



COMMUNICATION
SCQF Level 6
40 Hour Unit (F3GB 12)

CORE SKILLS UNIT

ASSESSMENT SUPPORT PACK

Part 1: Information for tutors

What is involved?

This Unit is designed for delivery in schools, colleges, workplaces, community, and other learning environments. The content should involve tasks and skills that are suited to the requirements of the individual learner. The focus of the Unit is on transferable communication skills:

- reading, summarising, and evaluating
- writing
- speaking and listening

These skills should be useful to learners in their education, in their social and personal lives, or in current and future jobs.

For this Unit, learners are expected to be able to communicate with others at an advanced level and complete tasks with little support. The Unit is designed for those who have skill or experience in communicating in the workplace, in public, in the community, or in education and training. The work undertaken in assessments may be complex and will require previous knowledge or experience of formal documents and situations. The Unit might be suitable for

learners who are currently working towards other qualifications at SCQF levels 5 or 6, eg National Qualifications or SVQs.

Communication tasks can be combined with other Core Skills activities, such as those for Working with Others, Problem Solving, or Information and Communication Technology (ICT). If you are adopting this approach, remember that records must be kept for each of the Units.

Assessment and evidence

Learners at SCQF level 6 are required to deal with language that is often complex and conveys different strands of information or ideas, not all of which will be familiar from their everyday working, educational, or social experience. They should require little support in completing their tasks.

When assessing by observation, you must keep a detailed checklist. Similarly, if you use oral questioning, you must keep a record of both the questions and learner responses. All evidence, whether produced by the learner or a record made by yourself, must be retained, signed, and dated by you.

This Unit is not just about assessing a minimum number of tasks. Particularly at this level, it is important that the learners develop skills across a wide range of contexts. In reading, it is important that you encourage the learners to read widely from documents with different purposes, themes, styles, and formats. Similarly, learners should experiment with a variety of writing formats and styles, ideally practising formal and informal styles, using graphics and supporting materials, and writing for different audiences, before attempting an assessment task. Speaking and listening skills, in discussion and in delivering presentations on familiar and unfamiliar topics, should be developed over a period of time, to build confidence and technique.

Practising and developing expertise in a range of contexts will emphasise to the learners that these skills are not limited to a particular subject, course of study, or workplace situation, but can be used in all areas of their lives.

Reading

You should choose complex non-fiction reading material that covers a topic and uses vocabulary that may be unfamiliar to learners. The material should include the presentation, analysis, and synthesis of information, and/or will explore an issue from several perspectives, and/or will present a sustained and sophisticated argument. It may feature abstract ideas and complexity in tone, point of view, or central argument. The reading material will normally have more than one purpose, eg to inform and evaluate; to discuss and to persuade; to share experience; to draw conclusions.

Reading material may deal with topics and vocabulary that are abstract and may be unfamiliar to learners. The reading material may include images as well as words. It may use specialist/technical vocabulary and complex sentence structure.

The length of the chosen reading text should be appropriate to level 6 i.e. between 700 and 1000 words.

Writing

You should use a task for assessment that is relevant to the learners in their personal, workplace, educational, or social environment. Documents may include images such as maps, sketches, diagrams, or photographs in support of the written text. These may be created by learners or selected from a bank of images. Learners will use appropriate vocabulary, including specialist or technical terms and varied sentence structures.

The document will have a clearly defined purpose, audience, and structure. Information will be presented, analysed, and evaluated, and/or ideas will be explored in depth and considered from several perspectives, taking account of and refuting challenges. A few errors may be present when learners are using complex syntax or vocabulary, but these should not be significant.

Learners will produce one piece of writing of at least 700 words (or a number of related pieces) that conveys several pieces of information and/or a clearly stated opinion. If there are a number of pieces, one of these must contain no fewer than 500 words. Document(s) can be handwritten, or word processed.

Speaking and listening

The oral communication must be one spoken interaction between the learner and one or more people. This may be either a discussion (lasting a minimum of five minutes) or the learner may give a short presentation lasting a minimum of four minutes, with an additional minute for questions.

A discussion should have a clear purpose, be on a relevant topic, and allow for identification and exploration of complex issues and the reaching of conclusions. The learner must make a significant contribution.

A presentation must include sustained and significant interaction with the audience. It may be supported by images using information technology software or multimedia tools.

You will establish learner competence by observation of the spoken interaction referring to the evidence requirements, supplemented where necessary by questioning of the learner.

Planning

You should work out where opportunities for meeting the standard are likely to arise. You should discuss this assessment process with the learners so that they clearly understand what is expected from them.

Guidance on the Unit

What learners need to know or be able to do

The Unit states that learners will:

When reading:

- identify and summarise all the important ideas, key points, and supporting detail in a complex piece of non-fiction writing (eg extracting, summarising, and explaining fully how detailed information relates to and supports key points)
- evaluate how well a complex piece of writing meets its purpose and the needs of its intended readers, supported by evidence (eg has it achieved the writer's aim, does it contain all the information that a reader would need, does it present all aspects of a complex issue, has the author used style and structure, graphics, layout, tone, and language appropriate to the subject matter and the intended readership?)

When writing:

- choose a format that is appropriate to the readers and the subject matter (eg a report, project proposal, or article)
- choose layout, structure, vocabulary, and graphics (if appropriate) that make their piece of writing clear, suit their topic, and are appropriate for their readers
- gather, select, and include relevant information or ideas
- vary sentence structure, paragraphing, and vocabulary to suit the purpose and readership (eg use paragraphing and structural subdivisions to make clear distinctions between facts, opinions, arguments, and conclusions)
- emphasise the main points in a piece of writing
- use spelling, grammar, and punctuation that are consistently accurate (eg complex structure of sentences, clauses, tenses of verbs, capital letters, full stops, commas, question marks, dashes, brackets, colons, semi-colons, italics, and paragraphing)
- vary language for effect, using a dictionary or thesaurus, when needed
- use a writing style that takes account of purpose and readership (eg giving examples to clarify certain points; avoiding jargon words in communications intended for non-specialists)

When speaking and listening:

- express complex ideas clearly in speech (eg by choosing language that fits the topic, the situation, and which listeners understand; speaking clearly and loudly enough; varying speed and tone; pausing at appropriate points)
- structure what they say to take account of purpose and audience (eg presenting the information/ideas with some supporting detail in a logical order; linking related information or ideas; making a presentation with a beginning/overview, middle section with information in logical sequence and sub-sections, and conclusion/summary of main points; making a sustained and structured contribution to a complex discussion)
- emphasise the main points (eg through their tone, gestures, and volume of speaking)
- support content with images, where appropriate (eg computer visuals, multimedia tools, and models)
- integrate the use of body language and verbal communication for maximum impact and clarity when speaking (eg eye contact, posture, and gesture)
- listen carefully to any questions from listeners and respond accordingly (eg by repeating or rephrasing information; giving extra information; summarising; asking questions of listeners; reflecting on or synthesising points of view expressed)
- adapt speaking style to take account of situation and audience (eg giving examples to clarify certain points; avoiding or explaining jargon words in communication for non-specialists)
- listen carefully to what others say, taking account of their contribution and responding accordingly (eg by explaining own point of view; repeating information; giving extra information; analysing; summarising; synthesising; rephrasing what has been said; asking questions to clarify anything they do not understand; exploring subjects in greater depth)

Assessment guidance, together with some suggested activities, is contained in Part 2.

Reading

Reading skills can be developed and assessed by using or adapting material related to the working, learning, or social environment of learners. Available documents might include in depth reports, detailed articles, advertising materials, and workplace policies and procedures. It is probable that learners at this level would be dealing with complex written documents on a regular basis.

Picking out all important ideas and key points

Learners will need to know how to pick out all the important points that the writer is making and any supporting detail. They should be encouraged to look at how the writer identifies the subject of the document. This could be the title or subject line of an e-mail or a letter, an eye-catching headline, or even a picture on an advertising portfolio. Within the document, there will be important points the writer does not want the reader to miss. Sometimes these are in bigger or bolder print, or are set out in bullet points, numbered, or underlined. Another way of highlighting important points would be to separate a longer piece of writing into paragraphs, so that each important point starts on a new line. The writer may also use diagrams, photographs, or other graphics to draw attention to important points. It is important that learners are aware of the line of reasoning in a document, which may express different points of view or suggest a number of reasons why a situation has arisen. Learners should be aware of different arguments and of the information that is being given to justify them.

Summarising the key information/ideas and the supporting detail

Learners should demonstrate their ability to identify the links between supporting detail and the main points in the document. This may involve pulling together material from different parts of the document or interpreting certain lines of argument. It can be helpful for the learner to produce a summary note that includes all the main ideas and key points in a logical order, referencing the supporting detail to each main section.

Evaluating a piece of writing

Learners should be able to judge the effectiveness of a piece of writing. If providing information, was this comprehensive and relevant? If presenting an argument, was there any unfair bias on the part of the writer? In dealing with sensitive issues, was consideration given to the standpoint of the reader?

Was the layout, use of language, and graphics effective in making the meaning clear?

Learners are not required to work out the purpose of the piece of writing in order to pass. You can tell them this as part of the assessment instruction. However, they do need to know the purpose in order to evaluate successfully.

Deciding whether or not a written communication has achieved its purpose

When deciding whether or not the piece of writing has achieved what it set out to do, the learners must consider the purpose. For example, if the purpose was to persuade the readers of a Sunday supplement that they could help offset the effects of global warming, was there evidence that the suggested measures would have a significant impact? Were alternative points of view identified? Were the opinions of relevant experts sought to inform the debate? Were arguments summarised and presented logically?

Writing

At this level, learners will normally produce written communications as part of their working, educational, or personal routine. Suitable writing tasks may not occur naturally, and you may have to set a special assessment. Written tasks should relate directly to the experience of the learners.

Writing for the reader

Learners need to decide whom they are writing for, and why, eg to inform, instruct, advise, or persuade. They should be clear about the main messages, and make sure the way they write is appropriate for the readers, both in content and style. For example, a report for the School Board or an article for a specialist magazine will normally use more formal language than that used in creating a set of leaflets advertising local events. Learners should be able to state clearly and unambiguously their reason for producing the written piece. There may possibly be more than one purpose, eg to inform and persuade, or to inform and advise.

Choosing a suitable format

Different formats are appropriate for different situations. The content of the document will influence the choice of format, eg whether to write a formal proposal, a report, or an article for publication or electronic distribution.

The choice of subject will also influence whether the communication is completed in handwriting or produced electronically. In reality, at this level, learners will almost certainly produce their task electronically.

Choosing layout, structure, vocabulary, and graphics

Thinking about the potential readers, the content, and the format will help learners select an appropriate structure and layout. In a workplace or educational context, there may well be a prescribed way of writing reports, letters, and e-mails, in which case this should be adhered to, though sometimes the writer may be allowed to influence the appearance of the finished piece, and at this level it may be appropriate for the learner to suggest changes to the usual style. Other items, eg maps, diagrams, pie charts, and photographs can be included in support of the text. These may be selected from a bank of images or created by the learners.

Varying sentence structure, paragraphing, and vocabulary

Learners should be able to vary the structure of sentences, eg simple or

complex, use paragraphs and/or bullet points, and select and use vocabulary that is appropriate to the purpose of the document and the intended readers. Every organisation has its own specialist or technical vocabulary and learners will need to understand and use this if writing for an internal readership. However, when writing for non-specialists, or for more general readers, more straightforward vocabulary and structure should be used to aid understanding. The communication will have failed if it is pitched at a level inappropriate to the readers.

Gathering and selecting information

Learners should demonstrate the ability to gather information from a range of sources as background to the written communication. They may find it useful to consult colleagues, teachers, or other learners; use existing internal workplace or educational documents; consult textbooks, journals, the library, and internet. They should be able to select information or ideas that are relevant to their topic and avoid including any material that may be interesting but has little bearing on their aim in writing the piece.

Presenting information in a logical order

Learners should be able to write in a logical and effective order, ie linking introduction, main body, and conclusion, using paragraphs and headings as appropriate to the format of the document. The type of document will dictate the ordering of items. For example, in a report, although the topic will be identified first, the very important results, conclusions, and recommendations will appear at the end, logically following all the evidence. However, in documents providing information or instructions it would be usual, within each section or paragraph, to present the main information first, followed by supplementary material. Typically, detailed additional material will be contained in annexes or appendices to the main document.

Emphasising the main points

Prominence can be given to significant words or phrases by their order within the document, placement in relation to other words, and repetition. Common conventions can be used to highlight important points, eg large or bold type, bullet points, and underlining.

Spelling, punctuation, and grammar

Spelling, punctuation, and grammar should be consistently accurate. Learners

should make sure that the words they use most often are spelled correctly, which at this level may include specialist words, technical terms, or abbreviations. Learners should check words they are unsure of, using a dictionary or spell-checker. They will be expected to comply with grammatical structures by constructing sentences and clauses correctly and using the correct tense and agreement for verbs. The main punctuation conventions should be followed (eg use of capital letters, full stops, commas, question marks, dashes, brackets, colons, and semi-colons).

Varying language and style

Learners should be able to vary the style and vocabulary of their piece of writing, for interest and effect. This may be achieved by using a dictionary or thesaurus. Learners should use a writing style which takes account of the purpose and the readership by, for example, avoiding jargon words when writing for non-specialists or providing examples to clarify specific points.

Improving on an initial draft

Learners should read their document to check that the ideas and information they have put together can be clearly understood, and that format, layout, and structure are appropriate to the reader and topic. They should also proof-read for grammatical or spelling errors, before editing and redrafting.

Speaking and listening

Naturally occurring discussions on any aspect of work, education, community, or social life offer opportunities for assessment. The learner should make a major contribution. Alternatively, learners may wish to give a presentation or demonstration about a particular project, hobby, community activity, or topical issue, fielding questions from the listeners to demonstrate listening skills.

Expressing complex ideas

Learners should know how to prepare for important conversations or discussions, making sure they know what they want to say. They should choose vocabulary that is appropriate to the topic and that the listeners will understand. If technical/specialist words or abbreviations are used that are unfamiliar to the listener, these should be explained. They should be able to use the most common spoken conventions to aid understanding by, for example, speaking slowly, clearly, and loudly enough; varying speed and tone for emphasis; pausing to allow for a response from the listener.

Gathering and selecting information and images

Learners should gather information from a range of sources as background to the topic for discussion or presentation. They may find it useful to consult colleagues, teachers, textbooks, journals, library, and/or the internet. They should then select the most relevant material to support their ideas, which could include a variety of graphical information. When taking part in a discussion or making a presentation, learners may include researched background information to support their ideas or arguments. A presentation may be supported by images using information technology software or multimedia tools.

Structuring information

Learners should understand how to present spoken information logically. One indicator of the importance of topics is the order in which information is presented: usually the most important idea first, often repeated at the end for emphasis. This is particularly important when giving instructions. Prominence can be given to significant words or phrases by their order, placement in relation to other words, and repetition. Learners should be able to construct a speech or presentation with a recognisable structure, eg beginning, middle, and conclusion. Sometimes a summary can be an effective way of drawing the discussion or presentation to a close.

Emphasising the main points

Tone, gesture, and volume can be used to emphasise the main points when speaking, eg deliberately stressing rising intonation when asking a question; use of fingers to identify and count off the main points in a summary; speaking more loudly to stress certain important words.

Using body language

Body language is a valuable clue to the mood and intention of the speaker. It is the unspoken supplement to the spoken words, and the speaker should consciously make use of this. It can convey confidence or diffidence, transparency or concealment, interest or indifference. Learners should be encouraged to try to look as relaxed as possible (even if they are nervous) and smile (if it is appropriate to do so). The main indicators are posture, eye contact, facial expression, and gesture. There is a range of gestures that enhances the spoken message, eg opening the hands in a welcoming gesture, nodding, or shaking the head. Some gestures are more akin to formal signs, eg putting the hand up in a response to a question or pointing when giving directions.

Listening carefully and responding to questions

It is important that learners allow listeners/other speakers the opportunity to ask questions or to offer points of view. It is often appropriate to pause at intervals while speaking, to allow time for clarification or repetition. However, if this does not happen, then the speaker should specifically ask for questions or opinions. The speaker should be prepared to provide clarification on vocabulary, specific topics, and on the general sense of what has been said. It may be necessary to repeat or rephrase what has been said or provide additional information. It can be very helpful to summarise the speaker's own points and to synthesise the views of others.

Adapting speaking style

Learners should take account of sensitive issues or audiences by, for example, avoiding jargon words or providing examples if addressing a non-specialist audience or clarifying vocabulary for listeners whose first language is not English.

Judging the degree of formality

The learner should be aware of, and respond to, the nature of the audience or

discussion group, and make appropriate choices regarding the formality of the language used. An open discussion with residents on local waste collection services would require a more informal register than making a presentation to the local council on the deficiencies of the system, proposing improvements that might be put into place.

Listening carefully to what others say

Learners should listen attentively to other speakers, and make sure that they take full account of their contributions. It is important to respond in an appropriate manner, eg by asking for additional information or clarification, or by entering into further discussion on the speakers' differing points of view. Learners should be prepared to repeat or rephrase their own points, and to analyse, summarise, and synthesise information or arguments.

Gathering evidence

It may be appropriate for you to gather written evidence produced by the learner while carrying out the practical activities. However, written evidence is not essential for the reading and speaking/listening elements of this Unit and is inappropriate if it disadvantages the learner.

From the learner's point of view, it is useful to have the means of keeping all the work of this Unit together. You can help here by creating and providing a workbook that includes all the evidence-gathering items. An alternative would be to provide worksheets that can be made into a portfolio.

If you have chosen to integrate the Communication work with that of other Units being undertaken by the learner, it may be possible to do combined assessment as part of a larger single activity. In this case you must keep separate records that show all standards being met in each Unit.

General guidance on assessment evidence for this Unit

Assessment activities for Reading, Writing, and Speaking and Listening can be designed to assess each task separately, or as one large assessment activity designed to cover all standards across all three tasks within this unit. Evidence must not be collected from assessment activities that cover only part of a task.

For the Reading task, the assessment activity should focus on one reading text and the evidence collected should demonstrate the learner's ability to summarise and evaluate that text only. The evidence for this task can be collected over more than one occasion and with no time restriction, within reasonable limits.

For the Writing task, the assessment activity should focus on one theme for the written piece or pieces. The evidence for this task can be collected over more than one occasion and with no time restriction, within reasonable limits.

For the Speaking and Listening task, the assessment activity should focus on one presentation or discussion conducted on one occasion and observed by the assessor.

All assessment activity for this unit is open book and it is the centre's responsibility to ensure that the evidence collected is the learner's own work.

Reading

Read a complex piece of non-fiction writing. They may then write a short report, or the assessor may ask questions and make notes or record what they have said.

Writing

Produce a well-structured document (or a series of related documents) on a complex topic. The written communication should total at least 700 words. Information will be presented, analysed, and evaluated and/or ideas and opinions will be developed in relation to an issue that is explored in depth and considered from several perspectives, taking account of and refuting challenges. At least one of the documents (if a related set is used) should be a substantive piece of no fewer than 500 words.

Speaking and Listening

Take part in a discussion or give a short talk to one or more people with questions and answers. The assessor will observe and make notes or a recording. The learner should also keep a brief record explaining the situation (eg who was present, what was being discussed, and what was the purpose of the discussion). This record might include any plan that they developed for their presentation/discussion.

Evidence for the Unit as a whole may be gathered in a variety of ways. Some typical activities might be:

- summarising and evaluating a substantial research report from a professional journal
- analysing and evaluating the annual report of a community partnership; inferring the readership and purpose; commenting on the effectiveness of the presentation
- drafting a proposal to local councillors that details resources required and recommended actions to be taken to set up a local pre-school playgroup
- producing a well-structured report of a complex laboratory investigation undertaken as part of your college course and drawing detailed conclusions from the research evidence
- making a significant contribution to a discussion on a controversial issue, backing up your beliefs/values/opinions with supporting evidence
- making a formal presentation on a health-related topic that collates and analyses information and data and presents conclusions on findings..

Disabled learners and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website

www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

Part 2: Assessment guidance

You can use the exemplar assessments given in this section in several ways:

- to help identify the type and amount of evidence that the learner needs to produce
- to help identify the level of complexity in evidence required for this Core Skill at this level
- to help you create an assessment task related to the learner's own situation

Some possible tasks are suggested overleaf.

Part 3 contains generic exemplar planning sheets and assessment checklists that you may use as they are. However, you may also adapt these to reflect the detail of the tasks you decide to set.

Task 1: Reading a complex piece of complex non-fiction writing

The document should consist of material on a complex, non-fiction topic. The text should be concerned with the presentation, analysis, and synthesis of information; and/or explore an issue from several perspectives; and/or present a sustained and sophisticated argument. It may feature abstract ideas and complexity in tone, point of view, or central argument. The material will normally have more than one purpose, eg to inform and evaluate; to discuss and to persuade; to share experience and draw conclusions. It may deal with topics and vocabulary that are abstract and may be unfamiliar to learners. Information, ideas, and meaning will be at a sophisticated level (often characterised by the number and relationship of ideas, by density of detail, or by abstraction). The structure of the text will allow for exemplification and analysis. It may include images as well as words.

The length of the chosen reading text should be appropriate to level 6 i.e. between 700 and 1,000 words.

Assessors and internal verifiers are responsible for ensuring that the reading text to be used for assessment satisfies the requirements of level 6 in terms of complexity and length.

Evidence for any reading assessment may be presented as answers to questions or in the form of a written or oral report, supplemented by responses to questions if necessary.

The following assessment exemplars are suggested to help you to identify potential contextualised assessment opportunities. Assessors must ensure that the chosen assessment satisfies the requirements of level 6. Selecting reading texts that are unnecessarily long and/or complex may lead to over-assessment.

Personal/social context

- 1 Read a comprehensive report in a specialist magazine on a topic that interests you. Summarise and evaluate the content and presentation,

commenting on the completeness of the information and opinions expressed. Suggest any ways it might be improved.

- 2 Consult a reputable website that provides information on a specific illness or condition and offers advice on how this can be managed. Analyse the detailed information and comment on how well it supplements the main topic. Identify any areas where more information could be useful. Evaluate the effectiveness of the advice given, commenting on the balance achieved between evidenced facts and opinions.
- 3 Consult the Scottish Executive website (www.scotland.gov.uk) and download a recent publication that relates to your personal interests and/or concerns. The range of documents publicly available includes reports on research findings, advice documents, and consultation papers. Read your chosen document, then summarise the main ideas and supporting information. Evaluate how well the topic is explored in terms of purpose and intended reader, taking into account style, structure, and presentation.

Educational context

- 1 Consult a relevant section from a textbook related to your course of study, eg the effects of the industrial revolution on urban development; the work of the post-impressionists. Identify the main ideas and analyse how well supplementary information (including pictorial or other graphical information) enhances understanding.

Suggest any further details that might have been included in the main text or the supplementary information. Comment on the completeness and usefulness of the material for your area of study and evaluate how successful it was in achieving its purpose, eg to educate and/or persuade.

- 2 Access a website providing information on progression from your current level of study, eg access to further or higher education; career opportunities in your proposed vocation. Analyse and distinguish factual information from opinion, commenting on the quality of the evidence provided. Comment on the methods used for presenting information, say whether or not supporting information enhanced the main topics, and evaluate the value of the site to other users.
- 3 Read an article on a contentious issue in the educational section of a broadsheet newspaper or *The Times Educational Supplement*.

Summarise the main ideas/arguments and identify the methods used to help the reader make the links between additional information or opinions and the main arguments. Evaluate how well the article sets out its arguments, and how effectively the construction, language, and style emphasise the main points. Finally, comment on the persuasiveness of the main standpoint.

Workplace context

- 1** Read the annual report for the company you work for. Produce a summary of the information, making clear reference to any supporting material and significant graphics. Your task as a marketing expert is to evaluate the document with a view to improving it next year. Make a full analysis of strengths and weaknesses in terms of style, structure, graphics, layout, tone, and language.
- 2** Choose a company policy document that needs updating. Review the present document in terms of intended readers and relevant legislation. Summarise main points and supporting detail to present to a management meeting, together with a full evaluation of style, structure, presentation, and content. Make recommendations for the updated document.
- 3** Look up web-based information relating to the Right to Roam, eg by the Ramblers Association. Read the home page and all associated links and evaluate how effectively it conveys the spirit and detail of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act to the general public. Comment on the level of detail, presentation, and tone of the material, suggesting improvements if you think any are needed.

Task 2: Writing — producing a document (or series of documents) totalling at least 700 words

Learners will produce one piece of writing of at least 700 words (or a number of related pieces) that conveys several pieces of information and/or a clearly stated opinion. If there are a number of pieces, one of these must contain no fewer than 500 words. Document(s) can be handwritten, or word processed. Learners should be encouraged to write the word count at the end of their assessment.

Documents may include images such as maps, sketches, diagrams, or photographs in support of the written text. These may be created by the learner or selected from a bank of images. The learner will use appropriate vocabulary, including specialist or technical terms, and sentence structures. The document will have a clearly defined purpose, audience, and appropriate structure. Information will be presented, analysed, and evaluated and/or ideas will be explored in depth and considered from several perspectives, taking account of and refuting challenges. A few errors may be present when learners are using complex sentence structure or vocabulary, but these should not be significant.

Personal/social context

- 1** Your Community Council is considering making a lottery funding application and has asked you to produce a preliminary report. Write a draft that describes a potential project to benefit your local community. Describe the background of the project and the proposed activities in detail, including graphical and other supporting material. Set out a suggested timescale for the complete project, with projected milestones. Include information on the research you have done; sources of practical support; how you think the project should be managed and administered.
- 2** Produce a comprehensive report on the results of a research project you have carried out in the community, eg rallying objections to a planning application, canvassing opinion of the advisability of creating a half-way house within a high-density housing estate. Present your evidence and make recommendations based on your findings. Include original documents, eg questionnaires/petition sheets, as appended material.

- 3 Write an article for a local newspaper that is designed to raise interest in a new venture you are proposing, eg a drama group or a tai chi class. Use language, style, and format, including photographs or other graphics, to enhance your persuasive message. Give examples of how successful similar activities have been in other areas, including extracts of interviews with supporters.

Educational context

- 1 Write up the results of a research project, eg a series of experiments into the social behaviour of rats or an investigation into the economic and cultural challenges facing migrant workers. Present the information in a style and format that will be informative and accessible to a non-academic reader, using a variety of media.
- 2 Collate a portfolio of documents you have created for your course of study, which you could use to showcase your learning. Supplement the written information with other materials and images, referencing and acknowledging sources.
- 3 Write a report to your teacher or tutor detailing useful information for next year's student intake. You could identify and describe aspects of course content, class attendance requirements, study–life balance, managing student budgets, premises, and facilities. Supplementary information might include your notes of interviews with current students, photographs of premises, and annotated course notes.

Workplace context

- 1 Design and create a chart to identify common sports injuries; analyse how these typically occur; describe immediate treatment; suggest long-term precautions to prevent recurrence. Demonstrate an awareness of the reading level of the potential user by including photographs, drawings, or other graphics to facilitate understanding.
- 2 Write an article for a popular magazine, promoting a series of recipes you have developed specially to help people following restricted diets, eg gluten-free, low-fat, and low carbohydrate. Analyse the dietary issues involved and include a sample of recipes, written in a way that will tempt and delight!

- 3 Write a revised health and safety policy for your company, identifying legal requirements and describing essential procedures. You will need to address the wide range of reading abilities among your readership by including pictorial information, eg copies of signage. You may feel it is necessary to produce a very simple checklist in addition to the main document.

Task 3: Speaking and Listening —participating in a discussion, or delivering a short presentation

The oral communication must be one spoken interaction between the learner and one or more people. This may be either a discussion (lasting a minimum of five minutes) or the learner may give a structured oral presentation lasting a minimum of four minutes, with an additional one minute for questions. A discussion should have a clear remit to explore an issue in depth and reach conclusions. The learner must make a significant contribution. A presentation must include sustained and significant interaction with the audience. It should present, analyse, and evaluate a substantial body of information. It may be supported by images using information technology software or multimedia tools. The topic should be one that, though complex, is relevant to the learner's experiences.

You will establish learner competence by observation of the spoken interaction, supplemented where necessary by questioning of the learner.

Personal/social context

- 1 Deliver a presentation to a group of parents on an issue you have researched and/or where you have considerable experience, eg balancing the needs of siblings within the family; dealing with aggressive behaviour; helping children achieve their educational or sporting potential. Use a range of presentation methods and provide supplementary information, including written handouts and/or materials you have collected from supporting agencies. Be prepared to invite and deal with extensive questioning.
- 2 Organise a meeting to discuss controversial plans to develop a new peripheral route around the city. This proposed route will pass through your community, splitting it in half. It is almost certain that the development will go ahead, so discuss what could and should be done to mitigate the impact. Some people may consider it is still worthwhile raising an objection to the whole project. Draw conclusions and decide on the way forward.
- 3 Discuss the merits and disadvantages of the council's plan to develop a large area of affordable housing next to an area featuring a number of Category A listed buildings. Another potential site is available, but this is near to a very busy dual carriageway, which would require extensive (and expensive) high-grade fencing to be erected. Identify the issues likely to influence councillors and decide what information might support each issue. Summarise the opinions of the discussion group.

Educational context

- 1 Discuss whether student representation at staff meetings has any real value or should be discontinued. Group members should back up their opinions with evidence from their own experience or by representing the opinions of other students they have consulted. They should attempt to reach a consensus and then decide what action should be taken. If no consensus can be agreed, a summary note should be made of the opinions expressed.
- 2 Present the findings of your research project to your class tutor and other students, eg changing agricultural methods in Scotland over the last 100 years; how the use of information and communication technology has contributed to more effective use of study time. Use a range of varied media in support of your talk.
- 3 Your group has been invited to deliver a presentation on your study topic, eg haute cuisine, 21st century poetry. Discuss in some detail what needs to be done and who will do it. There must be a consensus, and everyone must feel comfortable with the tasks they have been allocated. You should produce an action plan.

Workplace context

- 1 The small garage you manage is intending to introduce a computerised system for keeping service records. There has been some resistance to this from the long-serving mechanics, who see no reason to replace the workable card system they currently use for logging the jobs. Describe the new system and present a persuasive argument for implementing it, highlighting a range of advantages. Make a note of the areas where people experience anxiety, so that they can be reassured over time.
- 2 The partners in your dental practice have advised that the treatment rooms are to be revamped and they want the nurses to take responsibility for the layout of small equipment. Organise a meeting of all the practice nurses to agree how this should be done. Each treatment room must have identical layout/storage for small equipment and supplies, so it is essential that all nurses are completely happy with the solution. At the end of the meeting the group should have produced a layout plan, with notes indicating areas of responsibility for developing the workspace.
- 3 Deliver a formal presentation to senior management on the training

requirements for staff over the next 12 months. Include details of your Training Needs Analysis and the providers you have sourced who can deliver the training. You anticipate some resistance to your proposals in view of the costs involved, so be prepared to defend your case, emphasising that 'no training' is not an option. Back up this assertion by referring to documents, speeches, and filmed evidence, where leading figures in industry and education support high levels of workplace training.

Additional information for assessors

The three communication tasks may be connected. For example, if the learner presents evidence for Task 1 in report format, the same document could provide full or partial evidence for Task 2, as long as it meets specific skill (and length) requirements for writing.

Similarly, a Task 1 report, or Task 2 writing exercise, could be used as part of the preparation for an oral presentation or discussion.

Assessors should ensure that reading texts are appropriate for this level. A brief marking guideline should be drawn up to ensure consistency of reading assessment.

Part 3: Exemplar recording documentation

This section provides forms that can be used for planning and recording learners' results.

Planning sheets

Planning documents are tools that encourage wider learning around Core Skills Communication standards.

Planning sheets should not be used to assess summative assessment. They are intended for formative purposes only.

However, you can use these to help learners plan and/or provide supplementary evidence in support of assessment, if needed.

Assessment checklists

Assessment Checklists should be used to assess summative assessment.

Assessment Checklists contain the standards for Core Skills Communication at this level. The standards are in the Skills that learners must demonstrate to pass summative assessment.

You can use Assessment Checklists to make observation notes and record achievement for each task.

Planning sheets

The following documents should be used for learning and planning purposes only. Assessment Checklists in the next section should be used for summative assessment.

Planning sheet A for Task 1: Reading assessment

Use this sheet to help you prepare for assessment.

Learner:

Date:

Title of what you read:

Main aim or purpose of what you read: To...

For what type of reader was it intended?	
What were the important ideas? List them briefly in your own words.	
How did supporting detail link with main ideas? (Think about graphics, use of colour, examples, headings, etc, and which main ideas they connect with.)	

<p>How successful was the piece of writing in what it was trying to do? Would it work for the sort of reader it was intended for?</p>	
<p>Note down any comments about the relationship between purpose and readership. What do you notice?</p> <p>Consider the effectiveness of such aspects as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• style• structure• graphics• layout (use of space, headings, colour, etc)• tone• language <p>Support your comments with precise references.</p>	

Planning sheet B for Task 1: Reading assessment

There are different ways of assessing your reading skill. Your tutor may ask you questions about what you have read and record your answers (Planning Sheet A will help you prepare for this).

Or you may be asked to write a report on what you have read. The following format may help you with this.

Report on.....

Insert the title of the document(s) you read.

1. Summary

Here summarise all the main ideas of the document. You can use bullet points if you want to.

Then describe the supporting details, eg graphics, examples, etc, and explain, in full sentences, how they connect with or back up the main ideas. It may help you to highlight the document and use arrows, etc to indicate connections between main ideas and supporting detail before you try to analyse this in your report.

2. Evaluation

Make a *full* evaluation of the piece of writing by commenting on style, structure, layout, tone, language, and any supporting details (including use of graphics if appropriate), giving evidence from the text to back up your views. Your evaluation should keep in mind the purpose(s) of the piece of writing and the intended reader and it should comment on the relationship between purpose and readership.

This evaluation section of your report is likely to be at least 150 words long.

Signature:

Date:

Don't forget to sign and date your report.

Exemplar reading report

The following leaflet is the sixth in a range of 'Bootcamp resources: Practical marketing tips for social enterprises' from Buy Social Scotland.

<https://www.buysocialscotland.com/resources>

Look through the reading piece you are directed to by your assessor. This is no. 6 in a series of free leaflets, and it is called, 'Use social media Channels effectively'

This is from the website that offers guidance on starting and conducting your own social enterprise. Each section is a video guide that is supported by a pdf leaflet. The leaflet that you will read is for people of any age who have an interest in starting a social enterprise and how to use social media in doing this.

1. Summary

The leaflet begins by saying that its information comes from two charitable, social media companies. These people feature in the video beside the leaflet.

'Leverage Storytelling' 58% of people check an organisation's social media before going to its website.

This highlights the importance of sharing information about your business regularly through social media.

Effective social media should be interactive with a variety of content.

Feedback through social media can help shape a business.

Social algorithms in social media channels, these select the most engaging content for users.

Visual and active content is more successful. This can be enhanced by changing the size and length of content for different social media platforms.

Organic content is your own whereas paid or sponsored content is made by others.

Map your hashtags It explains what hashtags are by including the symbol #.

You should actively follow others through hashtags. This will help you stay up to date in your interests and help you build a community and develop

your brand.

Track performance it is important to track 'Insights', or trends in how your content is used. 'Impressions' are the number of times your content is accessed, 'Reach' is the number of people accessed and 'Engagements' are the number of 'likes' this brings.

This can be calculated by Google and other, paid apps, that help you evaluate your success.

The power of video Increasingly, 95% of users retain content through video storytelling, whereas written material is retained by 10% of users.

Video should not be too long, and it is a good idea to include your branding in your video content.

This is quite complex information that is presented in straightforward sections and as a series of bullet-points in these. This shows the idea of taking straightforward steps to make your social media effective.

2. Evaluation

This is a useful guide for anyone who wants to develop a social media presence. It fits in with other guides in the series that are presented with similar design and colours and this works well as a summary of main ideas discussed in more depth in the video/webinar that it accompanies.

Readers who are familiar with some of the technical content will be able to use this information better than complete novices. Content is sometimes explained as having a specific social media meaning; like, 'Insights, Impressions, Reach and Engagement'. This is useful for those who want to learn to use social media effectively. Other words such as 'Algorithm', are not defined. This is a little inconsistent, however, the leaflet is consistently keen to explain information.

The design of the leaflet is minimal. There are no photographs but only one cartoon graphic that repeats on each page that shows a mobile phone with a rocket blasting out of it. This adds an element of fun and regularity to the pages. The graphic indicates the idea of social media 'taking off' dramatically.

The headings that clearly separate sections are represented as labels or tags. These are more in the style of physical labels found on packaging rather than those used in social media. This might be confusing to some.

Generally, the layout is not cluttered by design so that focus is put on the

information. This is effective for readers who plan to return to the document and perhaps use its guidance.

Overall this is a useful document.

Signature: Harriet Harper

Date: 27 February 2022

Planning sheet for Task 2: Writing assessment

Use this sheet to help you prepare for assessment.

Learner:

Date:

What complex topic do you plan to write about?	
What's the purpose of your document? It should be either to present, analyse, and evaluate information or to develop an opinion on an issue explored in depth.	
Think about readership. What sort of reader(s) is your document intended for? Consider age, previous knowledge, educational background, etc.	
What format do you plan to use (eg report, briefing paper, essay, or magazine article)?	
If you are exploring an issue, you need to bring in more than one perspective. List the different viewpoints (or arguments) you plan to consider. You will need to agree with some, disagree with others.	
If you are presenting and	

<p>analysing complex information, list the main information you need to include.</p>	
<p>How will you organise structure and layout logically and effectively? This could be headed sections (possibly numbered) or a paragraph plan, depending on what sort of document you have in mind.</p>	
<p>What graphics/images might you use to enhance the writing?</p>	
<p>What sources of information do you intend to use (eg people, class notes, textbooks, or websites)?</p>	
<p>Have you got a title? If unsure, create a working title just for the moment.</p>	

Planning sheet A for Task 3: Speaking and Listening

Use this sheet to help you prepare for assessment.

Oral presentation

Learner:

Date:

<p>What complex topic do you plan to speak about?</p>	
<p>The purpose of your presentation is to present, analyse, and evaluate information.</p> <p>Which parts of your presentation will be factual (informative)? Which parts will be analytical? Which parts will be evaluative?</p> <p>Talk to your tutor if unsure.</p>	
<p>Who will your audience be? Will they know you? Will they know anything about your topic?</p> <p>Will you need to supply your listeners with additional information, eg a handout, a glossary, or key terms on the white board? List anything you need to remember.</p>	

<p>How will you structure your presentation to suit your purpose and your audience?</p> <p>Consider using prompts, cue cards, or perhaps PowerPoint. Your presentation will be structured round your main headings. What will these be? (Sometimes structuring a presentation around a group of questions helps to involve your audience.)</p>	
<p>How will you actively involve your listeners (eg by a question and answer session at the end; use of questions at the start)?</p>	
<p>What visual aids might make your presentation more effective/interesting?</p>	
<p>What aspects of body language do you need to bear in mind if you want to make your presentation fully effective?</p>	
<p>What sources of information can you use (eg people, class notes, textbooks, or websites)?</p>	

Planning sheet B for Task 3: Speaking and Listening

Use this sheet to help you prepare for assessment.

Discussion

Learner:

Date:

What will the discussion topic be? Remember it needs to be a complex issue.	
What will be the purpose of the discussion?	
Who will take part?	
What sources of information will you use to research your topic (eg people, class notes, textbooks, websites)?	
What will your role be? What main points will you make? Remember you have to make a significant, sustained contribution at this level. That means preparing really well.	
What are the roles of the rest of the group?	
What sort of prompts or visual aids might help you back up your points effectively (eg cue cards, notes, or pictures)?	

Assessment checklists

The Skills in the following Checklists are the standards that learners must reach to pass summative assessment. All standards must be achieved.

Assessment checklist: Reading

Task 1: Read, understand, and evaluate complex written communication.

Learner:

Description of reading task:

Skills	Tutor feedback	Achieved (Yes/No)
All important ideas and supporting detail in a piece of complex non-fiction writing are identified and summarised.		
The text is evaluated fully in terms of purpose and needs of intended readers. Evidence to support evaluation includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">analysis of relationship between purpose and readershipan examination of conventions such as style, structure, graphics, layout, tone, and language		

Tutor signature:

Date:

Note: A suitable text will be concerned with the presentation, analysis, and synthesis of information; and/or will explore an issue from several perspectives; and/or will present a sustained and sophisticated argument. It may use complex, specialist vocabulary and make use of complex sentences. It may include images and will normally have more than one purpose, eg to report and evaluate; to discuss and persuade; to share an experience and draw conclusions. It should be between 700 and 1,000 words in length.

Assessment checklist: Writing

Task 2: Produce well-structured written communication on complex topics.

Learner:

Description of writing task:

Word count:

Skills	Tutor feedback	Achieved (Yes/No)
All essential ideas/information and supporting details are presented in a logical and effective order.		
Structure and layout: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• take account of purpose and audience• make clear how content has been organised, using paragraphing or other structural divisions to distinguish facts, opinions, arguments, and conclusions• link major and minor points in ways that assist clarity and impact		
Conventions (eg format, layout, word choice, supporting images) are effective in terms of purpose and intended reader.		

Spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure are consistently accurate.		
Sentence structure, paragraphing, and vocabulary are varied to suit purpose and intended reader.		

Tutor's signature:

Date:

Note: Purpose and readership will be clearly defined, and structure appropriate. Information will be presented, analysed, and evaluated; and/or ideas developed in relation to an issue explored in depth and considered from several perspectives, taking account of and refuting challenges. Complex topics may involve many related ideas and/or detail, or discussion of abstract or technical concepts. One piece of writing must be at least 700 words or if there are a number of related pieces, one of these must contain no fewer than 500 words.

Assessment checklist: Speaking and Listening

Task 3: Produce and respond to oral communication on a complex topic.

Learner:

Description of speaking and listening task:

Duration:

Skills	Tutor feedback	Achieved (Yes/No)
Vocabulary, register, and range of spoken language structures are: <ul style="list-style-type: none">consistently appropriatevaried effectively.		
All essential information, opinions, and/or ideas with supporting detail are conveyed: <ul style="list-style-type: none">accurately and coherentlywith varied emphasis as appropriate.		
Communication is structured to take full account of purpose and audience.		
Delivery takes account of situation and audience.		

Formal language and non-verbal conventions integrated (conscious variation in tone, pace, and modulation to suit audience needs).		
Responds to others, taking account of their contributions.		

Tutor's signature:

Date:

Note: Oral presentation must be of the required duration for SCQF level 6 (a minimum of four minutes with an additional one minute for questions) and should present, analyse, and evaluate a substantial body of information with significant, sustained interaction with the audience. Discussion (lasting a minimum of five minutes) should allow for identification of key elements and exploration of points of view on a complex issue. The learner's contribution must be significant and sustained.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Credit value

6 SCQF credit points (1 SQA credit) at SCQF level 6



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Helpdesk: 0845 279 1000
Fax: 0845 213 5000
E-mail: customer@sqa.org.uk
Website: www.sqa.org.uk

Optima Building	Lowden
58 Robertson Street	24 Wester Shawfair
Glasgow	Dalkeith
G2 8DQ	EH22 1FD

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History of changes

Edition	Description of change	Date
3	Task 1 - selection of texts for reading assessments (length and level of complexity); role of purpose in relation to evaluation; suggested generic questions. Task 3 – expected duration for oral presentations.	June 2020
4	All Tasks: Clearer definition of purpose given for planning documents and assessment checklists. Task 1: exemplar report updated to reflect Core Skills Communication standards more clearly.	March 2022
5	General guidance on gathering assessment evidence for all tasks in this Unit has been added.	November 2023

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