



Higher  
Course Assessment  
Specification



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# Higher English Course Assessment Specification (C724 76)

**Valid from August 2014**

This edition: July 2014, version 1.2

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Please refer to the note of changes at the end of this Course Assessment Specification for details of changes from previous version (where applicable).

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## Course outline

<b>Course title:</b>	Higher English
<b>SCQF level:</b>	6 (24 SCQF credit points)
<b>Course code:</b>	C724 76
<b>Course assessment code:</b>	X724 76

The purpose of the Course Assessment Specification is to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year. It describes the structure of the Course assessment and the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding that will be assessed.

### Course assessment structure

Component 1 — question paper — Reading for Understanding, Analysis and Evaluation	30 marks
Component 2 — question paper — Critical Reading	40 marks
Component 3 — portfolio: writing	30 marks
<b>Total marks</b>	<b>100 marks</b>

This Course includes six SCQF credit points to allow additional time for preparation for Course assessment. The Course assessment covers the added value of the Course.

### Equality and inclusion

This Course Assessment Specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to assessment. Assessments have been designed to promote equal opportunities while maintaining the integrity of the qualification.

For guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled learners and/or those with additional support needs, please follow the link to the Assessment Arrangements web page: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html).

Guidance on inclusive approaches to delivery and assessment of this Course is provided in the *Course Support Notes*.

# Assessment

To gain the award of the Course, the learner must pass all of the Units as well as the Course assessment. Course assessment will provide the basis for grading attainment in the Course award.

## Course assessment

SQA will produce and give instructions for the production and conduct of Course assessments based on the information provided in this document.

## Added value

The purpose of the Course assessment is to assess added value of the Course as well as confirming attainment in the Course and providing a grade. The added value for the Course will address the key purposes and aims of the Course, as defined in the Course Rationale. It will do this by addressing one or more of breadth, challenge, or application.

In this Course assessment, added value will focus on the following:

- ◆ challenge — requiring greater depth or extension of knowledge and/or skills
- ◆ application — requiring application of knowledge and/or skills in practical or theoretical contexts as appropriate

This added value consists of:

- ◆ the ability to understand, analyse and evaluate detailed and complex unseen written texts
- ◆ the ability to understand, analyse and evaluate detailed and complex texts in the contexts of literature, language or media
- ◆ the ability to apply language skills in the creation of texts

## Grading

Course assessment will provide the basis for grading attainment in the Course award.

The Course assessment is graded A–D. The grade is determined on the basis of the total mark for all Course assessments together.

A learner's overall grade will be determined by their performance across the Course assessment.

### Grade description for C

For the award of Grade C, learners will have demonstrated successful performance in all of the Units of the Course. In the Course assessment, learners will typically have demonstrated successful performance in relation to the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course.

**Grade description for A**

For the award of Grade A, learners will have demonstrated successful performance in all of the Units of the Course. In the Course assessment, learners will typically have demonstrated a consistently high level of performance in relation to the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course.

**Credit**

To take account of the extended range of learning and teaching approaches, remediation, consolidation of learning and integration needed for preparation for external assessment, six SCQF credit points are available in Courses at National 5 and Higher, and eight SCQF credit points in Courses at Advanced Higher. These points will be awarded when a Grade D or better is achieved.

## Structure and coverage of the Course assessment

The Course assessment will consist of three Components:

Component 1 comprises a question paper titled 'Reading for Understanding, Analysis and Evaluation.'

Component 2 comprises a question paper that has two sections: one titled 'Scottish Texts' and one titled 'Critical Essay'.

Component 3 comprises a portfolio, titled 'Writing'.

**Component 1 — question paper: Reading for Understanding, Analysis and Evaluation**, will have 30 marks.

These 30 marks will be awarded for addressing the challenge of applying the reading skills of understanding, analysis and evaluation to two non-fiction texts which are connected by theme. Learners will gain credit for their understanding of the ideas of the texts; their analysis and evaluation of the writers' use of language; and their ability to summarise information for a purpose.

Learners will be required to:

- ◆ identify key information and ideas from the texts
- ◆ explain relationships between ideas
- ◆ analyse features of language and discuss their relationship with the ideas of the texts as a whole. Features of language might include word choice, imagery, tone, sentence structure, punctuation, sound techniques, and so on.
- ◆ evaluate the effect of the language and/or ideas of the text(s).

The learners will answer detailed questions on the first text, and then address one question which requires the learner to infer and summarise the ideas and/or language of both texts. They will be required to demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the texts.

**Component 2 — question paper 'Critical Reading'**, will have 40 marks.

These 40 marks will be awarded for applying critical reading, knowledge and understanding.

This question paper has two Sections. In each Section, learners must cover a different genre and cannot use the same text twice.

Twenty marks will be available for each of the two Sections.

### **Section 1 Scottish Texts (20 marks)**

Learners will apply their skills in understanding, analysis and evaluation to previously studied Scottish literature by answering questions on the work of **one** Scottish writer. This writer will be chosen from a list of specified texts covering the genres of drama, prose and poetry. The writers will be contemporary, 20<sup>th</sup> century and pre-20<sup>th</sup> century

and the list will be refreshed as required. There will be one extract with questions provided for each Scottish writer on the list.

Learners will gain credit for their understanding, analysis and evaluation of the extract and either the whole play or novel, or other specified poems and short stories by the writer.

10 marks will be available for answering detailed questions on the extract, and a further 10 marks will be available for answering one question requiring a broader knowledge of the rest of the novel or play, or other short stories or poems by the writer. In the final 10-mark question the learner can answer the question in either a series of linked statements, or in bullet points.

### **Section 2 Critical Essay (20 marks)**

Learners will apply their understanding, analysis and evaluation skills to previously studied texts from the following contexts: drama, prose, poetry, film and TV drama, or language, by writing one critical essay. Three essay questions will be provided for each context and learners should select one.

Learners will gain credit for their knowledge and understanding of the text(s), and their skills in analysis and evaluation. The essay should be relevant to the question and achieve minimum requirements for technical accuracy. There may be a few errors, but they should not impede understanding. If minimum standards are not achieved, the maximum mark which can be awarded is 9. To access the full range of marks the essay should communicate clearly at first reading.

### **Component 3 — portfolio: writing**

The purpose of this assessment is to generate evidence for the added value of this Course by means of a **portfolio**. The portfolio consists of two written texts which will be the evidence for assessment. The added value consists of the ability to apply language skills in the creation of texts.

This portfolio will give learners an opportunity to demonstrate the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

- ◆ skills in writing in different genres, namely creative and discursive writing
- ◆ skills in writing for different purposes and audiences

The portfolio will have 30 marks (30% of the total mark). A maximum of fifteen marks will be awarded for each text chosen for the portfolio.

This portfolio has one Section.

Learners will demonstrate their ability to write in more than one form. The written texts must be of no more than 1,300 words each, but full marks can be achieved in a shorter piece, if appropriate to purpose.

The learner's writing will be marked in terms of content, accuracy, language use and ability to achieve the intended purpose.

## **Setting, conducting and marking of assessment**

### **Question paper 1 — Reading for Understanding, Analysis and Evaluation**

This question paper will be set and marked by SQA, and conducted in centres under conditions specified for external examinations by SQA. Learners will complete this question paper in 1 hour and 30 minutes.

### **Question paper 2 —Critical Reading**

This question paper will be set and marked by SQA, and conducted in centres under conditions specified for external examinations by SQA. Learners will complete this question paper in 1 hour and 30 minutes.

### **Controlled assessment — portfolio: writing**

This portfolio is:

- ◆ set by centres within SQA guidelines
- ◆ conducted under some supervision and control

Evidence will be submitted to SQA for external marking.

All marking will be quality assured by SQA.

No assessed piece may be redrafted more than twice at most.

## Further mandatory information on Course coverage

The following gives details of mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding for the Higher English Course. Course assessment will involve sampling the skills, knowledge and understanding. This list of skills, knowledge and understanding also provides the basis for the assessment of the reading and writing Unit outcomes of the Course.

### Knowledge of:

- ◆ the distinction between connotative and denotative uses of language.
- ◆ the conventions of written language.
- ◆ a critical terminology for discussing a wide range of texts.
- ◆ literary genres
- ◆ Scottish literature drawn from a specified list

### Command of:

- ◆ skills of understanding, analysis and evaluation
- ◆ skills of inference making and summarising
- ◆ skills required for discursive and creative writing

### Specified Scottish Texts (will be refreshed as required)

#### Drama:

**The Slab Boys** by John Byrne

**The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil** by John McGrath

**Men Should Weep** by Ena Lamont Stewart

#### Prose:

**Short stories** by Iain Crichton Smith

*(The Red Door, The Telegram, Mother and Son, In Church, The Painter, The Crater)*

**Short stories** by George Mackay Brown

*(A Time to Keep, The Bright Spade, The Wireless Set, The Whaler's Return, The Eye of the Hurricane, Tartan)*

**The Trick is to Keep Breathing** by Janice Galloway

**Sunset Song** by Lewis Grassie Gibbon

**The Cone Gatherers** by Robin Jenkins

## Poetry

### **Robert Burns**

*(Holy Willie's Prayer, Tam O' Shanter, To a Mouse, A Poet's Welcome to his Love-Begotten Daughter, Address to the Deil, A Man's a Man for a' That)*

### **Carol Ann Duffy**

*(War Photographer, Havisham, Valentine, Originally, Anne Hathaway, Mrs Midas)*

### **Liz Lochhead**

*(The Bargain, My Rival's House, View of Scotland/Love Poem, Some Old Photographs, For my Grandmother Knitting, Last Supper)*

### **Norman MacCaig**

*(Sounds of the Day, Assisi, Visiting Hour, Memorial, Aunt Julia, Basking Shark)*

### **Sorley MacLean**

*(Hallaig, Screapadal, Heroes, Shores, An Autumn Day, I gave you Immortality )*

### **Don Paterson**

*(Waking with Russell, The Thread, 11:00: Baldovan, Two Trees, The Ferryman's Arms, Nil Nil)*

## Administrative information

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**Published:** July 2014 (version 1.2)

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### History of changes to Course Assessment Specification

Course details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
	1.1	Pages 8-9 List of Specified Texts added Page 8 Mandatory information on skills, knowledge and understanding of course coverage revised	Qualifications Development Manager	April 2014
	1.2	Page 7 – timing of critical reading paper updated to 1 hour 30 minutes	Qualifications Development Manager	July 2014

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