

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT English: Critical Listening (Higher)

NUMBER DF5V 12

SUMMARY

The Unit English: Critical Listening focuses on critical listening skills. Candidates will view/listen to and analyse a range of complex oral communications. A range of skills will be developed and high levels of ability will be required as candidates analyse for informational, analytical, expressive and critical purposes.

This Unit is free-standing, and is additional to the component Units of the Higher Course in English.

The content of the Unit comprises:

- the skills and concepts required for individual talk, discussion and listening; skills will be deployed in talking about issues, interests, ideas and texts and in listening critically to oral skills being used in a range of situations
- the skills and concepts required for reading and researching topics and texts
- the skills and concepts required for writing notes, plans and evaluations
- knowledge of a range of relevant linguistic concepts.

OUTCOME

Listen to complex oral communication and respond critically to it.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

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

- The Critical Listening Unit at Intermediate 2
- Standard Grade English at Credit level
- Intermediate 2 English or its component Units
- Any other relevant qualification.

Administrative Information

Superclass: KB

Publication date: April 2004

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

CREDIT VALUE

0.5 Credit at Higher (3 SCQF points at SCQF level 6*)

**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

There is no automatic certification of core skills or core skills components in this Unit.

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 (Higher)

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 complex oral communication and respond critically to it.

Performance criteria

Understanding

Responses demonstrate secure understanding of key elements, central concerns and supporting details/relevant features of the observed communication.

Analysis

Responses explain accurately and in detail ways in which aspects of verbal and non-verbal technique contribute to meaning/effect/impact.

Evaluation

Responses reveal clear engagement with the observed communication (or aspects of it) and stated or implied evaluation of its effectiveness, taking into account its perceived purpose, using appropriate critical terminology and substantiated with detailed and relevant evidence from the text.

Evidence requirements

Written or spoken responses to unseen questions on an unseen complex 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 information, ideas and opinions at a sophisticated level (often marked by the number and relationship of ideas, and/or by the density of detail).

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT English: Critical Listening (Higher)

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.

<p>The candidate will watch, listen, analyse, discuss and evaluate a selection from such texts as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• individual speeches and presentations• broadcast communications (news, documentary, debate, advertisement)• group discussions• those which form the focus of literary and language study in other Units.
<p>The candidate will engage in a variety of language activities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• planning and constructing oral communications for specified purposes and audiences• rehearsing and delivering oral communications for specified purposes and audiences• making an analytical presentation about a text or an aspect of a text or topic• contributing constructively and purposefully to group discussion of topics or texts• watching and/or listening to a range of oral presentations, debates, speeches, interviews and group discussion• analysing a range of oral presentations (for example, debates, speeches, interviews, group discussions, broadcasts).
<p>Outcome Listen to complex oral communication and respond critically to it.</p> <p>The candidate will be assessed in critical listening.</p>

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:

- an understanding of listening skills and purposes
- an 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 (Higher)

The support notes offered in relation to individual 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 a clear understanding of oral skills. The place of effective listening in quality 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, which allows for reflection and the formation of critical opinion
- listen/view and review the observed communication on tape
- focus on different aspects of the communication, such as content, role(s), behaviours, relationships, progression, outcomes
- discuss what has been listened to/watched with teacher/lecturer and peers.

Clearly the learning and teaching of oral presentation skills will assist candidates in identifying the qualities of effective talk; the close relationship of all three outcomes will also be beneficial to each.

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 full understanding of meaning.

Evaluative listening

Evaluation of any text, printed, 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 justifying 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 and evaluation.

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. While 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 (Higher)

Suitable texts for critical listening may be:

- individual and other oral presentations
- group oral interactions
- dialogues, debates, speeches
- current affairs and other 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 and lecturers should seek to ensure that the texts are:

- stimulating and accessible
- illustrative of significant aspects of oral communication, including interaction between speakers
- not too long or too short (length should be sensibly adjusted to constraints of time and candidate 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 complex oral communication and, through a series of questions which require understanding, analysis and evaluation, respond critically to it.

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).