

HKUGA College English Department Handbook (Senior Secondary)

1. Introduction

The English curriculum at HKUGAC has been planned in accordance with the philosophical and structural framework of the recent educational reform and with the overall academic philosophy of the school.

1.1 Aims of the Curriculum

The general aim of the English curriculum is to develop in students the ability to:

- become lifelong independent learners
- adapt to a rapidly changing world
- problem solve practically and intellectually
- act confidently as individuals and as part of a group
- be sensitively aware of global issues and act responsibly
- engage in global communication
- have respect for others and appreciate similarities and differences

1.2 Curriculum and Philosophical Framework

To this end, alongside outstanding educational practices all over the world, the senior English curriculum has acknowledged the following as central to learning:

1.2.1 Communication

English as a language of communication encompasses five skill areas:

- speaking
- listening
- reading
- writing
- viewing

In order to develop students' communication skills in English, all units of work of the English curriculum require students to:

- share ideas orally with others in class, and at times, outside of class
- listen carefully to others and ask relevant questions
- read for understanding, enlightenment, and enjoyment
- write for different purposes and audiences
- work with different text types and media such as newspapers, magazines, film, television, posters, and leaflets to understand different text conventions, purposes, and context

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1.2.2 Holistic Learning

This concept stresses the interrelationship between disciplines in order to provide a global view of learning and to enable students to realise the interconnectedness of knowledge. Cross-departmental activities are arranged whenever possible.

1.2.3 Intercultural Awareness

Intercultural awareness fosters tolerance and respect through the exploration of literature – poetry, drama, prose, and film – from different parts of the world. We encourage students to explore literature beyond their immediate culture and ‘comfort zones’ through library lessons and extensive reading / viewing outside of school.

1.2.4 Community and Service

This area sharpens students’ awareness of the world around them and encourages responsible and caring participation in the local setting and the wider community.

1.2.5 Human Ingenuity

Literally, ‘what man fashions.’ It refers to the contribution humanity makes to the world in which we live through the innovations, developments, transformations in literature, art, and architecture. Students can therefore appreciate the human capacity to invent, create, transform and improve the quality of life for all.

1.2.6 Environment

This area looks at the world we have made around us and challenges students to accept responsibility for maintaining a natural and sustainable world now and in the future.

1.2.7 Health and Social Education

As a life-skills area, this is also an important element of the English curriculum, because intellectual development depends very much upon the health of the body and mind and the willingness of students to address issues that may be controversial.

1.2.8 E-learning

The English department has infused e-learning into its 6-year curriculum with the aim of developing students into autonomous learners and enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of teaching and learning. Learning is no longer confined to the classroom: through different e-learning platforms, students are able to share their work as well as comment on each other’s work easily with their teachers and peers.

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2. Aims and Objectives of English Language Education

Aims

The aims of the teaching and study of English are to encourage and enable students to:

- use English as a vehicle for thought, creativity, reflection, learning and self-expression
- use English as a tool for personal growth, social interaction and for developing relationships within the international community
- comprehend more clearly aspects of their own culture and those of other cultures by exploring the interdependence of human beings
- explore the many facets of the language through the use of media and IT
- develop the skills involved in speaking, listening, reading, writing and viewing a variety of contexts
- respond appropriately to a variety of texts
- read widely to promote a lifelong interest in English and literature
- develop a critical and creative approach to studying and analysing literature
- develop English skills through interdisciplinary work
- consider the role of literature, both culturally and historically
- reflect on the learning process in various ways and at various stages
- empathise with real people and fictional characters as and when appropriate

Objectives

At the end of S6, students should be able to:

- understand and comment on the language, content, structure, meaning and significance of both familiar and previously unseen pieces of writing
- demonstrate a critical awareness of a range of written and visual texts
- use English to narrate, describe, analyse, explain, argue, persuade, inform, entertain and express feelings
- understand connotations within English in order to interpret the author's or speaker's intention
- compare and connect themes to show similarities or differences across genres
- express informed personal responses to literary and non-literary texts and demonstrate the ability to approach works independently
- express ideas with clarity and coherence in both oral and written communication
- structure ideas and arguments, both orally and in writing, in a sustained and logical way and support them with relevant examples
- distinguish the main ideas in a text from secondary ideas
- use and understand an appropriate and varied range of English vocabulary and idiom
- use correct grammar with appropriate and varied sentence structures
- show awareness of the need for an effective choice of register suited to the audience in both oral and written communication

Students in S1 through to S6 will have opportunity throughout the year to practise many of the bullet points above. However, English time in school is limited and students will be encouraged to practise English as much as possible outside the classroom in order to aid fluency.

3. Content of the English Curriculum (S4-S6)

The senior secondary English curriculum at HKUGAC is a continuation of the varied,

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collaborative learning our students begin from day one in S1. By the end of S6 our students will have covered the full range of literary and non-literary NSS electives that have been seamlessly integrated into the full six-year curriculum. As in the junior forms, all the units of work are eclectic and cover the five skills of reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing. The units have been specially developed for the students, allowing for the different ways of learning: auditory, kinaesthetic, read-write, and visual. The senior secondary units remain thematically based with an eye on the public examinations.

3.1 S4

Learning English through Short Stories: Gothic Literature

A further study of the short story genre through the sub-genre of gothic literature.

Class reading texts: *The Graveyard Book*; *Frankenstein*; *Dracula*; a selection of gothic short stories, including *The Landlady*, *The Monkey's Paw*, *Tell-tale Heart*

Standardised assessment for the form:

1. Process writing: An original gothic short story
2. Timed writing: A speech promoting a short story competition
3. Presentation: Dramatic narration of students' own gothic short story

Cultures of the World: Travel Writing

A study of the genre of travel writing including research and presentation skills.

Class reading texts: *various samples of travel writing and travel guides*

Standardised assessments for the form:

1. Process writing: Travel recount
2. Timed writing: Travel leaflet (writing to sell / persuade)
3. Presentation: Travel destination (Staycation)

Learning English through Popular Culture: Pop Culture and Social Media

A review of film as a text, and an exploration of reality TV and the power of media / social media.

Class text (film): *The Truman Show* or *Nosedive*

Standardised assessments for the form:

1. Process writing: Argumentative essay

3.2 S5

Learning English through Drama: Shakespeare's Plays

A study of Shakespeare's plays including themes, language and plot conventions.

Class reading texts: *Any one of Shakespeare's plays (A Midsummer Night's Dream, Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet, The Taming of the Shrew and Hamlet are popular choices)*

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Theatre visit: *Students watch a professional production of Shakespeare's play if available during the academic year. In recent years, students have watched A Midsummer Night's Dream (14-15), Hamlet (15-16), The Merchant of Venice (16-17), The Complete Plays of William Shakespeare by the Reduced Shakespeare Company (17-18), and The Taming of the Shrew (18-19).*

Standardised assessments for the form:

1. DSE-type writing task related to the elective Learning English through Drama
2. SBA presentation on students' own experience with Shakespeare (including adapting, scripting, and acting out a scene based on one of Shakespeare's plays in front of an audience)

Learning English through Social Issues: Nature and the Environment

An exploration of the language of advocacy in the context of environmental sustainability.

Class texts: *The Cove; Food Inc; Earthlings*; various print and electronic materials from advocacy groups.

Standardised assessments for the form:

1. Letter to the principal or Article in the school magazine
2. SBA group discussion based on issue(s) raised in the unit

Learning English through Workplace Communication: Career and study options

An introduction to the language of higher education and the workplace. Includes report writing (research, use of data, referencing), personal statements, job postings, cover letters, resumes and interview skills as well as note-taking skills. Students will be equipped with the necessary language skills to confidently handle the written formalities required for university or job applications.

Standardised assessments for the form:

1. Personal statement
2. DSE-type writing task related to the elective Learning English through Workplace Communication
3. A video CV (or something similar in nature)

3.3 S6

Learning English through Social Issues: The Individual and Society

A study of the individual in fiction, as well as discussions on the challenges and necessity of upholding tradition in modern society.

Class texts (optional): *The Catcher in the Rye; Of Mice and Men; Nation; Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress; Dead Poet's Society (film)*

Standardised assessment for the form:

1. A persuasive or argumentative piece of writing
2. SBA group discussion / individual presentation based on issue(s) raised in the unit

Class Reading Sets: S4 – S6

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Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress – S. Dai; *Brother in the Land* – R. Swindells
Crusades – E. Laird; *Dracula* – B. Stoker; *Dragonwings* – L. Yep; *Frankenstein* – M. Shelley; *Macbeth*; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; *Romeo and Juliet* – W. Shakespeare
Music on the Bamboo Radio – M. Booth; *Nation* – T. Pratchett; *Of Mice and Men* – J. Steinbeck; *The Catcher in the Rye* – J.D. Salinger; *The Graveyard Book* – N. Gaiman;
The Kite Rider – G. McCaughrean

3.4 HKDSE

All the language arts and non-language arts units related to the HKDSE are integrated into the English curriculum beginning in S1, supported by revision and deeper coverage from S4 onwards in order to enhance the depth of understanding. There is also a greater focus on familiarising students with the HKDSE paper format and exam requirements in senior forms.

From S5 on, students will also complete various speaking tasks as part of the School Based Assessment (SBA) component of the DSE. Final SBA scores will be submitted in the year of their examination.

3.5 International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) First Language English Course

The Cambridge IGCSE is taken in over 100 countries worldwide and is widely recognised by higher education institutions and employers around the world as evidence of academic ability. It also provides students with invaluable public examination experience and an accurate, internationally-recognized measurement of their English capability.

Students who achieve outstanding results in the subject and are seen as capable of completing the IGCSE *First Language English* coursework component to a high standard may opt to sit for the *First Language English* examination in S5. This will require them to join first-language classes in S4 and S5, which are de-facto accelerated classes in which students complete the required coursework alongside the regular curriculum.

4. Assessment

4.1 Continuous Formative Assessment and Summative Assessment

Assessment is based on continuous formative assessment completed throughout the year and summative end of term/end of year examinations.

The ongoing continuous work (formative assessment) is worth 40% of the final year mark and the examination (summative assessment) is worth 60%. The final mark is then converted into a grade on a 5** – 1 scale.

GRADE for TERM 1	=	SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT (60%)	+	FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT (40%)
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YEAR GRADE	=	SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT (60%)	+	FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT (40%)
		Term 1 (30%) + Term 2 (30%)		Term 1 (20%) + Term 2 (20%)

Breakdown of Formative Assessment

Component	Component A CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT (70%)		Component B INDEPENDENT LEARNING (30%)		
	a1. Standardised assessments	a2. Classwork	b1 ELC*	b2 ELP*	b3 Homework record
Weighting	40%	30%	10%	10%	10%

*ELC = English Learning Companion

*ELP = English Language Policy

Conversion of Percentage to Grade

Percentages	Grades
90% or above	5**
86% – 89%	5*
80% – 85%	5
65% – 79%	4
50% – 64%	3
35% – 49%	2
34% or below	1

The general criteria for marking written assignments through the year is based on the HKDSE criteria for Paper 2 though some individual units of work may involve specifically-tailored marking schemes which are given to the students at the appropriate time.

4.2 Continuous Formative Assessment Breakdown by Form

4.2.1 S4 Core Assessment/Assignment Breakdown

Term 1

Reading

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Timed Paper 1	8.5%
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Writing

Travel Recount (Process Writing)	6.5%
Timed Travel Leaflet	5%

Listening and Integrated Skills

Timed Paper 3	11.5%
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Speaking

Travel Destination Video Presentation	8.5%
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Independent Learning (30%)

ELC	10%
Homework	10%
ELP	10%

*Remaining 30%: Individualised Classwork

Term 2

Reading

Timed Paper 1	8.5%
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Writing

Gothic Story (Process Writing)	6%
Argumentative Essay (Process Writing)	6%

Listening and Integrated Skills

Timed Paper 3	11.5%
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Speaking

Interpretive Reading	8.5%
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Independent Learning (30%)

ELC	10%
Homework	10%
ELP	10%

*Remaining 29.5%: Individualised Classwork

4.2.2 S5 Core Assessment/Assignment Breakdown

Term 1

Reading

Timed Paper 1	8.5%
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Writing

Proposal (Process Writing)	6.5%
Timed Debate Speech	5%

Listening and Integrated Skills

Timed Paper 3	11.5%
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Speaking

SBA (GI) - Sustainability	4.5%
SBA (IP) - Well-being	4%

*Remaining 30%: Individualised Classwork

Term 2

Reading

Timed Paper 1	8.5%
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Writing

Personal Statement (Process Writing)	6.5%
Timed Article	5%

Listening and Integrated Skills

Timed Paper 3	11.5%
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Speaking

SBA (GI) - Workplace Communication	4.5%
SBA (IP) - Drama	4%

*Remaining 30%: Individualised Classwork

4.2.3 S6 Core Assessment/Assignment Breakdown

Reading

Timed Paper 1	8.5%
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Writing

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Argumentative Essay (Process Writing)	6.5%
Timed Letter to the Editor	5%

Listening and Integrated Skills

Timed Paper 3	11.5%
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Speaking

Dead Poets Society SBA	8.5%
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Independent Learning (30%)

ELC	10%
Homework	10%
ELP	10%

*Remaining 30%: Individualised Classwork

5. Parents' Role in Learning and in the Completion of Homework

Parents, many of whom are skilled English language practitioners in their own right, can assist very positively in helping students improve their language acquisition and encouraging their children to speak English regularly. Parents themselves can demonstrate to their children, in a variety of ways, the importance they attach to English.

However, it is essential that students do NOT receive parental or other assistance in the completion of English assignments at home. All students must produce work completed solely by themselves with no assistance from parents or tutors and no plagiarism from the internet.

Students complete their work in exercise books or lined paper as instructed and keep all handouts in folders distributed at the beginning of each year. Students are expected to bring these materials to each class.

Writing assignments will be given as homework regularly. When no writing has been assigned, students are expected to spend time on independent learning, and to revise vocabulary, grammar and other language material covered in class.

If any parent wishes further clarification on any of these points, please do not hesitate to contact the English Department.