

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT English: Personal Study (spoken response) (Access 3)

NUMBER D8VL 09

CLUSTER English (Access 3)

SUMMARY

While each unit in the Access 3 cluster of units requires development of reading, writing, talking and listening skills for a variety of purposes, the Personal Study unit focuses on studying texts or topics and responding to the material studied. Candidates will select texts or topics of particular personal interest and pursue independent study of aspects of their chosen material. It should be noted that the term “text” should be taken to have a wide meaning, encompassing not only printed text but also a variety of material in audio or video form, with subject matter which may be literary (fiction or non-fiction) or may relate to aspects of media or language. Basic reading skill and understanding will be required. The Personal Study (spoken response) requires an ability to express and justify a personal point of view in an individual spoken presentation under controlled conditions, including interaction with an audience.

The content of the unit comprises:

- the skills and concepts required for studying and responding to texts or topics
- the skills and concepts required for speaking about chosen texts or topics.

OUTCOME

Speak about chosen text(s) or topic(s).

Administrative Information

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National Unit Specification: statement of standards

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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

Speak about text(s) or topic(s).

Performance criteria

Understanding

The spoken presentation demonstrates basic understanding of the main point(s) of the subject matter of the Personal Study through one or two references to relevant features of the subject matter.

Analysis

The spoken presentation identifies one or two aspects of structure/style/language which contribute to meaning/effect/impact.

Evaluation

The spoken presentation contains a personal reaction to one or two aspects of the subject matter of the Personal Study.

Expression

Mainly audible delivery and use of one or two verbal and/or non-verbal techniques indicate some attempt to engage with both topic and audience.

Interaction with Audience

There are some signs of awareness of audience requirements and reactions and there are relevant responses to at least one or two questions.

Evidence requirements

The candidate's presentation must be essentially unassisted.

The spoken presentation should last at least one minute and should be followed by questions from an audience of no fewer than two people.

The candidate must meet all of the performance criteria in one spoken presentation.

At this level, some support through prompting is permissible, though such support should be limited.

The candidate may refer to materials during the assessment. Such materials will include the candidate's chosen text(s) and may include an outline and preparatory notes (no more than the equivalent of two sides of A4 paper in total) which are the candidate's own work.

The candidate may not use the same material as used in the Literary Study unit.

A checklist and/or recording, with the notes used by the candidate, should be retained as evidence of performance.

National Unit Specification: support notes

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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 CONTENT AND CONTEXT

While all language purposes may be covered in this unit, there will be particular focus on investigating, analysing, reviewing and responding.

The candidate will study personally chosen text(s) or topic(s) from one or more than one of the following:

- literature (fiction or non-fiction)
- language
- mass media.

Note: “text” may be audio, video or film material as well as printed text.

The candidate will engage in a variety of activities such as:

- personal study of text(s) or topic(s)
- recognising basic literary, linguistic or other devices and effects
- looking at different approaches to and ideas about text(s) or topics(s) with teachers/lecturers
- exploring the insights and judgements of others
- acquiring awareness of basic critical concepts through direct teaching
- deploying different research techniques
- collating information and ideas
- identifying a point of view
- recognising different approaches taken in material studied.

Outcome

Speak about chosen text(s) or topic(s).

The candidate will give a spoken presentation about the chosen text(s) or topic(s).

Opportunities for talking and listening activities will arise as candidates pursue study in this unit.

Scottish material may feature in the unit, if the candidate so chooses. The presentation may be in Scots.

The response will take the form of a spoken presentation on the subject of the material chosen for Personal Study.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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The material for study must be the choice of the candidate, but guidance can and should be given. Ideally, candidates should be free to choose from a range of material for study. They should be encouraged to focus on material which they regard as stimulating and interesting. If candidates wish, the Study could emerge from further independent study of text(s) or topic(s) related to an enquiry undertaken by the group, but materials which have been chosen by the teacher/lecturer for study by the group should not form the basis of the Personal Study. The material chosen, however, should allow the candidate full opportunity to achieve the criteria in a spoken presentation.

The best approach is generally a personal one. It is helpful to candidates if the structure of the Study is made clear. It is worth stressing that the more specific the chosen task, the more productive the Personal Study tends to be. Guidance, therefore, should be offered on how the task might be approached at an appropriate level by the candidate concerned.

Suggested areas for study

The examples listed below are intended as indications of possible areas of study. They are not intended to be exhaustive: the examples may be extended to include other material. In the case of literature, texts should not be abridged or simplified. Works in translation may be studied.

- A short story or stories.
- A play.
- A work or works of non-fiction, eg biography, memoir, travel writing, essay.
- A film or other media text.
- Comparison of a novel or other work with stage, film, television, radio versions.
- Works by the same or different authors, related or contrasted by theme or style, eg short stories, poems.
- Personal use of dialect and register.
- The language of a personal leisure-time interest or hobby.
- The language of a vocational area, eg medicine, care, sport.
- A topic, eg travel, homelessness, self-esteem, studied through a variety of material.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES

Study will vary from candidate to candidate and from centre to centre. The following points are offered in the interests of good practice.

- At the outset, all candidates should be briefed on the nature of the task and offered practical suggestions on how best they might choose a suitable area of study.
- Candidates should be made fully aware of the conditions under which their spoken presentation will be given at the end of the unit, and the criteria by which their spoken presentation will be assessed. Candidates should be reminded that the clarity, structure and length of their presentation are important.
- Candidates should be encouraged to consult with the teacher/lecturer on a regular basis in order to establish how the study is proceeding; guidance should be offered which will allow each candidate to develop personal thinking on the chosen study, with a view to spoken presentation. The teacher/lecturer should, for example, ask questions, and the candidate should be encouraged to offer reasons for personal views on material studied.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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- Candidates should be reminded that it is not acceptable to read aloud a previously written essay or script.
- Questions should allow candidates an opportunity to expand on points made during the presentation. At least two questions are likely to be needed.
- The study should be the work of the candidate concerned.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT

The candidate will make a personal choice of material for study in consultation with the supervising teacher/lecturer, who will advise on the suitability of such material. Such negotiation will take place early in the unit. All materials to be studied for the Personal Study unit must be approved by the centre as suitable choices. The candidate is required to offer as the basis of the study material which has not been taught. The spoken presentation at the end of the unit must be the work of the candidate concerned, and must be given in a single time allocation of at least 1 minute, followed by questions, with an audience of no fewer than two people. Candidates are permitted to refer to materials during the assessment.

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 alternative outcomes for units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment Arrangements* (SQA, 2001).