

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT English: Critical Listening (Access 3)

NUMBER DF5V 09

COURSE

SUMMARY

The Unit English: Critical Listening focuses on critical listening skills. Candidates will listen to/watch a variety of oral communications and respond critically to them. A range of basic skills will be developed as candidates listen to/watch, discuss and analyse communications which fulfil a range of transactional and expressive purposes.

This Unit is free-standing, and is additional to the component Units of the Access 3 Cluster in English.

The content of the Unit comprises:

- the basic skills required for individual talk, discussion and listening
- the basic skills required for reading and researching topics and texts
- the basic skills required for writing notes and plans
- knowledge of a range of relevant oral and aural skills.

OUTCOME

Listen to simple oral communication and respond critically to it.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, the Unit is designed to build upon skills and experience gained in previous study of oral/aural skills.

Administrative Information

Superclass: KB

Publication date: April 2004

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2004

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

Additional copies of this unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. The cost for each unit specification is £2.50. (A handling charge of £1.95 will apply to all orders for priced items.)

National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

CREDIT VALUE

0.5 Credit at Access 3 (3 SCQF credit points at level 3*)

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

CORE SKILLS

Information on the automatic certification of any core skills in this Unit is published in *Automatic Certification of Core Skills in National Qualifications* (SQA, publication code BA0906).

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT English: Critical Listening (Access 3)

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

Listen to simple oral communication and respond critically to it.

Performance criteria

Understanding

Responses demonstrate basic understanding of the main points of the observed communication and one or two of its relevant features.

Analysis

Responses identify one or two aspects of verbal and non-verbal technique which contribute to meaning/effect/impact.

Evaluation

Responses contain a personal reaction to one or two aspects of the content or style of the observed communication.

Evidence requirements

Written or spoken responses to unseen questions on an unseen simple oral communication.

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

The candidate must meet all the performance criteria in response to one observed communication.

The observed communication will be characterised by content which communicates simple information, ideas and opinions in a straightforward, unambiguous manner.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT English: Critical Listening (Access 3)

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 20 hours.

While all language purposes may be covered in this Unit, there will be particular focus on purposes related to listening to oral presentation and discussion of information, ideas and opinions.

The candidate will, watch, listen to, discuss and evaluate a selection from such texts as:

- individual speeches and presentations
- extracts from broadcast communications (news, documentary, debate, advertisement)
- those which form the focus of literary and language study in other Units.

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

- watching and/or listening to a range of basic oral presentations, debates, speeches, interviews, and group discussions
- responding critically to a range of oral presentations (for example, debates, speeches, interviews, group discussions, extracts from broadcasts)
- contributing constructively and purposefully to group discussion of topics or texts
- rehearsing and delivering basic oral communications for specified purposes and audiences
- planning and constructing basic oral communications for specified purposes and audiences.

Outcome

Listen to simple oral communication and respond critically to it.

The candidate will be assessed in critical listening.

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

The summary table gives an indication of content and context. There will be a need to set time aside to create the context and content which will provide the resources for candidates' ideas and understanding.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

In order to develop skills in critical listening candidates will need:

- a basic understanding of listening skills and purposes
- a basic understanding of how to develop skills of listening
- an opportunity to reflect on and evaluate their progress
- feedback from the teacher/lecturer and/or other candidates.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT English: Critical Listening (Access 3)

The support notes offered in relation to oral presentation and group discussion contain much that is of relevance in the learning and teaching of listening skills. In particular, skilled critical listening will be dependent upon an understanding of oral skills. The place of effective listening in discussion is obvious. There are, however, significant differences in the demands on and opportunities for listening skills required of candidates studying for this outcome. The candidates can:

- remain detached
- listen/view and review the observed communication on tape
- focus on various basic aspects of the communication
- discuss what has been listened to/watched with teachers/lecturers and peers.

Clearly the learning and teaching of oral presentation skills will assist candidates in identifying the qualities of effective talk.

Effective critical listening is dependent upon skill in the following areas:

Receptive listening

Receptive skills may be compared with literal comprehension in reading, but in listening reception will include discrimination as well as comprehension. Comprehension refers to the ability to understand the content of the communication. Allied closely, often inseparably, to this is discrimination, the skill of identifying and making sense of auditory and visual cues. Discriminatory skills, therefore, require sensitivity to both verbal and non-verbal messages presented by the speakers.

Inferential listening

Inferential skills may be compared with inference/deduction in reading but inferential listening will draw upon the different types of message presented by the speaker(s). In order to work out different levels of meaning the listener interprets not only verbal but also visual and aural cues and clues. In moving from receptive to inferential listening, the listener progresses to greater understanding of meaning.

Evaluative listening

Evaluation of any text, printed, visual or oral, has at its centre judgement of quality and effectiveness. Evaluative listening involves the listener in measuring the effectiveness of the observed oral communication and adopting a personal critical stance. Evaluation is dependent upon receptive and inferential skills. Evidence of this will be offered in the form of details supporting the critical judgement.

As with close reading, listening skills can be measured only through the quality of analysis and response. The analogy may be further developed in that both reader and listener are able to show developing skill and growing sophistication as they make accurate interpretations and judgements of increasingly complex texts. What it may be useful to show/play to candidates examples of limited and even poor communications, candidates will gain most benefit from studying rich and involving texts.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT English: Critical Listening (Access 3)

Suitable texts for critical listening may be:

- individual and other oral presentations
- group oral interactions
- dialogues, debates, speeches
- current affairs, discussion broadcasts
- interviews with individuals or groups (for example, job interviews, interviews with figures of public or other interest/significance).

In selecting texts suitable for critical listening, teachers/lecturers should seek to ensure that the texts are:

- stimulating and accessible
- illustrative of significant aspects of oral communication
- not too long or too short (length should be sensibly adjusted to practicable constraints of time and candidates powers of concentration and recollection).

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

As assessment is an integral part of the learning and teaching process, candidates should be encouraged to observe a variety of texts which contain significant oral communication and, in response to these, undertake a number of activities for formative purposes.

In summative assessment, care must be taken both in the selection of texts and in 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.

Summative assessment of this outcome, which must take place under controlled conditions in the presenting centre, will require candidates to demonstrate their ability to listen to a simple oral communication and, through a series of questions which require understanding, analysis and evaluation, respond to it critically.

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, September 2003).