

The Requirements of Basic Academic Attainments for Junior Secondary English (*Second Language)

***English not being used as the primary language of instruction**

2017

1. Basic rationale

Macao is unique for her cultural diversity and is becoming increasingly globalized. English serves as a bridge for effective communication with the world. It has a dominant role in many sectors like business, education, tourism, etc. It is essential to nurture new generations of students with adequate mastery of the English language so that they can meet the challenges of advancing Macao's social and economic development further.

On top of the functional purposes, English also serves as a medium for personal development, both intellectual and aesthetic, as a large proportion of the world's sources of information and language arts is in English.

More importantly, the Junior Secondary English curriculum will cultivate students' motivation to learn English; and strengthen their self-confidence to communicate in English.

On these grounds, the Requirements of Basic Academic Attainments for Junior Secondary English (Second Language) should comply with the following fundamental principles:

- (1) The Junior Secondary English Curriculum should further strengthen and develop the following three basic rationales:
 - The curriculum should recognise students' interests and abilities. It should be student-centred. The curriculum should strengthen students' self-confidence and independence in the learning of English.
 - To further develop their basic abilities in listening, speaking, reading and writing for the purpose of communication.
 - A variety of teaching methods should be employed. Variety in teaching strategies is necessary to cater to learner diversity.

(2) Ensuring sufficient cognitive challenge

When students enter junior secondary school, they begin a rapid stage of physical, cognitive and psychological development. Lower secondary students, who are adolescents and early teens beginning to form their personal identity and becoming more curious about the world, will need a language learning experience that satisfies their cognitive and emotional needs. The junior secondary English curriculum should ensure that on top of the linguistic objectives (such as grammar and vocabulary), the subject-matter content of the learning resources as well as the learning experiences should be sufficiently cognitively challenging to junior secondary students.

(3) Attending to the humanistic values of language learning

English should not, and need not, be taught solely for functional purposes. In fact, like any language, English can serve to impart humanistic values. When students begin junior secondary school, they have already built a foundation in the English language. Considering students have a more developed knowledge and mastery of the English language, junior secondary English curriculum should support them to acquire moral and civic values, so that they will become responsible and caring members of society.

(4) Providing students with learner training

Junior secondary students have better meta-cognitive skills, which lead to more reflective learning. Therefore, while students should continue to receive quality teaching input from teachers, they should also be provided with training that will help them become more independent and effective language learners. Examples of such training may cover metalinguistic awareness, language learning strategies, and self-assessment.

II. Curriculum Goals

- (1) Extend the knowledge, skills, and attitudes in English Language learning ;
- (2) Develop students' higher-order language skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing;
- (3) Extend students' vocabulary knowledge for both receptive and productive language use;
- (4) Extend students' grammatical knowledge and their grammatical competence for more accurate comprehension and expression in language use;
- (5) Strengthen students' ability to understand varieties of spoken and written texts

- with richer content;
- (6) Enable students to describe factual events with richer details and better organisation in speaking and writing;
 - (7) Enable students to describe personal experiences, express personal opinions, and report on simple projects coherently;
 - (8) Develop students' ability to take part in simple conversations and discussions;
 - (9) Cultivate students' ability to edit and revise their spoken and written productions for better communicative effect;
 - (10) Nurture students' propensity in evaluating their own language learning progress;
 - (11) Enable students to use a range of language references, both print and online, for solving language problems;
 - (12) Sensitise students to cultural differences in different contexts of language use.

2. The requirements of basic academic attainments in different domains

Explanation of coding:

- (1) The capital English letters represent the requirements of basic academic attainment in different learning domains; A - Listening, B – Speaking, C – Reading, D – Writing;
- (2) The number following the English letter signifies the serial number of learning categories in the learning domains.

Learning domain A: Listening

- A-1 Identify the vowel and consonant phonemes in single-syllable words and in stressed syllables in polysyllabic words;
- A-2 Distinguish between words with closely sounding phonemes, including consonant blends;
- A-3 Identify the stressed syllables in polysyllabic words;
- A-4 Deduce the meaning of unknown words in a spoken text using a range of techniques;
- A-5 Obtain specific pieces of information in simple spoken texts;
- A-6 Recognise the connections between ideas in a simple spoken text from cohesive devices including pronoun reference and connectors;
- A-7 Distinguish between main points and supporting examples in a spoken text.
- A-8 Identify the sequence of events, causes and effects;
- A-9 Identify the main focus of an utterance from its word or sentence stress;
- A-10 Deduce intention and attitude from the speaker's intonation;

- A-11 Identify the main ideas in simple spoken texts, such as conversations and short talks;
- A-12 Predict the likely development of a spoken text by making use of a range of strategies;
- A-13 Take down notes on the main points of a talk.

Learning domain B: Speaking

- B-1 Attempt to pronounce a new word from its spelling;
- B-2 Pronounce polysyllabic words with proper word stress;
- B-3 Use vocabulary that is appropriate to the speech event;
- B-4 Use a range of cohesive devices to indicate the relationships between ideas;
- B-5 Give an account of a personal experience, or describe an incident with clarity;
- B-6 Explain the procedures for doing something with clarity;
- B-7 Develop a main idea using examples;
- B-8 Explain the cause and effect of a problem, an issue, etc. ;
- B-9 Express opinion clearly;
- B-10 Use varied sentence structures in speaking;
- B-11 Use a range of techniques to start a conversation;
- B-12 Conclude a short presentation appropriately;
- B-13 Use appropriate intonation to express attitudinal meaning;
- B-14 Use proper sentence stress to highlight important information;
- B-15 Read aloud a short piece of prose with appropriate stress, rhythm, and intonation;
- B-16 Acknowledge ideas expressed by other speakers in a conversation;
- B-17 Ask for clarification from other speakers during a conversation;
- B-18 Demonstrate interest in social interaction.

Learning domain C: Reading

- C-1 Recognise previously learned vocabulary and accumulate vocabulary through various reading strategies;
- C-2 Work out the meaning of unfamiliar words from clues in the word or the text, and background knowledge;
- C-3 Recognise the format and language features of a variety of text types;
- C-4 Construct meaning and locate information from visual texts;
- C-5 Make predictions about the content of a text using prior knowledge, personal experiences and text features before reading;

- C-6 Demonstrate an understanding of punctuation when reading;
- C-7 Make effective and judicious use of the dictionary and language references to assist reading;
- C-8 Understand the connection between ideas by identifying cohesive devices;
- C-9 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers;
- C-10 Identify the main ideas and key details of a text; what the author wants to tell or describe;
- C-11 Demonstrate understanding of texts through different presentations;
- C-12 Gather relevant information from print and digital sources;
- C-13 Give personal response to a text;
- C-14 Read aloud simple texts with accuracy, fluency, comprehension and appropriate expression, pacing and intonation;
- C-15 Acquire the habits of reading frequently and independently;
- C-16 Demonstrate interest in reading various texts (including fictional and non-fictional texts).

Learning domain D: Writing Skills

- D-1 Use more varied vocabulary with correct spellings;
- D-2 Demonstrate control of basic conventions of English writing, such as spelling and punctuation;
- D-3 Use appropriate linking devices to link ideas and produce longer sentences;
- D-4 Use a wider range of sentence patterns in writing;
- D-5 Use basic grammatical features with consistency;
- D-6 Recount events in chronological order;
- D-7 Develop stories from pictures;
- D-8 Gather ideas before writing by brainstorming, mind-mapping, and using a variety of pre-writing techniques;
- D-9 Develop paragraphs with main ideas and supporting details;
- D-10 Write spontaneously and take risks in the drafting stage;
- D-11 Revise and edit drafts for content, organization and language;
- D-12 Proofread final drafts and correct mistakes in grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics;
- D-13 Write simple stories that include settings, characters, problems, events and solutions;
- D-14 Appreciate and evaluate peers' writing;
- D-15 Demonstrate interest and enjoyment in writing.