

Scottish Certificate of Education

**Standard Grade Revised Arrangements in  
English – Alternative Communication**

Foundation, General and Credit Levels in and  
after 1994

# **STANDARD GRADE ARRANGEMENTS IN ENGLISH – ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION**

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**These arrangements are intended to supplement the arrangements for Standard Grade English.**

## **Introduction**

In March 1990, a Joint Working Party (JWP) was established to develop a course, based on Standard Grade English, which would be suitable for candidates with severe or profound hearing impairment whose needs could not be catered for within the framework of the published Standard Grade course.

Although this course is designed for candidates who have been identified as having hearing impairment, it may also be suitable for other candidates who have special educational needs, such as those who have difficulties with communication.

In November 1991, the Report of the JWP was issued for comment. In preparing these Arrangements, the Board has taken account of the observations received and has amended the proposals as appropriate.

Examinations based on the arrangements set out below will be available to all candidates in and after 1994, with the proviso that presentation in the same year for this course and for Standard Grade English be mutually exclusive.



## **Section 1**

### **Aims of the Course**

# 1 Aims of the Course

- 1 1 The aims of the Standard Grade English – Alternative Communication course are the same as those of the Standard Grade English course. As with the Standard Grade English course, it should seek to enrich the lives of pupils, contribute to their personal and social growth and enable them to develop skills to the highest possible level, through a variety of language experiences. In so doing, it should make them aware of the main ways in which language works in their lives. These aims are most likely to be achieved in situations which encourage in pupils qualities such as resourcefulness, cooperativeness and mutual respect. The teacher's role and the relationships built up with pupils are crucial.

This course has been designed for pupils whose difficulties with spoken language are so significant as to make the element of Talking in Standard Grade English inappropriate. Accordingly, in this course, the element of Talking is replaced with an alternative which will allow pupils to communicate and be assessed in whatever mode of communication they use.

In following the Standard Grade English – Alternative Communication course, pupils will continue to develop their reading and writing skills in the same way as pupils following the Standard Grade English course. This course, however, will also address their specific needs and allow the pupils the opportunity to develop their expressive and receptive skills in communicating using the method in which they have expertise and confidence. These are skills which they will require in continuing their education and in later life.

It is important that this course should be comparable with Standard Grade English and differ as little as possible from it. Accordingly, while many pupils with hearing impairment may have particular language difficulties, the importance of comparability is such that the elements of Reading and Writing have been retained as for Standard Grade English.

It is possible that for many pupils who have hearing impairment, Standard Grade English may be a more appropriate course. Presenting centres are advised therefore to consider, prior to embarking on this course, the option of presenting for Standard Grade English. The final decision should be taken in the light of consultation involving parents, the teacher of English, the specialist teacher of the hearing impaired and the pupils themselves.

## **Section 2**

### **Course Structure**

## 2 Course Structure

- 2 1 The Arrangements for Standard Grade English are based on the three elements of Reading, Writing and Talking. In this course, Talking is replaced by an element entitled **Communicating**. The elements of Reading and Writing, both in their roles within the course and in the manner of their assessment, are exactly the same in this course as in the Standard Grade English course. While recognising that pupils with severe hearing impairment may have fundamental problems with language, it is considered that any attempt to change the elements of Reading and Writing would compromise the credibility of this course. The element Communicating, while retaining GRC comparable to those for the element of Talking, allows candidates to communicate **in whatever method is most appropriate for them**. As with the arrangements for Talking in Standard Grade English, the audience or participants in Communicating in this course will be the pupils' peers and teachers whom they encounter and with whom they communicate.

The importance of structure in the course has to be recognised. Language and communication skills, whether written, oral or manual, do not simply mature; their development requires conscious cultivation. There is, therefore, a place for the teaching and application of techniques. The point is that awareness of the need for these skills will arise out of the contexts of the course.

The particular communication methods used by a pupil with hearing impairment should be acknowledged and valued. Pupils with hearing impairment may gain in confidence if they are encouraged to discuss, in their normal methods of communicating, the preliminary approaches to tasks and stimulus materials.

The content of this course is the same as that of the Standard Grade English course. The element of communicating in this course differs from the element of Talking in Standard Grade English in that it allows pupils the opportunity to express themselves and be assessed in whatever mode of communication they use. In this way the course is more appropriate for the pupils concerned.

Assessment in English is a continuing process and is very much part of teaching. Its main purpose in the classroom is to help the teacher and the pupil to find ways of improving the pupil's learning. Provision of such assessment would be part of the structure of the course.

The teaching and the assessment of the skills involved in the element Communicating are unlikely to be solely the responsibility of the English teacher but will possibly involve a specialist teacher of the hearing impaired and/or an interpreter.

### 2 2 Communicating

#### 2 2 1 Preparation and Planning

In addition to the general advice on preparation and planning contained within the Arrangements for Standard Grade English, there will need to be additional planning and preparation to enable the pupil with hearing impairment to participate in and contribute fully to the communication activity. The way in which a teacher of English will plan and prepare for this element will depend on the needs and experiences of the pupils involved. Advice in the form of Notes of Guidance is given on the necessary preparation and planning required for this element, particularly for those teachers of English in the mainstream setting who have had little or no experience of working with pupils with hearing impairment.

## 2 2 1 (continued)

Pupils with hearing impairment should be allowed to develop their skills in Communicating in the most conducive environment and in the least stressful way. While it is recognised that factors such as good classroom organisation, suitable seating arrangements, good acoustics and the use of appropriate auditory equipment are important, attention must also be given to appropriate teaching methodologies, appropriate specialist support and to the amount of time which might be involved. The support teacher of the hearing impaired and/or the interpreter **and** the teacher of English have a crucial role to play in the teaching and assessment of Communicating (see Notes of Guidance).

## 2 2 2 Purposes of Communicating

In the Arrangements for Standard Grade English, talking and listening are closely related and exist on a continuum of interaction. At one extreme there is the type of communication where the intention is to convey information with minimal response on the part of the audience; at the other extreme is the type of communication where the purpose is to receive information with minimal opportunity to respond. Between the two extremes is the situation where the purpose is to engage in discussion which features expressing and receiving information in roughly equal proportions. This will also be the case in this course in respect of the expressive skills and the receptive skills which are also closely related. Accordingly, for the purposes of certification, both sets of skills will be subsumed under Communicating.

Throughout this course, pupils will learn to explore feelings and clarify ideas by communicating for a variety of purposes and audiences in appropriate forms and styles. The main purposes of the expressive aspect of communicating are:

- to convey information
- to deploy ideas, expound, argue and evaluate
- to describe personal experiences, express feelings and reactions
- to create particular effects
- to work, in a group, towards a common goal.

The main purposes of the receptive aspect of communicating are:

- to gain an overall impression
- to obtain particular information
- to grasp ideas or feelings
- to understand and evaluate attitudes, assumptions and arguments expressed
- to appreciate techniques used
- to enjoy and obtain enrichment.

It is important that, from the language activities of reading, writing and communicating, all pupils with hearing impairment gain some knowledge of the main features of language in use. They should also gain sufficient technical vocabulary to allow them to use their own and other people's language accurately and confidently.



## **Section 3**

### **Assessment for Certification**

### **3 Assessment for Certification**

**3 1** As with the structure and content of the course, the approaches to assessment and moderation have been designed to be comparable with those of Standard Grade English. The pattern of assessment is also retained and is as follows.

#### **3 2 Pattern of Assessment**

The three elements of Reading, Writing and Communicating will be formally assessed and will contribute equally to the final award. There will be three forms of assessment for certification for all candidates:

- internal assessment of **Communicating**
- external assessment of a folio of coursework in **Reading** and **Writing**
- external written examinations in **Reading** and **Writing**.

#### **3 3 Communicating**

**3 3 1** As with the assessment arrangements for Talking in Standard Grade English, the element of Communicating will, for the purposes of assessment, be regarded as falling within one or other of two categories; Discussion or Individual Communication. Discussion comprises all forms of communicating in which the participants take turns to contribute. It includes, for example, reciprocal communication between individuals, interaction in groups and contributions to discussion within the whole class. Individual Communication takes in all forms of communicating where there is a minimal response on the part of the audience, which can range from a single person to a group or class. It is recognised that these categories overlap and that activities such as interviews may legitimately be placed in either, according to whether or not the assignment calls for participants to interact significantly.

**3 3 2** Communicating will be internally assessed using the Grade Related Criteria. As with Standard Grade Arrangements in English, assessments will arise out of the natural work of the course rather than from a series of tests. The teacher of English **and** the specialist teacher of the hearing impaired and/or interpreter will each have a role to play in this assessment. The final grading for Communicating, which will be the aggregate with equal weighting of a grade for Discussion and a grade for Individual Communication, should take into account a range and balance of tasks assessed over the two years of the course.

There is no requirement for a specified number of assignments to be undertaken for the purpose of certification. It is recognised that in some cases the number of assignments undertaken by the pupil with hearing impairment in the mainstream setting may well be less than that of other pupils within the class. Over the two years of the course, teachers should create opportunities which will allow the pupil with hearing impairment to cover the range of purposes previously outlined, and maintain the balance between Discussion and Individual Communication. Other situations will present themselves informally from time to time (in class, group and individual assignments) and these are equally important as part of the records of each candidate's performance in Communicating. The final grade should take account of the course as a whole. The design of a Communicating assignment should be such that pupils are clear about what they are to do.

- 3 3 3 Some means of recording assessments should be used. This should be as simple as possible but capable of informing fairly the subsequent summative grading of the candidate's performance and the process of moderation. It is suggested that for individual candidates, specific details should be noted for each formal assignment and observation (see Arrangements for Standard Grade English paragraph 6 8 3).
- 3 3 4 The internal assessment will be externally moderated by a Visiting Moderator trained by the Board and operating under current regulations. The moderation procedure will be the same as is outlined for the element of Talking in Standard Grade English and centres will be offered guidance in this respect.
- 3 3 5 Presenting centres will conduct their assessments in line with the guidance given and will submit grades for Communicating to the Board by a specified date. It will be the responsibility of the Head of the English department to ensure that common standards are applied. The Head of the English department will countersign the grade submitted by the class teacher, indicating satisfaction that the grades conform to the guidance offered by the Moderator.

The Board's examiners will scrutinise the grades submitted and, where further discussion of the assessments is judged to be appropriate, a follow-up visit may be made by a Moderator. During such a visit, the Moderator may require teachers to carry out an assessment of certain Communicating activities while he/she is present.

- 3 3 6 In the first few years of a centre's presentation, internal assessments will be moderated by the Board. This moderation will prove an invaluable part of the training for teachers who are inexperienced in assessing Communication. Under current arrangements, the Board normally moderates a random sample of centres each year. However, it will be possible for a centre to request that additional moderation be carried out if there are particular reasons for doing so, such as a change of staff.

#### **3 4 Reading and Writing**

The arrangements for the assessment of Reading and Writing will be identical to those currently operating for Standard Grade English.



## **Section 4**

### **Grade Related Criteria**

## **4 Grade Related Criteria**

### **4.1 Definition**

Grade Related Criteria (GRC) are positive descriptions of performance against which a candidate's achievement is measured. Direct comparisons are not made between the performance of one candidate and that of another.

### **4.2 Types of GRC**

Summary GRC are broad descriptions of performance. They are published as an aid to the interpretation of the profile of attainment by candidates, parents, employers and other users of the Certificate.

Extended GRC are detailed descriptions of performance. They are intended to assist teachers in making their assessments for each element, and to be used by examiners when conducting external assessment.

A summary version of the GRC which is particularly suitable for assessment purposes is appended to the Notes of Guidance.

### **4.3 Application of GRC**

GRC are defined at three Levels of performance: Foundation, General and Credit.

Awards will be reported on six grades, two grades being distinguished at each Level. The upper of the two grades at a given Level will be awarded to candidates who meet the stated criteria demonstrating a high standard of performance; the lower grade to those who demonstrate a lower, but still satisfactory, standard of performance.

There will be a seventh grade for candidates who complete the course but fail to meet the criteria for any Level.

The GRC state, for the purpose of national certification by the Board, the standards of unaided performance required at the end of a two-year course. It follows that their principal application is summative, both for the Board and for individual English departments. Teachers will find them of use in their own classroom assessments.

### **4.4 Use of GRC by English Departments**

GRC will be used for certification purposes by English departments:

- to assist in the process of selecting folio pieces
- to assess Communicating internally
- as a basis for providing the Board with estimates of performance in Close Reading and Writing.

4 4 (continued)

GRC are generalisations: they assimilate aspects of the mode, and attempt to sum up and characterise the **typical** performance. When impression assessment techniques are used, their application depends on the professional judgement of the assessor. They cannot explicitly provide for all the ways in which strengths and weaknesses compensate for, and combine with, each other in individual performance within the same grade range. Therefore, application of the GRC in English will in practice call for a continual process of adjustment by the teacher to arrive at a holistic assessment of a pupil's performance.

4 5 **Communicating – Summary GRC**

**The categories Discussion and Individual Communication are used as defined on page 12 (paragraph 3 3 1).**

Foundation Level (Grades 6, 5)

In discussion and individual communication, the candidate managed to convey a few simple ideas; weaknesses in expression did not prevent this. There were a few signs of awareness of the purpose and situation of the communicating. In discussion, account taken of others was intermittent. In individual communication, the candidate used a limited range of language and needed substantial support through prompting and questioning.

General Level (Grades 4, 3)

In discussion and individual communication, the candidate conveyed relevant ideas adequately; expression showed some traces of variety. On the whole, the candidate was aware of the purpose and situation of the communicating. In discussion, account taken of others was reasonably regular. In individual communication, language was generally accurate; some support was needed through prompting and questioning.

Credit Level (Grades 2, 1)

In discussion and individual communication, the candidate conveyed substantial and relevant ideas readily; expression was fluent. The candidate was consistently aware of the purpose and situation of the communicating. In discussion, close account was taken of others. In individual communication, language was varied and accurate and there was little or no prompting.

4 6 **Description of Grades**

These describe performance within Levels. They apply to each element.

Grade 6 The candidate has met the criteria for Foundation Level, demonstrating a satisfactory overall standard of performance.

Grade 5 The candidate has met the criteria for Foundation Level, demonstrating a high overall standard of performance.

Grade 4 The candidate has met the criteria for General Level, demonstrating a satisfactory overall standard of performance.

4 6 (continued)

Grade 3 The candidate has met the criteria for General Level, demonstrating a high overall standard of performance.

Grade 2 The candidate has met the criteria for Credit Level, demonstrating a satisfactory overall standard of performance.

Grade 1 The candidate has met the criteria for Credit Level, demonstrating a high overall standard of performance.

#### 4 7 **Communicating – Extended GRC**

4 7 1 Discussion

##### *Introduction*

These GRC are to be used for assessing all forms of communicating in which the participants contribute; these include, for example, reciprocal communication between individuals, interaction in groups, and contributions within a whole class.

When a candidate's performance in any kind of discussion is being assessed, the essential judgment to be made is holistic, ie **how effectively the candidate contributes to the main purposes of the discussion**. Evidence to support this assessment will be found in the quality of four aspects of the candidate's contribution:

- substance and relevance of contribution
- account taken of other contributions
- awareness of situation
- control of expression.

These aspects of performance cannot be weighted and aggregated according to a fixed formula: in different situations they will combine in different ways. They should be borne in mind, however, when assessing the quality of the candidate's performance as a whole.

##### **Foundation Level (Grades 6, 5)**

In discussion the candidate's performance is characterised by the following.

##### *Substance and Relevance of Contribution*

The candidate can contribute a few ideas/responses/opinions/experiences, and these are only tenuously relevant.

##### *Account Taken of Other Contributions*

The candidate shows evidence of taking account of the contributions of others, in one of the following ways: by repeating/using/supporting/challenging their contributions.

4 7 1 (continued)

*Awareness of Situation*

The candidate shows evidence of attempting to behave in a way appropriate to the situation by one of the following:

- acknowledging the status of any designated participant (eg chair, leader, interviewer)
- allowing/encouraging others to have their say
- contributing readily but not excessively
- using language suited to the audience.

*Control of Expression*

The candidate's communication is in part intelligible and clear.

**Factors Differentiating Grades 6 and 5**

Grade 6

The candidate makes at least one intelligible attempt to contribute relevantly to the course of the discussion, and shows some evidence of willingness to cooperate in the situation or discussion.

Grade 5

The candidate's performance shows evidence of attention to purpose.

It also combines some of the following features:

- a few contributions, though weakened by irrelevance
- some limited account taken of others
- some limited awareness of situation
- reasonably intelligible and clear expression.

**General Level (Grades 4, 3)**

In discussion the candidate's performance is characterised by the following.

*Substance and Relevance of Contribution*

The candidate can contribute some relevant ideas/responses/opinions/experiences, **and**

**either** occasionally support these with evidence/reasons;  
**or** occasionally question and answer relevantly.

*Account Taken of Other Contributions*

The candidate on the whole takes some account of the contributions of others in one of the following ways: by summarising/using/expanding/supporting/challenging their contributions.

*Awareness of Situation*

The candidate behaves in a way appropriate to the situation by two of the following:

- acknowledging the status of any designated participant (eg chair, leader, interviewer)
- allowing/encouraging others to have their say
- contributing readily but not excessively
- using language suited to the audience.

*Control of Expression*

The candidate is largely intelligible and clear, and shows evidence of varying the features of the communication to point-up meaning or adjusting pace to suit the circumstances.

**Factors Differentiating Grades 4 and 3**

**Grade 4**

The candidate's attention to purpose, though flawed in some significant ways, just achieves the adequacy required for General Level.

It also combines some of the following features:

- substances and relevance of contribution
- account taken of other contributions
- awareness of situation
- control of expression.

One or more of these is flawed in some way but the combination just achieves overall adequacy.

**Grade 3**

The candidate's attention to purpose is adequate.

It also combines some of the following features:

- adequate substance and relevance of contribution
- adequate account taken of others
- adequate awareness of situation
- adequate control of expression.

**Credit Level (Grades 2, 1)**

In discussion the candidate's performance is characterised by the following.

*Substance and Relevance of Contribution*

The candidate's contribution is substantial in quality and is relevant to the purpose of the discussion. The candidate can:

- provide a good number of relevant ideas/responses/opinions/experiences
- support ideas with evidence
- question and answer relevantly.

4 7 1 (continued)

*Account Taken of Other Contributions*

The candidate takes account of the contributions of others, in several of the following ways: by analysing/summarising/using/expanding/supporting/challenging/refuting their contributions.

*Awareness of Situation*

The candidate behaves in a way appropriate to the situation by the following:

- acknowledging the status of any designated participant (eg chair, leader, interviewer)
- allowing/encouraging others to have their say
- contributing readily, but not excessively
- using language suited to the audience.

*Control of Expression*

The candidate is consistently intelligible and clear and shows some skill in varying the features of the communication to point-up meaning and in adjusting pace to suit the circumstances.

**Factors Differentiating Grades 2 and 1**

Grade 2

The candidate's attention to purpose is sound, but lacks some shrewdness, tenacity, subtlety.

In other respects the performance is generally good, but it is less fertile/less confident/less sensitive/less consistent than at grade 1.

Grade 1

The candidate's performance is distinguished by a consistent, alert attention to purpose.

It also combines some of the following features:

- high quality in contributions and taking account of the contributions of others
- confidence of expression
- tactful awareness of the situation.

Overall the performance is characterised by consistency of quality.

4 7 2 Individual Communication

*Introduction*

These GRC are to be used for assessing all forms of communicating where there is a minimum response on the part of the audience: the audience can range from an individual to a group or class.

When a candidate's performance in Individual Communication is being assessed, the essential judgement to be made is holistic. Evidence to support this assessment will be found in the quality of six aspects of performance:

- content
- aspects of purpose
- language
- expression
- awareness of audience
- duration.

These aspects of performance cannot be weighted and aggregated according to a fixed formula: in different situations they will combine in different ways. They should, however, be borne in mind when assessing the quality of the candidate's performance.

### **Foundation Level (Grades 6, 5)**

#### *Content*

The candidate can:

- express obvious and simple ideas
- display a little skill in linking ideas.

#### *Aspects of Purpose*

The candidate can:

- present simple facts, ideas or opinions with little attempt at sequencing
- give a simple account of a personal experience with a limited sense of involvement
- in story telling, set the scene and outline the narrative.

#### *Language*

The candidate:

- uses a limited range of vocabulary and language structures
- is restricted in register.

#### *Expression*

The candidate is, in part, intelligible and clear.

*Awareness of Audience*

The candidate:

- shows limited awareness of the requirements and reactions of the audience
- occasionally makes use of eye contact, facial expression and other body language as appropriate
- requires substantial support through prompting and/or questioning.

*Duration*

The candidate shows a limited ability to sustain the communication, as appropriate to the purpose.

**Factors Differentiating Grades 6 and 5**

Grade 6

The candidate communicates a few intelligible ideas at least **one** of which is to the point.

Grade 5

The candidate's performance shows evidence of attention to purpose.

It also combines some of the following features:

- several items of content, though weakened by irrelevance and/or obscurity
- intelligible language, weakened by inaccuracy
- some limited awareness of audience
- expression reasonably intelligible and clear.

**General Level (Grades 4, 3)**

*Content*

The candidate can:

- express appropriate ideas
- link ideas with some skill.

*Aspects of Purpose*

The candidate can, as appropriate:

- convey information in an orderly sequence
- order and present ideas and opinions with some attempt at reasoning
- give a reasonably coherent account of a personal experience, expressing feelings and reactions with some sense of involvement
- in story telling, set the scene, sustain the narrative to its climax and convey some sense of character.

4 7 2 (continued)

*Language*

The candidate:

- uses vocabulary and language structures which are largely accurate
- shows some awareness of appropriate register.

*Expression*

The candidate:

- is largely intelligible and clear
- displays some fluency
- shows evidence of ability to vary the features of the communication to point up meaning, or to adjust pace to suit the purpose.

*Awareness of Audience*

The candidate:

- shows awareness of the requirements and reactions of the audience
- frequently makes use of eye contact, facial expression and other body language as appropriate
- requires some support through prompting and/or questioning.

*Duration*

The candidate can sustain the communication at some length, as appropriate to the purpose.

**Factors Differentiating Grades 4 and 3**

**Grade 4**

The candidate's attention to purpose, though flawed in some significant way, just achieves the adequacy required for General Level.

Despite weaknesses, the combination of qualities of content, language, expression, awareness of audience just achieves overall adequacy.

**Grade 3**

The candidate's attention to purpose is intermittent but adequate.

It also combines some of the following features:

- adequate content
- adequate accuracy of language
- adequate expression
- adequate awareness of audience.

4 7 2 (continued)

### **Credit Level (Grades 2, 1)**

#### *Content*

The candidate can:

- express ideas of quality, relevance and interest
- link ideas clearly to each other and to the main purpose of the task.

#### *Aspects of Purpose*

The candidate can, as appropriate:

- convey information, highlighting what is most significant
- marshal ideas and evidence in support of an argument
- give a succinct and coherent account of a personal experience, with sensitive expression of feelings and reactions
- in story telling, achieve effect through creative use of structure, features of the language, timing, vocabulary and characterisation.

#### *Language*

The candidate:

- uses varied and accurate vocabulary
- uses an appropriately wide range of language structures
- uses a register appropriate to topic and audience.

#### *Expression*

The candidate:

- is consistently intelligible and clear
- is consistently fluent
- adjusts pace to suit the purpose
- varies the features of the communication to point up meaning.

#### *Awareness of Audience*

The candidate:

- takes due account of the requirements and reactions of the audience
- consistently makes use of eye contact, facial expression and other body language as appropriate
- requires little or no prompting.

472 (continued)

*Duration*

The candidate can sustain the communication at considerable length as appropriate to the purpose.

**Factors Differentiating Grades 2 and 1**

**Grade 2**

The candidate's attention to purpose is sound, but lacks some sophistication, insight and fullness.

In other respects the performance is generally good, but it is less rich/less confident/less sensitive/less consistent than at grade 1.

**Grade 1**

The candidate's performance is distinguished by a consistent and alert attention to purpose.

It also combines some of the following features:

- high quality in content and language
- confidence of expression
- sensitive awareness of situation and audience.

Overall, the performance is characterised by consistency of quality.