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|---------------------------|------------|
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This specification is available online at www.ccea.org.uk

1 Introduction

This specification sets out the content and assessment details for our GCSE course in English Language. We have designed this specification to meet the requirements of:

- Northern Ireland GCSE Design Principles;
- Northern Ireland GCE and GCSE Qualifications Criteria; and
- Subject Criteria and Requirements for English.

First teaching is from September 2017. We will make the first award based on this specification in Summer 2019.

This specification is a unitised course. The guided learning hours, as for all our GCSEs, are 120 hours. We have structured the course to concentrate the functional aspects of English in:

- Unit 1: Writing for Purpose and Audience and Reading to Access Non-fiction and Media Texts; and
- Unit 2: Speaking and Listening.

Students who complete these units will have the opportunity to achieve a recognition of achievement in Functional English.

The specification supports the aim of the Northern Ireland Curriculum to empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives, as well as its objectives:

- to develop the young person as an individual;
- to develop the young person as a contributor to society; and
- to develop the young person as a contributor to the economy and environment.

If there are any major changes to this specification, we will notify centres in writing. The online version of the specification will always be the most up to date; to view and download this please go to www.ccea.org.uk

1.1 Aims

This specification aims to encourage students to:

- demonstrate skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing necessary to communicate with others confidently, effectively, precisely and appropriately;
- express themselves creatively and imaginatively;
- become critical readers of a range of texts, including multi-modal texts;
- use reading to develop their own skills as writers;
- understand the patterns, structures and conventions of written and spoken English;
- understand the impact of variations in spoken and written language and how they relate to identity and cultural diversity; and
- select and adapt speech and writing to different situations and audiences.

1.2 Key features

The following are important features of this specification.

- It offers opportunities to build on the skills and capabilities developed through the delivery of the Northern Ireland Curriculum at Key Stage 3.
- It is a unitised specification, allowing students flexibility in preparing for assessment; students can enter for a unit when they are ready to be assessed and can resit each unit individually.
- From Summer 2018, Units 1 and 2 will be available in both the Summer and January series; Units 3 and 4 will be available from Summer 2019 and will also be available each January series from 2020.
- It allows students to study English and related subjects at a more advanced level.
- The course offers students opportunities to develop skills for real-life contexts and to progress to employment.
- These skills are embedded in this specification:
 - engaging with and making fresh connections between ideas, texts, words and images;
 - studying spoken and written language, exploring how language varies;
 - expressing ideas and information clearly, precisely, accurately and appropriately in spoken and written communication; and
 - forming independent views and challenging what is heard or read on the grounds of reason, evidence or argument.
- Students can use texts that they are studying for GCSE English Literature as the stimulus for controlled assessment tasks.
- In revising this specification, we consulted with teachers, subject advisers and subject associations.

1.3 Prior attainment

This specification builds on the knowledge, understanding and skills developed through the statutory requirements for Language and Literacy: English with Media Education at Key Stage 3 in the Northern Ireland Curriculum. Students do not need to have reached a particular level of attainment before beginning to study this specification.

1.4 Classification codes and subject combinations

Every specification has a national classification code that indicates its subject area. The classification code for this qualification is 5030.

Please note that if a student takes two qualifications with the same classification code, schools, colleges and universities that they apply to may take the view that they have achieved only one of the two GCSEs. The same may occur with any two GCSE qualifications that have a significant overlap in content, even if the classification codes are different. Because of this, students who have any doubts about their subject combinations should check with the schools, colleges and universities that they would like to attend before beginning their studies.

2 Specification at a Glance

The table below summarises the structure of this GCSE course.

| Content | Assessment | Weightings | Availability |
|---|---|------------|--|
| Unit 1: Writing for Purpose and Audience and Reading to Access Non-fiction and Media Texts | External written examination Untiered 1 hour 45 mins Students complete five tasks. | 30% | Summer from 2018 and January from 2019 |
| Unit 2: Speaking and Listening | Controlled assessment Untiered Teachers mark the tasks, and we moderate the results. | 20% | Summer from 2018 and January from 2019 |
| Unit 3: Studying Spoken and Written Language | Controlled assessment Untiered Teachers mark the tasks, and we moderate the results. | 20% | Summer from 2019 and January from 2020 |
| Unit 4: Personal or Creative Writing and Reading Literary and Non-fiction Texts | External written examination Untiered 1 hour 45 mins Students complete four tasks. | 30% | Summer from 2019 and January from 2020 |

Students must take at least 40 percent of the assessment (based on unit weightings) at the end of the course as terminal assessment.

3 Subject Content

We have divided this course into four units. The content of each unit and the respective learning outcomes appear below. Functional aspects of English are assessed in Units 1 and 2; the mark schemes reflect this. These units assess students' abilities in Functional English: reading, writing, and speaking and listening.

3.1 Unit 1: Writing for Purpose and Audience and Reading to Access Non-fiction and Media Texts

In this unit, students engage with writing and reading tasks. There are two sections in the examination paper. Section A is writing and there is one task. Section B is reading and there are four tasks.

| Content | Learning Outcomes |
|--|---|
| <p>Section A: Writing for Purpose and Audience</p> <p>(One task – all learning outcomes are assessed.)</p> <p>Section B: Reading to Access Non-fiction and Media Texts</p> <p>(Four tasks, two on each of the texts – all learning outcomes are assessed.)</p> | <p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write accurately and effectively; • use an appropriate writing form; • express ideas and/or information precisely and accurately; • select vocabulary to persuade and/or inform the reader; • use accurate grammar, spelling and punctuation; • read and understand texts; • recognise the effects of language choices; • develop interpretations of writers' ideas; and • explain and evaluate how writers use linguistic, grammatical and structural features to influence the reader. |

3.2 Unit 2: Speaking and Listening

In this unit, students are assessed in three controlled assessment tasks: an individual presentation and interaction, a discussion and a role play. See Appendix 4 for the assessment criteria for Unit 2.

| Content | Learning Outcomes |
|---|---|
| <p>Task 1: Individual presentation and interaction</p> <p>(All learning outcomes are assessed.)</p> <p>Task 2: Discussion</p> <p>(All learning outcomes are assessed.)</p> <p>Task 3: Role play</p> <p>(All learning outcomes are assessed.)</p> | <p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communicate clearly and effectively; • present information and ideas; • use standard English as appropriate; • structure and sustain talk; • choose and adapt language appropriate to an audience; • respond appropriately to questions and views of others; • interact with others; • make a range of effective contributions; • express ideas clearly, accurately and appropriately; • listen and respond to others' ideas and perspectives; • challenge what they hear where appropriate and shape meaning through asking questions and making comments and suggestions; • use a variety of techniques as appropriate; • create and sustain different roles from a range of real-life contexts; and • experiment with language to engage the audience. |

3.3 Unit 3: Studying Spoken and Written Language

In this unit, students complete two controlled assessment tasks. In The Study of Spoken Language, they complete one written response that enables them to investigate the characteristics of, and influences on, two pieces of spoken language.

In The Study of Written Language, students complete one written response that enables them to demonstrate knowledge of characters, themes or genre in a literary text or texts. Students can write about a text that they are studying for GCSE English Literature; however, they must submit a different piece of work that specifically meets the requirements of this task. Centres can adapt tasks by choosing a text that meets the needs of their students. Texts chosen must be of an appropriate level of demand. See Appendix 5 for the assessment criteria for Unit 3.

| Content | Learning Outcomes |
|--|--|
| <p>Task 1: The Study of Spoken Language</p> <p>(All learning outcomes are assessed.)</p> <p>Task 2: The Study of Written Language</p> <p>(All learning outcomes are assessed.)</p> | <p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand the characteristics of spoken language; • understand influences on spoken language choices; • explore the impact of spoken language choices; • understand how language varies in different contexts; • read and understand texts; • understand how meaning is constructed; • recognise the effect of language choices and patterns; • select material appropriate to purpose; • evaluate how texts may be interpreted differently depending on the reader’s perspective; • explain and evaluate how writers use linguistic and presentational features to sustain the reader’s interest; and • collate from different sources and make appropriate comparisons and cross-references. |

4 Scheme of Assessment

4.1 Assessment opportunities

For the availability of examinations and controlled assessment, see Section 2. There will be two examination series available, one in Summer and one in January. Controlled assessment units will also be available in Summer and January.

This is a unitised specification; candidates must complete at least 40 percent of the overall assessment requirements at the end of the course, in the examination series in which they request a final subject grade. This is the terminal rule.

Candidates may resit individual assessment units once before cash-in. The better of the two results will count towards their final GCSE grade unless a unit is required to meet the 40 percent terminal rule. If it is, the more recent mark will count (whether or not it is the better result). Results for individual assessment units remain available to count towards a GCSE qualification until we withdraw the specification.

4.2 Assessment objectives

There are four assessment objectives for this specification.

Speaking and Listening (AO1)

Candidates must:

- i. speak to communicate clearly and purposefully; structure and sustain talk, adapting it to different situations and audiences; use standard English and a variety of techniques as appropriate;
- ii. listen and respond to speakers' ideas and perspectives, and how they present meaning;
- iii. interact with others, shaping meanings through suggestions, comments and questions and drawing ideas together; and
- iv. create and sustain different roles.

Study of Spoken Language (AO2)

Candidates must:

- i. understand variations in spoken language, explaining why language changes in relation to contexts; and
- ii. evaluate the impact of spoken language choices in their own and others' uses.

Studying Written Language (AO3)

Candidates must:

- i. read and understand texts, selecting material appropriate to purpose, collating from different sources and making comparisons and cross-references as appropriate;
- ii. develop and sustain interpretations of writers' ideas and perspectives; and
- iii. explain and evaluate how writers use linguistic, structural and presentational features to achieve effects and engage and influence the reader.

Writing (AO4)

Candidates must:

- i. write to communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, using and adapting forms and selecting vocabulary appropriate to task and purpose in ways that engage the reader;
- ii. organise information and ideas into structured and sequenced sentences, paragraphs and whole texts, using a variety of linguistic and structural features to support cohesion and overall coherence; and
- iii. use a range of sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.

4.3 Assessment objective weightings

The table below sets out the assessment objective weightings for each assessment component and the overall GCSE qualification.

| Assessment Objective | Unit Weighting (%) | | | | | Overall Weighting (%) |
|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| | External Assessment | Controlled Assessment | Controlled Assessment | | External Assessment | |
| | Unit 1 | Unit 2 | Unit 3 | | Unit 4 | |
| | | | Task 1 | Task 2 | | |
| AO1 | | 20 | | | | 20 |
| AO2 | | | 10 | | | 10 |
| AO3 | 12.5 | | | 10 | 12.5 | 35 |
| AO4 | 17.5 | | | | 17.5 | 35 |
| Total Weighting | 30 | 20 | 10 | 10 | 30 | 100 |

4.4 Functional English

In this specification, the term Functional English refers to the skills and abilities students need to develop as a young person and as an individual, and as a contributor to society, the economy and environment. These skills enable students to operate confidently, effectively and independently in education, work and everyday life. Assessment and reporting of performance in Functional English is based on Units 1 and 2. Candidates are assessed on three elements: reading, writing, and speaking and listening. Candidates demonstrate their skills in a range of contexts and for various purposes.

4.5 Quality of written communication

In GCSE English Language, candidates must demonstrate their quality of written communication. They need to:

- ensure that text is legible and that spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate so that meaning is clear;
- select and use a form and style of writing that suit their purpose and complex subject matter; and
- organise information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

Quality of written communication is assessed in responses to tasks that require extended writing.

4.6 Reporting and grading

We report the results of individual assessment units on a uniform mark scale that reflects the assessment weighting of each unit. We determine the grades awarded by aggregating the uniform marks that candidates obtain in individual assessment units.

We award GCSE qualifications on a grade scale from A* to G, with A* being the highest. The nine grades available are as follows:

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|----|---|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade | A* | A | B | C* | C | D | E | F | G |
|--------------|----|---|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|

If candidates fail to attain a grade G or above, we report their result as unclassified (U).

The achievement in Functional English is based on the candidate's performance in Units 1 and 2. The standard required to achieve a Level 1 or Level 2 in each unit is based on a minimum raw mark threshold that we set for each series. The overall level awarded for Functional English is determined from a combination of the levels achieved in both units. Functional English is awarded within the context of GCSE study and reported with the results for GCSE English Language as a 'pass' at either Level 1 or Level 2. For candidates achieving Functional English at Level 2, this achievement is reported as an endorsement on the certificate. If a candidate does not achieve a level in Functional English, this will not be reported.

5 Grade Descriptions

Grade descriptions are provided to give a general indication of the standards of achievement likely to have been shown by candidates awarded particular grades. The descriptions must be interpreted in relation to the content in the specification; they are not designed to define that content. The grade awarded depends in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of candidates' performance in the assessment may be balanced by better performances in others.

| Grade | Description |
|----------|--|
| A | <p>Candidates select suitable styles and registers of spoken English for a range of situations and contexts, showing assured use of standard English where appropriate. They confidently vary sentence structures and choose from a wide vocabulary to express information, ideas and feelings in an engaging manner. They explain expertly, and evaluate persuasively, how they and others use and adapt spoken language for specific purposes. They initiate conversations and demonstrate sensitive listening through contributions that sustain and develop discussion. They recognise and fulfil the demands of different roles, whether in formal settings or creative activities.</p> <p>Candidates respond personally and persuasively to a variety of texts, developing interpretations and evaluating how details of language, grammar, structure and presentation engage and affect the reader. They identify and discuss writers' perspectives in narrative, argument, explanation or analysis. They choose apt quotations and make telling comparisons and cross-references that illuminate the purpose and meanings of texts.</p> <p>Candidates' writing shows confident, assured control of a range of forms and styles appropriate to task and purpose. Texts engage and hold the reader's interest through logical argument, persuasive force or creative flair. They use linguistic and structural features skilfully to sequence texts and achieve coherence. A wide range of accurate sentence structures ensures clarity; choices of vocabulary, punctuation and spelling are ambitious, imaginative and largely correct.</p> |

| Grade | Description |
|----------|---|
| C | <p>Candidates adapt their talk to the demands of different situations and contexts. They recognise when standard English is required and use it confidently. They use different sentence structures and select vocabulary so that information, ideas and feelings are communicated clearly and the listener's interest is engaged. They explain and evaluate how they and others use and adapt spoken language for specific purposes. Through careful listening and by developing their own and others' ideas, they make significant contributions to discussion and participate effectively in creative activities.</p> <p>Candidates understand and demonstrate how meaning and information are conveyed in a range of texts. They make personal and critical responses, referring to specific aspects of language, grammar, structure and presentational devices to justify their views. They successfully compare and cross-reference aspects of texts and explain convincingly how they may vary in purpose and how they achieve different effects.</p> <p>Candidates' writing shows successful adaptation of form and style to different tasks and for various purposes. They use a range of sentence structures and varied vocabulary to create different effects and engage the reader's interest. They use paragraphing effectively to make the sequence of events or development of ideas coherent and clear to the reader. Sentence structures are varied and sometimes bold; punctuation and spelling are accurate.</p> |

| Grade | Description |
|----------|---|
| F | <p>Candidates talk in familiar situations, showing some awareness of purpose and of listeners' needs. They convey information, develop ideas and describe feelings, using the main features of standard English as appropriate. They listen and make responses to others' ideas and opinions. They show some awareness of how they and others use and adapt spoken language for specific purposes. In formal and creative activities, they attempt to meet the demands of different roles.</p> <p>Candidates describe the main ideas, themes or argument in a range of texts, and refer to details when justifying their views. They make simple comparisons and cross-references that show some awareness of how texts achieve their effects through writers' use of linguistic, grammatical, structural and presentational devices.</p> <p>Candidates' writing shows some adaptation of form and style for different tasks and purposes and it communicates simply with the reader. Sentences attempt to sequence events or ideas logically; they sometimes choose vocabulary for variety and interest. Paragraphing is straightforward; the structure of sentences is basic. There is some accuracy in spelling and basic punctuation.</p> |

6 Guidance on Controlled Assessment

6.1 Controlled assessment review

We will replace our controlled assessment themes every year to ensure that they continue to set an appropriate challenge and remain valid, reliable and stimulating.

6.2 Skills assessed by controlled assessment

Teachers must assess the following skills through controlled assessment:

Speaking and Listening (20%)

- communicating clearly;
- listening and responding to others' ideas;
- interacting with others; and
- creating and sustaining different roles.

Study of Spoken Language (10%)

- understanding variations in spoken language, explaining why language changes in relation to contexts; and
- evaluating the impact of spoken language choices.

Studying Written Language (10%)

- reading and understanding texts, selecting appropriate material and making cross-references as appropriate;
- developing and sustaining interpretations; and
- explaining and evaluating how writers use language and presentational features to achieve effects.

6.3 Level of control

Rules for controlled assessment in GCSE English Language are defined for the three stages of the assessment:

- task setting;
- task taking; and
- task marking.

6.4 Task setting

The level of control for task setting varies between limited and medium.

The level of control for task setting for Unit 2: Speaking and Listening is limited. Centres have the opportunity to adapt, contextualise and design tasks to better suit their specific circumstances. See Appendix 2 for sample tasks.

The level of control for task setting for Unit 3: Studying Spoken and Written Language is medium. Centres must develop tasks based on a thematic list that we provide (see Appendix 3).

The controlled assessment tasks give centres the opportunity to submit work to us for the Summer or January series and to contextualise them to suit their specific circumstances. This includes the availability of and access to resources.

We will provide centres with details of controlled assessment themes and guidance on how to complete and submit the tasks.

6.5 Task taking

The level of control for task taking for Unit 2 is high.

The level of control for task taking for Unit 3 is high.

Unit 2: Speaking and Listening (20%)

| Areas of Control | Detail of Control |
|----------------------|--|
| Authenticity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates can carry out preparation under limited supervision (limited control). • Responsibility for planning the three tasks lies entirely with candidates (limited control). • They must complete the tasks for final assessment under formal supervision (high control). • Teachers must be able to authenticate the work. |
| Feedback | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We encourage teachers to give feedback during the preparation process on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the tasks to be completed; and – how performance will be marked according to the assessment criteria. |
| Time Limit | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each task can last up to 30 minutes. • The suggested duration for the individual presentation before questions is 5 minutes. |
| Collaboration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates' preparation work may be informed by working with others, but candidates must be assessed on an individual response. |
| Resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates' access to resources is determined by those available to the centre. |

Unit 3 Task 1: The Study of Spoken Language (10%)

| Areas of Control | Detail of Control |
|----------------------|---|
| Authenticity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates can carry out planning and research under limited supervision (limited control). • Responsibility for planning the piece of work for assessment lies entirely with candidates (limited control). • They must produce the piece for final assessment under formal supervision. Work produced under formal supervision cannot be removed from the classroom (high control). • Teachers must be able to authenticate the work. |
| Feedback | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We encourage teachers to give feedback during the planning and preparation process on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the task to be completed; and – how work will be marked according to the assessment criteria. • Once candidates have completed the piece for final assessment in the time given under formal supervision, they cannot make any further changes. |
| Time Limit | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of the piece for final assessment: 1 hour (this can be completed in more than one session). |
| Collaboration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates can complete preparatory work in groups, but each candidate must complete an individual response for final assessment. |

| Areas of Control | Detail of Control |
|------------------|---|
| Resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates' access to resources is determined by those available to the centre. • They must be provided with transcripts of the source materials being used for the task. Candidates can only use unannotated transcripts of the source material when completing their final response. • When producing the piece for final assessment, candidates are not allowed access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – dictionaries and thesauruses; – grammar and spell check programmes; – the internet; or – their preparatory work or any form of draft response. • If candidates produce the piece for final assessment over more than one session, their work must be collected and stored after each session; candidates are not allowed access to their work between sessions. |

Unit 3 Task 2: The Study of Written Language (10%)

| Areas of Control | Detail of Control |
|---------------------|---|
| Authenticity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates can carry out planning and research under limited supervision (limited control). • Responsibility for planning the piece of work for assessment lies entirely with candidates (limited control). • They must produce the piece for final assessment under formal supervision. Work produced under formal supervision cannot be removed from the classroom (high control). • Teachers must be able to authenticate the work. |
| Feedback | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We encourage teachers to give feedback during the planning and preparation process on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the task to be completed; and – how work will be marked according to the assessment criteria. • Once candidates have completed the piece for final assessment in the time given under formal supervision, they cannot make any further changes. |

| Areas of Control | Detail of Control |
|----------------------|---|
| Time Limit | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of the piece for final assessment: 1 hour (this can be completed in more than one session). |
| Collaboration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates can complete preparatory work in groups, but each candidate must complete an individual response for final assessment (high control). |
| Resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates' access to resources is determined by those available to the centre. • Candidates are allowed access to an unannotated copy of the stimulus text. • When producing the piece for final assessment, candidates are not allowed access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – dictionaries and thesauruses; – grammar and spell check programmes; – the internet; or – their preparatory work or any form of draft response. • If candidates produce the piece for final assessment over more than one session, their work must be collected and stored after each session; candidates are not allowed access to their work between sessions. |

6.6 Task marking

The level of control for task marking is medium. Teachers mark the controlled assessment tasks using assessment criteria that we provide. They should use professional judgement to select and apply the criteria for each Competence Level appropriately and fairly to candidates' work. They should follow a 'best fit' approach when selecting a candidate's mark, making allowance for balancing strengths and weaknesses in each response.

Teachers must ensure that the work they mark is the candidate's own. For up-to-date advice on plagiarism, or any kind of candidate malpractice, see *Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments: Policies and Procedures* on the Joint Council for Qualifications website at www.jcq.org.uk

6.7 Internal standardisation

Centres with more than one teaching group must carry out internal standardisation of controlled assessment tasks before submitting their marks to us. This is to ensure, as far as possible, that each teacher has applied the assessment criteria consistently when marking assessments. Centres may need to adjust an individual teacher's marking:

- to bring assessments into line with those of other teachers in the centre; and
- to match the standards established at the agreement trial.

If marks do change, centres must amend the total/final mark on their Candidate Record Sheet.

6.8 Moderation

Centres must submit their marks and samples to us by May or January in any year. We may adjust centres' marking to bring the assessment of the candidates' work into line with our agreed standards.

We issue full instructions each year on:

- our moderation procedures;
- which samples we require; and
- the deadlines for submitting marks and samples to us.

Teachers and centre staff may contact us at any stage if they require advice, assistance or support relating to any aspect of controlled assessment.

See Appendix 1 for a glossary of controlled assessment terms. For more details, see the Joint Council for Qualifications document *Instructions for Conducting Controlled Assessments*, available at www.jcq.org.uk

7 Curriculum Objectives

This specification builds on the learning experiences from Key Stage 3 as required for the statutory Northern Ireland Curriculum. It also offers opportunities for students to contribute to the aim and objectives of the Curriculum at Key Stage 4, and to continue to develop the Cross-Curricular Skills and the Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities. The extent of the development of these skills and capabilities will be dependent on the teaching and learning methodology used.

7.1 Cross-Curricular Skills at Key Stage 4

| |
|---|
| Communication |
| <p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communicate meaning, feelings and viewpoints in a logical and coherent manner, <i>for example in The Study of Written Language</i>; • make oral and written summaries, reports and presentations, taking account of audience and purpose, <i>for example in Speaking and Listening and The Study of Spoken Language</i>; • participate in discussions, debates and interviews, <i>for example in Speaking and Listening</i>; • interpret, analyse and present information in oral, written and ICT formats, <i>for example analysing a media text</i>; and • explore and respond, both imaginatively and critically, to a variety of texts, <i>for example in the critical study of media texts and the study of literary texts</i>. |
| Using ICT |
| <p>Students should be able to make effective use of information and communications technology in a wide range of contexts to access, manage, select and present information, including mathematical information, <i>for example carrying out secondary research online and collating and presenting data</i>.</p> |

7.2 Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities at Key Stage 4

| Self-Management |
|--|
| <p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan work, <i>for example preparing extended pieces of writing;</i> • set personal learning goals and targets to meet deadlines, <i>for example completing personal research before controlled assessment deadlines;</i> • monitor, review and evaluate their progress and improve their learning, <i>for example discussing teacher feedback from analysis of a text;</i> and • effectively manage their time, <i>for example completing the examination tasks in Units 1 and 4.</i> |
| Working with Others |
| <p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learn with and from others through co-operation, <i>for example participating in classroom discussion;</i> • participate in effective teams and accept responsibility for achieving collective goals, <i>for example problem-solving scenarios in Speaking and Listening;</i> and • listen actively to others and influence group thinking and decision-making, taking account of others' opinions, <i>for example participating in group presentations and feedback sessions.</i> |
| Problem Solving |
| <p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and analyse relationships and patterns, <i>for example analysing the use of particular language choices in spoken language and the use of rhythm in poetry;</i> • propose justified explanations, <i>for example considering the actions of characters when studying written language;</i> • reason, form opinions and justify their views, <i>for example presenting and explaining the personal views of a character when studying written language;</i> • analyse critically and assess evidence to understand how information or evidence can be used to serve different purposes or agendas, <i>for example assessing the use of language in media texts;</i> • analyse and evaluate multiple perspectives, <i>for example participating in debates in Speaking and Listening;</i> • explore unfamiliar views without prejudice, <i>for example an empathetic response to a character in The Study of Written Language;</i> • weigh up options and justify decisions, <i>for example reaching a collective decision in Speaking and Listening;</i> and • apply and evaluate a range of approaches to solve problems in familiar and novel contexts, <i>for example coming to a conclusion in a discussion.</i> |

Although not referred to separately as a statutory requirement at Key Stage 4 in the Northern Ireland Curriculum, **Managing Information** and **Being Creative** may also remain relevant to learning.

8 Links and Support

8.1 Support

The following resources are available to support this specification:

- our English Language microsite at www.ccea.org.uk and
- specimen assessment materials.

We also intend to provide:

- past papers;
- mark schemes;
- Chief Examiner’s reports;
- Principal Moderator’s reports;
- planning frameworks;
- centre support visits;
- support days for teachers;
- agreement trials;
- controlled assessment guidance for teachers;
- controlled assessment guidance for candidates;
- a resource list; and
- exemplification of examination performance.

8.2 Examination entries

Entry codes for this subject and details on how to make entries are available on our Qualifications Administration Handbook microsite, which you can access at www.ccea.org.uk

Alternatively, you can telephone our Examination Entries, Results and Certification team using the contact details provided.

8.3 Equality and inclusion

We have considered the requirements of equality legislation in developing this specification and designed it to be as free as possible from ethnic, gender, religious, political and other forms of bias.

GCSE qualifications often require the assessment of a broad range of competences. This is because they are general qualifications that prepare students for a wide range of occupations and higher level courses.

During the development process, an external equality panel reviewed the specification to identify any potential barriers to equality and inclusion. Where appropriate, we have considered measures to support access and mitigate barriers.

We can make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities to reduce barriers to accessing assessments. For this reason, very few students will have a complete barrier to any part of the assessment.

Potential barriers for some students include:

- Speaking, for some students with a speech impairment; and
- Listening, for some students with a hearing impairment.

These competencies are included because the GCSE is a holistic qualification which must continue to assess all skills to meet all its Assessment Objectives.

Modified visual and hearing papers are available on request.

It is important to note that where access arrangements are permitted, they must not be used in any way that undermines the integrity of the assessment. You can find information on reasonable adjustments in the Joint Council for Qualifications document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*, available at www.jcq.org.uk

8.4 Contact details

If you have any queries about this specification, please contact the relevant CCEA staff member or department:

- Specification Support Officer: Joan Jennings
(telephone: (028) 9026 1200, extension 2552, email: jjennings@ccea.org.uk)
- Subject Officer: Olivia McNeill
(telephone: (028) 9026 1200, extension 2963, email: omcneill@ccea.org.uk)
- Examination Entries, Results and Certification
(telephone: (028) 9026 1262, email: entriesandresults@ccea.org.uk)
- Examiner Recruitment
(telephone: (028) 9026 1243, email: appointments@ccea.org.uk)
- Distribution
(telephone: (028) 9026 1242, email: cceadistribution@ccea.org.uk)
- Support Events Administration
(telephone: (028) 9026 1401, email: events@ccea.org.uk)
- Moderation
(telephone: (028) 9026 1200, extension 2236, email: moderationteam@ccea.org.uk)
- Business Assurance (Complaints and Appeals)
(telephone: (028) 9026 1244, email: complaints@ccea.org.uk or appealsmanager@ccea.org.uk).

Appendix 1

Glossary of Terms for Controlled Assessment Regulations

| Term | Definition |
|--|--|
| Component | <p>A discrete, assessable element within a controlled assessment/qualification that is not itself formally reported and for which the awarding organisation records the marks</p> <p>May contain one or more tasks</p> |
| Controlled assessment | A form of internal assessment where the control levels are set for each stage of the assessment process: task setting, task taking, and task marking |
| External assessment | A form of independent assessment in which question papers, assignments and tasks are set by the awarding organisation, taken under specified conditions (including detailed supervision and duration) and marked by the awarding organisation |
| Formal supervision (High level of control) | The candidate must be in direct sight of the supervisor at all times. Use of resources and interaction with other candidates is tightly prescribed. |
| Informal supervision (Medium level of control) | <p>Questions/Tasks are outlined, the use of resources is not tightly prescribed and assessable outcomes may be informed by group work.</p> <p>Supervision is confined to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring that the contributions of individual candidates are recorded accurately; and ensuring that plagiarism does not take place. <p>The supervisor may provide limited guidance to candidates.</p> |
| Limited supervision (Limited level of control) | Requirements are clearly specified, but some work may be completed without direct supervision and will not contribute directly to assessable outcomes. |

| Term | Definition |
|--------------|--|
| Mark scheme | <p>A scheme detailing how credit is to be awarded in relation to a particular unit, component or task</p> <p>Normally characterises acceptable answers or levels of response to questions/tasks or parts of questions/tasks and identifies the amount of credit each attracts</p> <p>May also include information about unacceptable answers</p> |
| Task | A discrete element of external or controlled assessment that may include examinations, assignments, practical activities and projects |
| Task marking | <p>Specifies the way in which credit is awarded for candidates' outcomes</p> <p>Involves the use of mark schemes and/or marking criteria produced by the awarding organisation</p> |
| Task setting | <p>The specification of the assessment requirements</p> <p>Tasks may be set by awarding organisations and/or teachers, as defined by subject-specific regulations. Teacher-set tasks must be developed in line with awarding organisation specified requirements.</p> |
| Task taking | <p>The conditions for candidate support and supervision, and the authentication of candidates' work</p> <p>Task taking may involve different parameters from those used in traditional written examinations. For example, candidates may be allowed supervised access to sources such as the internet.</p> |
| Unit | <p>The smallest part of a qualification that is formally reported</p> <p>May comprise separately assessed components</p> |

Appendix 2

Controlled Assessment Tasks for Unit 2: Speaking and Listening

Speaking and Listening (20%)

Candidates are assessed in an individual presentation and interaction, a discussion and a role play. Sample tasks are suggested below. The total mark for this unit is **60**. Each task is marked out of **20**.

Individual presentation and interaction

Deliver a presentation on a topic that interests you, followed by a question and answer session.

Discussion

In a group of two or more, discuss the difficulties facing homeless people.

Role play

Example 1: Individual role play – You are a youth worker. At the monthly local council meeting, present your argument requesting funding for your youth club.

Example 2: Group role play – You are members of the local council. Taking individual roles as councillors, discuss whether you should provide funding for a local youth club.

Appendix 3

Controlled Assessment Tasks for Unit 3: Studying Spoken and Written Language

We replace the tasks for Unit 3 each year. Moderation can be in May or January. For themes for the current year of teaching and moderation, please see the Task List published in the Controlled Assessment section of the subject microsite at www.ccea.org.uk

Each task is marked out of **30**. The total mark for the unit is **60**.

Task 1 – The Study of Spoken Language (10%)

Listen to two talks, one formal and one informal. Consider the variations of language use and explain why language changes in different contexts.

Centres can adapt this task by choosing talks that meet the needs of their candidates, for example:

- Compare and contrast how these two speakers communicate their messages:
 - ‘Women’s rights are human rights’ speech by Hillary Clinton; and
 - ‘How bad do you want it? (Success)’ speech by Eric Thomas.

Task 2 – The Study of Written Language (10%)

Create a task based on the following theme:

- Love and/or hate in a literary text you have studied.

For example:

- Analyse the presentation of George and Lennie’s relationship in Chapters 1 and 2 of *Of Mice and Men*.

(For tasks based on anthologies or a number of shorter texts of varying genres, candidates may, if required by the task, make comparisons. However, this is not a formal requirement.)

Appendix 4

Assessment Criteria for Unit 2: Speaking and Listening

This assessment criteria should be used for each task in Unit 2.

| Level and marks | Communicating and adapting language | Interacting and responding | Creating and sustaining roles |
|----------------------------------|---|---|--|
| 0 | Award zero for work not worthy of credit. | | |
| 1 1–4 marks | <p>Candidates briefly express points of view, ideas and feelings. They sometimes develop detail to add interest to accounts, narratives and information, supported by appropriate non-verbal features. They use straightforward vocabulary and grammar, showing awareness of some main features of standard English.</p> | <p>Candidates respond to what they hear, showing some interest, including non-verbal reactions. They make brief, occasional contributions and general statements in discussion. They follow central ideas and possibilities in what they hear and raise straightforward questions.</p> | <p>Candidates draw on obvious and sometimes stereotypical ideas to create simple characters. They react to situations in predictable but appropriate ways, demonstrating some understanding of relationships and familiar ideas.</p> |
| 2 5–8 marks | <p>Candidates convey straightforward information and ideas, coherent accounts and narratives in extended turns. They begin to adapt talk and non-verbal features to meet the needs of different audiences. They use a variety of vocabulary and structures for different purposes, including appropriate features of standard English with reasonable accuracy.</p> | <p>Candidates respond positively to what they hear, including helpful requests for explanation and further detail. They make specific, relevant contributions to discussion. They allow others to express ideas or points of view that may differ from their own and respond appropriately.</p> | <p>Candidates show understanding of characters by creating straightforward roles using speech, gesture and movement. They engage with situations and ideas, showing understanding of issues and relationships.</p> |

| Level and marks | Communicating and adapting language | Interacting and responding | Creating and sustaining roles |
|---|--|--|---|
| <p>3</p> <p>9–12 marks</p> | <p>Candidates effectively communicate information, ideas and feelings, and promote issues and points of view.</p> <p>They adapt talk to a variety of situations and audiences, using non-verbal features to add to impact.</p> <p>They use a range of well-judged vocabulary and sentence structures to achieve different purposes, including competent and appropriate use of standard English.</p> | <p>Candidates listen closely and attentively, engaging with what is heard through perceptive responses. They make significant contributions that move discussions forward.</p> <p>They engage with others' ideas and feelings, recognising obvious bias or prejudice and referring to precise detail.</p> | <p>Candidates develop and sustain roles and characters through appropriate language and effective gesture and movement.</p> <p>They make contributions to the development of situations and ideas, showing understanding and insight into relationships and significant issues.</p> |
| <p>4</p> <p>13–16 marks</p> | <p>Candidates confidently convey and interpret information, ideas and feelings, emphasising significant points and issues.</p> <p>They adapt and shape talk and non-verbal features to meet the demands of different situations, contexts and purposes.</p> <p>They make appropriate, controlled, effective use of standard English vocabulary and grammar.</p> | <p>Candidates challenge, develop and respond to what they hear in thoughtful and considerate ways, seeking clarification through apt questions. They analyse and reflect on others' ideas to clarify issues and assumptions and develop the discussion.</p> <p>They identify useful outcomes and help structure discussion through purposeful contributions.</p> | <p>Candidates create convincing characters and roles using a range of carefully selected verbal and non-verbal techniques.</p> <p>They respond skilfully and sensitively in different situations and scenarios, to explore ideas, issues and relationships.</p> |

| Level and marks | Communicating and adapting language | Interacting and responding | Creating and sustaining roles |
|---|--|--|---|
| <p>5</p> <p>17–20 marks</p> | <p>Candidates highlight priorities and essential detail when communicating complex and demanding subject matter.</p> <p>They use a sophisticated range of strategies to meet the demands of challenging contexts and purposes.</p> <p>They show an assured choice and flexible use of standard English vocabulary and grammar in appropriate situations.</p> | <p>Candidates sustain concentrated listening, showing understanding of complex ideas through interrogating what is said.</p> <p>They shape direction and content of talk, responding with flexibility to develop ideas and challenge assumptions.</p> <p>They initiate, develop and sustain discussion through encouraging participation and interaction, resolving differences and achieving positive outcomes.</p> | <p>Candidates create complex characters and fulfil the demands of challenging roles through insightful choice of dramatic approaches.</p> <p>They explore and respond to complex ideas, issues and relationships in varied formal and informal scenarios.</p> |

Appendix 5

Assessment Criteria for Unit 3: Studying Spoken and Written Language

Task 1 – The Study of Spoken Language

This controlled assessment task tests the assessment objectives for Spoken Language.

Assessment objectives for Study of Spoken Language

Candidates must:

- i. understand variations in spoken language, explaining why language changes in relation to contexts; and
- ii. evaluate the impact of spoken language choices.

How the task meets specific elements of the assessment objectives

Candidates present a consideration of the purpose, audience and specific context of each of the two spoken texts. They engage with:

- the key words and phrases that each speaker has deliberately chosen to create and elicit the desired effect;
- the language and linguistic techniques and rhetorical devices that each speaker calls on to make the best possible impact on the audience; and
- the delivery techniques used by each speaker, for example tone, pace, pause, pitch and volume.

Method and style of marking

The teacher should read and annotate the response as below.

- Use underlining to highlight positive elements in the candidate's response, such as creditworthy, relevant explanation or purposeful interpretation.
- Tick to acknowledge the use of relevant examples or supporting evidence.
- In the margin, write 'C' to highlight where appropriate comparisons and cross-references are used.
- Ignore all errors in punctuation, syntax and spelling as they are not being assessed.
- Marginal or summative comments are not required.

The process of assessment

At the end of the response, the teacher will assess positively the response's features in relation to each of the five Competence Level Strands for The Study of Spoken Language.

Below is an example of how this assessment works in practice. This should be read with the Competence Level Strands and the Mark Grid that follow.

For the purpose of this explanation/example, the response has been read, annotated and then assessed positively against each of the five Competence Level Strands for The Study of Spoken Language.

The response has been summarised by the following descriptors:

- 'Competent **explanations/cross-references of appropriately selected language choices (from both sources) and their intended effects.**' (Language choice and effect CL3)
- 'Straightforward **comments on the use of some linguistic techniques from both sources**' (Linguistic techniques and devices/their effects CL2)
- 'Competent understanding **of the use of selected delivery techniques and their purpose (from both sources). Informed comments on the influence of the contexts**' (Delivery techniques/their purpose/context CL3)

Only these individual Competence Levels need to be noted at the end of the response.

The order in which the Competence Level 'strand scores' are accrued has no significance when reading the Mark Grid. Regardless of the order in which they have been achieved, **233, 323 and 332** all attract the same score (**15 or 16 marks**). The teacher then uses their professional judgement to decide on the mark of 15 or 16. Note this score beside the 'strand scores' as below:

332/16

In exceptional circumstances, the standard of a candidate's work might range across more than two strand levels. Where this happens, the teacher should decide the mark to be awarded on a 'best fit' basis.

Competence Level Strands for The Study of Spoken Language

These outline the different standards of performance that candidates achieve. **Each successive level description assumes the continued demonstration of the qualities described in the lower levels.**

| Level | Language choice and effect | Linguistic techniques and devices/their effects | Delivery techniques/their purpose/context | Level |
|-------|--|---|---|-------|
| 0 | Award zero for work not worthy of credit. | | | 0 |
| CL1 | Basic understanding of some language choices/key words from one or both sources. | Basic understanding of some linguistic techniques from one or both sources. | Basic understanding of some delivery techniques (from one or both sources). Some basic comments on purpose and/or contexts. | CL1 |
| CL2 | Straightforward comments on the use of some of the language choices (cross-referenced within or across both sources) and their intended effects. | Straightforward comments on the use of some linguistic techniques from both sources. | Straightforward understanding of some delivery techniques and their purpose (from both sources). Relevant comments on the influence of the contexts. | CL2 |
| CL3 | Competent explanations/cross-references of appropriately selected language choices (from both sources) and their intended effects. | Competent explanations of appropriately selected linguistic techniques and their intended effects (from both sources). | Competent understanding of the use of selected delivery techniques and their purpose (from both sources). Informed comments on the influence of the contexts. | CL3 |
| CL4 | Analysis of a range of purposefully selected language choices (from both sources) and their intended effects. | Analysis of a range of purposefully selected linguistic techniques and their intended effects (from both sources). | Analysis of a range of purposefully selected delivery techniques and their purpose (from both sources). Meaningful comments on the influence of the contexts. | CL4 |
| CL5 | Evaluation of a range of skilfully selected language choices (from both sources) and their impact on the audience. | Evaluation of a range of skilfully selected linguistic techniques (from both sources) and their impact on the audience. | Evaluation of a range of skilfully selected delivery techniques (from both sources) and their impact on the audience. Judicious and insightful comments on the influence of the contexts. | CL5 |

Mark Grid for The Study of Spoken Language

| Strands Attained | Mark Awarded |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 000 | 0 |
| 100 | 1/2 |
| 110 | 3/4 |
| 111 | 5/6 |
| 112 | 7/8 |
| 221 | 9/10 |
| 222 | 11/12 |
| 223 | 13/14 |
| 332 | 15/16 |
| 333 | 17/18 |
| 334 | 19/20 |
| 443 | 21/22 |
| 444 | 23/24 |
| 445 | 25/26 |
| 554 | 27/28 |
| 555 | 29/30 |

Task 2 – The Study of Written Language

Assessment objectives for Studying Written Language

Candidates must:

- i. read and understand texts, selecting material appropriate to purpose, collating from different sources and making comparisons and cross-references as appropriate;
- ii. develop and sustain interpretations of writers' ideas and perspectives; and
- iii. explain and evaluate how writers use linguistic, structural and presentational features to achieve effects and engage and influence the reader.

How the task meets specific elements of the assessment objectives

Candidates are expected to:

- read and understand texts;
- understand how meaning is constructed;
- select material appropriate to purpose;
- recognise the effect of language choices and patterns;
- explain how writers use linguistic and presentational features to sustain the reader's interest; and
- evaluate how texts may be interpreted differently depending on the reader's perspective.

Method and style of marking

The teacher should read and annotate the response as below.

- Use underlining to highlight positive elements in the candidate's response, such as creditworthy, relevant explanation or purposeful interpretation.
- Tick to acknowledge the use of relevant examples or supporting evidence.
- If appropriate, in the margin write 'C' to highlight where comparisons and cross-references have been used (for example, comparing and/or cross-referencing within a text or if the candidate is studying a number of poems or short stories).
- Ignore all errors in punctuation, syntax and spelling as they are not being assessed.
- Marginal or summative comments are not required.

The process of assessment

At the end of the response, the teacher will assess positively the response's features in relation to each of the five Competence Level Strands for The Study of Written Language.

Here is an example of how this assessment works in practice. This should be read with the Competence Level Strands and the Mark Grid that follow.

For the purpose of this explanation/example, the response has been read, annotated and then assessed positively against each of the five Competence Level Strands for The Study of Written Language.

The response has been summarised by the following descriptors:

- 'Competent understanding demonstrated through competent comments about the text(s)' (Reading, understanding and evaluating texts CL3)
- 'Straightforward comments on some of the main features of writer's techniques' (Interpretation and evaluation of writer's/writers' techniques and their effects CL2)
- 'Relevant selection of examples from within and/or across the text(s) used to support a competent response' (Selecting material appropriate to purpose CL3)

Only these individual Competence Levels need to be noted at the end of the response.

The order in which the Competence Level 'strand scores' are accrued has no significance when reading the Mark Grid. Regardless of the order in which they have been achieved, **233**, **323** and **332** all attract the same score (**15 or 16 marks**). The teacher then uses their professional judgement to decide on the mark of 15 or 16. Note this score beside the 'strand scores' as below:

323/16

In exceptional circumstances, the standard of a candidate's work might range across more than two strand levels. Where this happens, the teacher should decide the mark to be awarded on a 'best fit' basis.

Competence Level Strands for The Study of Written Language

These outline the different standards of performance that candidates achieve. Each successive level description assumes the continued demonstration of the qualities described in the lower levels.

| Level | Reading, understanding and evaluating texts | Interpretation and evaluation of writer's/ writers' techniques and their effects | Selecting material appropriate to purpose (collation and cross-referencing, if relevant) | Level |
|-------|---|---|---|-------|
| 0 | Award zero for work not worthy of credit. | | | 0 |
| CL1 | Basic understanding of the text(s), demonstrated through basic comments about the text(s). | Basic comments on some of the main features of writer's techniques. | Some basic reporting of examples from within and/or across the text(s). | CL1 |
| CL2 | Straightforward understanding, demonstrated through straightforward comments about the text(s). | Straightforward comments on some of the main features of writer's techniques. | Use of some specific selected examples from within and/or across the text(s) to support straightforward opinions. | CL2 |
| CL3 | Competent understanding demonstrated through competent comments about the text(s). | Competent explanations of key elements of writer's techniques with some explanation of their intended effects. | Relevant selection of examples from within and/or across the text(s) used to support a competent response. | CL3 |
| CL4 | Good understanding demonstrated through purposeful comments on the text(s). | A sustained interpretation of key elements of writer's techniques with analysis of their intended effects. | Purposefully selected material from within and/or across the text(s) used to develop a coherent response. | CL4 |
| CL5 | Excellent understanding demonstrated through perceptive comments about the text(s). | Confident and perceptive interpretation of key elements of writer's techniques with evaluation of the impact on the reader. | Illustrative material effectively and skilfully selected to support and present a confident, sustained response. | CL5 |

Mark Grid for The Study of Written Language

| Strands Attained | Mark Awarded |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 000 | 0 |
| 100 | 1/2 |
| 110 | 3/4 |
| 111 | 5/6 |
| 112 | 7/8 |
| 221 | 9/10 |
| 222 | 11/12 |
| 223 | 13/14 |
| 332 | 15/16 |
| 333 | 17/18 |
| 334 | 19/20 |
| 443 | 21/22 |
| 444 | 23/24 |
| 445 | 25/26 |
| 554 | 27/28 |
| 555 | 29/30 |

Summary of Changes since First Issue

(Most recent changes are indicated in red on the latest version)

| Revision History Number | Date of Change | Page Number | Change Made |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|---|
| Version 1 | N/A | N/A | First issue |
| Version 2 | 8 June 2022 | 35, 36, 39 and 40 | Change to content of Competence Level Strands |