching of vocabulary and grammar.

- Pair work and group work should form an integral part of the classroom procedure. Cooperative and collaborative learning should be encouraged.
- An eclectic approach should be used to teach grammar. The deductive method could be used to teach complex grammar points while inductive method could be used to teach simpler grammatical items.
- The Process approach to reading and writing is recommended.
- All activities and tasks used in the classroom should aim at engaging students in active communication. These activities and tasks should be based on the following principles:
 - a) Information gap principle
 - b) Information transfer principle
 - c) Task dependency principle
 - d) Jig-saw principle
- The main role of the language teacher should be to facilitate learning. The teacher should teach students how to learn so that at the end of their school career learners will be independent users of the target language.

F.2 Classroom Techniques

The following classroom techniques are recommended in the classroom while providing opportunities for the teachers to think of their own techniques to suit the level of the classroom.

- Repetition with understanding.
- Meaningful Drills
- Role-play
- Dialogues
- Language games
- Communicative activities
- Problem-solving activities
- Decision-making activities
- Jig-saw activities
- Sharing information to complete tasks
- Simulation
- Summarizing
- Dictation
- Gap-filling tasks
- Sequencing
- Controlled composition
- Guided composition
- Free composition
- Picture composition
- Discussion
- Mini-presentations

- Impromptu speeches
- Prepared speeches
- Memorization (with understanding)
- Dramatization
- Group singing
- Recitation (Poetry)

G Assessment and Evaluation

On-going assessment (OA) should be an integral part of the curriculum. OA provides the teacher and the learner continuous feedback on the teaching/learning process.

- Tests should be primarily **criterion-referenced** “as they have the benefit of providing teachers and students with the kind of qualitative information meaningful for the future use.” (JALT Testing and Evaluation N-SIG Newsletter Vol. 3 No. 1)

A **criterion-referenced** assessment aims at finding out how well the learner is able to perform relative to a fixed criterion based on an estimation of what is reasonable to demand from learners at the relevant point in their development during a particular stage of the course.

- The **on-going assessment** should include the following modes of assessment:
 - **Teacher’s assessment** based on at least two classroom tests per term.
 - One **self-assessment** per term where the learners themselves evaluate their own performance, using clear criteria and weighting system agreed upon beforehand. The teacher should check this. This type of assessment in addition to promote learner independence will also make students aware of their weaknesses and strengths.
 - One **peer-assessment** per term of group work using criteria and weighting system has to be agreed upon beforehand. The teacher too should check this. This again promotes learner autonomy.
 - **Portfolio:** The learner collects a set of assignments, book reviews, and journal writing done throughout the year in a file. The contents of the portfolio are first assessed by the student and then by the teacher.
 - **Summative assessment is conducted at** the end of the year.