

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT	English: Language Study (Intermediate 1)
NUMBER	D8VH 10
COURSE	English (Intermediate 1)

SUMMARY

While each unit in the Intermediate 1 course requires deployment and development of reading, writing, talking and listening skills for a range of purposes, the Language Study unit focuses on writing of different kinds and on reading for writing. Candidates will read and learn about a wide variety of texts whose purposes are informative, expressive and creative/imaginative. Competence in reading will be required as texts are studied and evaluated for information, for meaning and as models of writing.

Language Study is a mandatory component unit of the Intermediate 1 English course. It may also be used to form part of other unit groupings created to fulfil particular purposes. The unit builds upon skills and experience gained in Standard Grade English or in Access 3 English.

The content of the unit comprises:

- the skills required for informational, expressive and creative writing, including summary and report writing, writing which reflects, persuades or argues and writing in literary genres
- the skills required for reading informational and literary texts and for gaining access to information technologies
- the skills required for individual talk, discussion and listening.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Understand, analyse and evaluate non-fiction print text which conveys basic information.
- 2 Compose a piece of writing in a particular genre.

Administrative Information

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UNIT English: Language Study (Intermediate 1)

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained one of the following:

- Standard Grade English at Foundation level
- Access 3 English units.

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Intermediate 1.

CORE SKILLS

This unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete core skills for the unit	None
Core skills components for the unit	Written Communication Intermediate 1.

Additional information about core skills is published in the *Catalogue of Core Skills in National Qualifications* (SQA, 2001).

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT English: Language Study (Intermediate 1)

Acceptable performance in this unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Understand, analyse and evaluate non-fiction print text which conveys basic information.

Performance criteria

Understanding

Responses demonstrate understanding of the major and minor points of the text and give basic explanation of their relationships.

Analysis

Responses give some explanation of ways in which aspects of structure, style and language contribute to the meaning/effect/impact.

Evaluation

Comment is made on the effectiveness of the text which shows awareness of the writer's purpose(s) and is supported by appropriate reference to the text.

Evidence requirements

Written or spoken responses to unseen questions on an unseen non-fiction text which conveys basic information.

Responses must be unassisted and written or spoken in the presenting centre under supervision.

The candidate must meet all of the performance criteria in response to one text.

The text will be characterised by content which communicates detailed information and ideas at a basic level (content which is largely factual and conveys a clear stance); vocabulary which is accessible, yet demanding; sentence structure which is varied; a number of key ideas or facts presented in detail; straightforward layout; word choice and degree of formality appropriate to the particular form of writing.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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OUTCOME 2

Compose a piece of writing in a particular genre.

Performance criteria

Content

Content is mainly relevant and appropriate for purpose and audience; there is an attempt to develop a number of ideas/points of information.

Structure

There is a degree of organisation of content and a straightforward structure which is in the main appropriate for purpose, audience and genre.

Expression

Some use of basic techniques relevant to the genre, mainly accurate choice of words and some variety of sentence structures indicate an attempt to adopt an appropriate tone and convey a point of view.

Technical Accuracy

Spelling, grammar and punctuation are mainly accurate.

Note: according to purpose, content is likely to be reflection, ideas, opinion, argument, information.

Evidence requirements

A piece of writing which must be expressive or creative or a report.

The piece of writing, poetry excepted, must be at least 300 words in length. The length of a piece of poetry will depend on the chosen form but it should be enough to allow the achievement of all the performance criteria to be demonstrated.

The piece of writing must be unassisted and produced under a system of supervision which guarantees authenticity through a process requiring the candidate to submit the following at appropriate stages:

- draft title and proposals
- outline plan
- first draft
- final version.

Draft materials must be retained as evidence of authenticity.

The candidate must meet all of the performance criteria in one piece of writing.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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Expressive

Expressive writing includes reflective, persuasive and argumentative forms.

Reflective: this writing will aim to interest or give pleasure, rather than simply convey information; it will concern itself usually with a single idea, insight or experience and will include some reflection on knowledge, thoughts or feelings engendered by it.

Persuasive: this writing will persuade to a purpose or point of view (for example, to sell a product, or influence opinion/belief), usually concerning itself with a single topic or issue.

Argumentative: this writing will treat a topic or issue in a way which presents a line of argument, dealing with two or more varying viewpoints.

Creative

Creative writing includes work in poetry or drama or prose fiction.

In relation to structure and technical accuracy, the creative writer should be allowed scope to depart from convention to achieve particular effects. Such departures must, however, be intentional.

In relation to tone, the creative writer's 'voice' need not be 'heard' in the same way as the expressive writer's. Often the tone of a creative piece will be evident in the ways in which mood and atmosphere are created. Point of view, in a piece of creative writing, may be representative (eg a character's or narrator's).

Report

The report must contain a relevant selection of basic information drawn from at least three sources. In order to meet the requirements of the performance criteria, material drawn from sources must be recast and paraphrased appropriately for purpose.

The report must achieve a specified purpose.

The writer's point of view and tone will depend on the nature of the purpose. It is likely in many cases that the point of view attempted will be one of detached objective presentation of information or use of evidence to draw a conclusion; and the appropriate tone sought is likely to be impersonal or formal.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT English: Language Study (Intermediate 1)

This part of the unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

While all language purposes may be covered in this unit, there will be particular focus on informing, expressing and creating.

The candidate will identify, locate, study and respond to a selection of texts such as:

- reference texts, including print and electronic texts
- simple but detailed reports, brief factual articles from journalistic texts
- brief news articles and broadcast news items/reports
- short factual broadcasts or extracts from an extended documentary
- extracts from accessible feature articles and documentaries dealing with different points of view
- persuasive texts including advertisements
- biography and autobiography
- letters and extracts from memoirs
- interviews and discussions with others
- literary texts from different genres.

The candidate will engage in a variety of reading, writing, talking and listening activities such as:

- recognising and using different writing skills/purposes
- recognising and using different reading skills/purposes
- deploying different research techniques
- keeping records, identifying sources, creating banks of information
- evaluating sources/texts
- collating information/ideas
- identifying points of view
- examining and using persuasive techniques
- participating in creative writing workshops
- examining model texts and structures
- using literary and linguistic devices and techniques
- constructing different forms
- examining and using different questioning techniques
- engaging in individual and collaborative talk on topics which are familiar.

Outcomes

- 1 Understand, analyse and evaluate non-fiction print text which conveys basic information.
- 2 Compose a piece of writing in a particular genre.

The candidate will be assessed in close reading and produce a piece of writing of at least 300 words in length (poetry excepted).

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT English: Language Study (Intermediate 1)

The summary table gives indication of content and context. Opportunities for talking and listening activities will arise as candidates pursue study in this unit.

Where appropriate, Scottish texts/materials will feature in the unit.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

Close Reading

Opportunities should be provided for the candidate to read a variety of non-fiction texts and graphical and pictorial representations which offer a range of reading demands: for example, books (including biography, autobiography, memoirs, letters, essays); accessible broadsheet newspapers; magazines; pamphlets; notices; advertisements; instructions; graphs; tables; charts and reports.

The texts chosen should be appropriate to the needs of the candidate group and where possible should be integrated with other areas of study, either within the course programme or within other subjects/topics which the candidate is studying.

Learning and teaching approaches should be active and candidate-centred, utilising a variety of tasks and activities, including teacher or lecturer exposition, class and small group discussion of texts and individual study.

Formative activities developing analytical and evaluative reading skills may be part of projects and practical activities drawn from this unit or from other social or vocational contexts.

Writing

The following notes are designed to assist teachers/lecturers and candidates to define genre specifications, identify different writing techniques and recognise qualities sought at this level.

Expressive

The main requirements of the **reflective** essay are that it will:

- be thoughtful in tone and convey a sense of the writer's personality.

The personal reflective essay at Intermediate 1 may simply give an account of an experience, with some description of thoughts, feelings and reactions, although candidates should be encouraged to reflect on their experience and consider possible links with other experiences.

The main requirements of the **persuasive** essay are that it will:

- carry a sense of conviction, commitment or belief by use of tone
- attempt to use persuasive techniques, such as assertion, statement of need, plea, use of 'emotive' words.

The main requirements of the **argumentative** essay are that it will:

- communicate a line of argument
- present two sides of an argument (or more, if applicable)
- attempt to convey an argumentative tone which is measured, reasonable and yet carries personal conviction
- attempt to communicate to the reader a sense that the writer has a clear line of thought which leads to a reasonable conclusion
- make use of argumentative techniques such as comparison, contrast, proof, disproof.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT English: Language Study (Intermediate 1)

Candidates will choose their own topics for a piece of expressive writing in consultation with the supervising teacher or lecturer. Stimulus material for writing will come from a variety of sources similar to the range of texts suggested for close reading:

- journalism extracts, newspaper special investigations and features
- essays by literary authors
- essays in biography/autobiography
- pressure-group handouts
- advertising
- extracts from literary texts
- speeches
- thematic studies across genres and media: for example, gender issues, homelessness.

Teaching approaches will have wide application, and attention to the following will assist in the development of appropriate skills: structure, line of argument, linking, topic sentences, breadth of vocabulary, clarity of expression, personal involvement (as appropriate), the place of significant detail and the use of examples and illustrations to clarify ideas.

Creative

The candidate will choose the topic and form for the piece of creative writing in consultation with the supervising teacher/lecturer. The literary achievements of others will provide models for writing, and, therefore, those candidates who are also taking the Literary Study unit as part of a course or group of units will be exposed to a wide range of literature. For candidates who are studying this unit on a free-standing basis, there will be a need to create the context and content which will provide resources for candidates' ideas.

Candidates should be encouraged to explore and experiment with a range of genres and styles. In this way they will develop interests and preferences leading to a sharpening of focus when it comes to making choices for writing. This allows experimentation in a number of forms, but teachers/lecturers should encourage candidates to recognise interests and strengths at a relatively early stage.

The genre specification is as follows:

- a piece of prose fiction (eg a short story, episode from a novel)
- a poem or set of thematically linked poems
- a dramatic script (eg scene, monologue, sketch).

A piece of prose fiction (for example, short story, episode from a novel)

Fiction is difficult to define, but some of the following characteristics are likely to feature in work which has been shaped and crafted:

- a plot, or narrative development, centred on identifiable characters and leading to some kind of denouement
- an opening, setting the scene, introducing the characters; a development, expanding knowledge of predicament or situation; a conclusion
- a shaping of content and theme
- a structure and form appropriate to the fiction
- an appropriate use of dialogue
- the adoption of a particular tone.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT English: Language Study (Intermediate 1)

The writer of fiction may exploit topics and themes from an unlimited range. Candidates may find the following suggestions helpful:

- a person, a place, an object
- an event, a situation, a relationship
- an argument, a conflict, a misunderstanding
- a discovery, a choice, a dilemma
- a prejudice, a delusion, an obsession
- a memory, an image, an insight
- an experience, an issue, an activity.

A poem or set of thematically linked poems

Because there is an endless variety of approaches and forms, it is unrealistic to prescribe what a poem should be. When crafting poetry, candidates should bear in mind the following considerations:

- writing poetry involves much more than randomly chopping up prose into lines; poetry should be recognisably different from prose in, for example: its choice and arrangement of words, lines and verses/stanzas; the often surprising connections it makes between words; its often condensed and heightened use of language; its greater use of figurative language; its deployment of sound and rhythm; and its often unconventional syntax and patterning of ideas and images
- a poem should present its topic in a striking and original way
- whatever the range and variety of its references and detail, the theme of a poem should be focused and unified through its imagery and structural control
- a poem should contain a clear sense of the writer's imaginative/emotional/intellectual involvement with the topic
- a poem should aim to engage the reader's imaginative/emotional/intellectual responses as fully as possible.

The writer of poetry may exploit topics and themes from an unlimited range. Candidates, however, may find the following suggestions helpful:

- a person, a place, an object
- a condition, a situation, a relationship
- a mood, a memory, a feeling
- an image, an idea, an insight
- an experience, an issue, an activity.

A dramatic script (for example, scene, monologue, sketch)

In creating a dramatic script, candidates should be able to demonstrate a range of specific skills that illustrate their understanding of the nature and potential of the genre. In particular, they should be encouraged to:

- create characters who are credible, interesting and capable of provoking in the reader an intellectual and/or emotional response
- make effective use of dialogue and show an awareness of script notes on non-verbal communication – tone, gestures, body language – as well as indicating stage directions, special effects and other production notes related to dramatic realisation
- establish a setting in which, and a situation out of which, the drama will arise
- develop and communicate a recognisable theme, a centre of interest that will give point to the script
- produce a particular effect, mood or atmosphere
- demonstrate some familiarity with the requirements of script layout and presentation.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT English: Language Study (Intermediate 1)

The writer of drama may exploit topics and themes from an unlimited range. Candidates may find the following suggestions helpful:

- an event, a situation, a relationship
- an argument, a conflict, a misunderstanding
- a discovery, a choice, a dilemma
- a prejudice, a delusion, an obsession
- a mood, a memory, a feeling
- an idea, an issue, an experience.

Stimulus material will come from a variety of sources and may take many forms:

- work produced within the genre by writers of recognised quality
- work produced by candidate writers at a level similar to or more advanced than the class or group members
- extracts from other arts – visual, audio-visual, performing, music.

Candidates are encouraged to make use of a wide range of different language forms and, in particular, Scottish language forms should be used where appropriate.

Report

The topic, and scope and purpose of the report will be specified by the teacher or lecturer. The teacher or lecturer will provide support, guidance, exemplars and task management advice especially where the candidate is unfamiliar with the conventions and forms of report writing.

The evidence requirements for the report state that information will be derived from at least three sources. Possible categories of sources include:

- print sources including text books/reference books, journalism, feature articles, letters, memoranda, other accessible reports
- surveys using questionnaires, interviews
- practical investigations, for example, observation of experiments, measurements
- non-print sources, including maps/graphs/diagrams
- audio-visual sources, including radio, television, video, film
- databases.

It is permissible for all three sources to come from any one of these categories.

It is important to note that, in the context of the report, the nature of the information will be straightforward, without sophistication of analysis. The information may be gathered by the teacher or lecturer into appropriate topic packs. Where specialised vocabulary is used it will be accessible to the candidate because of prior knowledge of or particular interest in the subject.

The writing should have clear structure and should be presented in a logical order. Where the convention of headings is used there will be obvious separation of the constituent sets of information to match the headings.

Diagrams, tables, charts and graphs may be included if appropriate to the chosen form. Headings, appendices, bibliographies and a lettering or numbering system to separate the constituent sections may also be used.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT English: Language Study (Intermediate 1)

The subject of the report may relate to another curricular area of study. It is possible that part of the assessment evidence required by another subject may demonstrate coverage of the performance criteria for writing and the evidence requirements for the report. The report would have to be completed, however, in the controlled conditions which pertain in this unit and the teacher or lecturer responsible for presentation would have to be satisfied that the degree of guidance which may have been offered in other disciplines does not go beyond the specifications for this outcome.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Close Reading

As assessment is an integral part of the learning and teaching process, the candidate should be encouraged to read widely and to undertake a number of activities for formative purposes.

In summative assessment care must be taken in both selection of text and question design. Questions should be designed to create a framework within which the candidate has opportunity to demonstrate coverage of all of the performance criteria.

The texts chosen for assessment must contain a number of major and minor points and several sets of information. There must be a discernible purpose and the conventions of the type of text should be identifiable. Local newspapers and several of the tabloids are likely to yield suitable material for summative purposes. It is also likely that some of the simpler articles from broadsheet newspapers could be appropriate. General readership and special interest or hobby magazines and vocational interest newsletters which assume some prior knowledge or understanding of specialised vocabulary may offer source materials.

At this level, the internal structure of the material will be straightforward and the text may be complemented by graphics and photographs. The text will be characterised by content which communicates detailed information and ideas at a basic level (content which is largely factual and conveys a clear stance); vocabulary which is accessible, yet demanding; sentence structure which is varied; a number of key ideas or facts presented in detail; straightforward layout; word choice and degree of formality which are appropriate to the particular form of writing.

The summative assessment of this outcome must take place under controlled conditions in the presenting centre.

Writing

The candidate will produce **one** piece of writing for summative assessment drawn from the categories identified in Group A or Group B or Group C.

Group A: Expressive

- a personal reflective essay
- a persuasive essay
- an argumentative essay.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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Group B: Creative

- a piece of prose fiction (eg, short story, episode from a novel)
- a poem or set of thematically linked poems
- a dramatic script (eg, scene, monologue, sketch).

Group C: Report

- a report for a specified purpose.

Candidates should be encouraged to explore and experiment with a range of genres and styles. In this way they will develop interests and preferences leading to a sharpening of focus when it comes to making choices for writing. This allows experimentation in a number of forms but teachers and lecturers should encourage candidates to recognise interests and strengths at a relatively early stage.

As assessment is an integral part of the learning and teaching process, the candidate should be encouraged to read widely, to write in a variety of forms for different purposes and audiences and to undertake a number of activities for formative purposes.

In summative assessment, care must be taken in question design. Writing tasks must be designed to create a framework within which the candidate has opportunity to demonstrate coverage of all of the performance criteria. Care must also be taken to ensure authenticity by a process of supervision which monitors candidate progress through the stages specified in evidence requirements. Although only the final versions of the writing should be submitted for moderation (if required), teachers/lecturers should retain earlier drafts as evidence of authenticity.

SPECIAL NEEDS

This unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. Special needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering special alternative outcomes for units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment Arrangements* (SQA, 2001).