

1. INTRODUCTION

This document, which is based on the *General Assessment Document* issued by the Ministry of Education, provides information and guidance for teachers on the assessment of students studying English in **Grades 11 to 12**. The document covers assessment of both the 'Core' ('A' and 'B') courses and of 'Elective' English in Post-Basic Education..

These updated assessment arrangements replace previously-issued documents and will be implemented **from November 2009**.

2. ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES

The updated assessment arrangements are based on the following principles:

- All assessments are to be based upon the **learning outcomes** which students are expected to achieve.
- These learning outcomes are organized into **elements**: i.e. Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, Grammar/Vocabulary. These elements provide the framework, not only for assessment but also for record-keeping and reporting.
- Teachers are to carry out continuous assessment of all students using a variety of assessment techniques.
- In Grade 11, student achievement is to be reported as a letter-grade, while in Grade 12, both letter grades and percentage-marks are used. The following table shows the breakdown of percentage marks and corresponding letter-grades:

Mark Range	Letter-Grade	Descriptor
90% – 100%	A	Excellent
80% – 89%	B	Very good
65% – 79%	C	Good
50% – 64%	D	Satisfactory
49% or less	E	Needs further support

Note: The minimum pass mark is 50% or letter-grade 'D' at all grade levels.

3. LEARNING OUTCOMES

In Grades 11 and 12, the learning outcomes of the '**Core**' English courses ('A' and 'B') are, for the purposes of assessment, grouped into **five elements**:

Listening *Speaking* *Reading* *Writing* *Grammar/Vocabulary*

In order to ensure proper coverage of all of its important features, each element (except for *Grammar/Vocabulary*) is further divided into **sub-elements**, as follows:

Grade 11

LISTENING	SPEAKING	READING	WRITING
Everyday language + Texts	– Presentations – Interaction	– Class-based – Independent	– Interactive – Informative – Narrative – Evaluative

Grade 12

SPEAKING	READING	WRITING
<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Presentations– Interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Independent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Interactive– Informative– Narrative– Evaluative

Note: As can be seen, the number of CA elements/ sub-elements in Grade 12 is reduced. This is because there are only 30 marks to be awarded instead of 40.

In the '**Elective**' course, the learning outcomes are grouped into two elements, *Reading* and (in particular) *Writing*:

RDG	WRT	
	Grade 11	Grade 12
<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Class-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Interactive– Informative– Narrative– Evaluative– Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Interactive– Informative– Narrative– Evaluative– Reports

A detailed description of these elements and sub-elements can be found in [Appendix One](#). This appendix describes the main learning outcomes for each grade-level, according to element and sub-element. Each outcome is specified in terms of a 'CAN' statement (e.g. "*CAN recognise and understand words and phrases.*").

For each grade-level, the outcomes are listed in two sections: 'General Outcomes' and 'Specific Outcomes'. Each 'general' outcome is headed by a letter (*a, b*, etc.) with the most important outcomes appearing first, followed by lesser (but still important) outcomes from previous grade-levels. The same letter-headings are used again in the 'Specific Outcomes' section, which provides more detailed information and explanation about each of the 'general' outcomes.

Further information regarding these learning outcomes can be gathered from the relevant Teachers' Books and course materials.

Individual teachers will also take into account any additional language items which have been introduced to students through **supplementary materials/activities** with the aim of enhancing their overall achievement of the learning outcomes.

4. ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES

The learning outcomes mentioned above are best assessed using a **variety** of different assessment techniques, which can be grouped under two labels: 'Continuous Assessment' and 'Formal Testing'.

4.1 Continuous Assessment

Continuous Assessment (CA) provides a way of collecting information about student learning throughout the school year, primarily by **regular observation and evaluation of students' performance in normal classroom conditions**.

Continuous Assessment accounts for **40%** of a student's overall mark. (Note: In **Grade 12 only**, this includes 10% for a **Short Test (ST)** administered in the middle of the year.)

Continuous Assessment has several strengths in terms of validity, fairness and student motivation. It also allows for the convenient assessment of Speaking.

General guidelines on the conducting of Continuous Assessment can be found in Appendix Two. These guidelines emphasise the need for teachers to:

- have a clear **understanding** of the different language elements, learning outcomes and assessment criteria;
- develop efficient **strategies for classroom observation**;
- keep **systematic records** (both formal and informal);
- achieve a balance between **summative** and **formative** assessment;
- be tactful, encouraging and, above all, **fair**.

Appendix Two also describes a number of important approaches to CA, including:

- Portfolios
- Project work
- Generic Tasks
- Presentations
- Quizzes
- Groupwork
- Self-Assessment
- Giving feedback to students

At the end of Appendix Two, there is a special section devoted to **Formal Moderation**. The procedures used in Formal Moderation seek to ensure that common standards are being applied, so that the Continuous Assessment marks awarded for the Diploma are fair and accurate. This section includes information for teachers about the kinds of evidence of student achievement which they will be required to keep and make available to visiting moderators.

4.2 Formal Testing

At the end of the year, a formal examination will be administered, accounting for **60%** of a student's overall mark for English.

For both 'Core' courses ('A' & 'B'), this **End-of-Year Exam (EYE)** will focus, in turn, on *Listening, Vocabulary, Grammar, Reading and Writing*. (Note: For reasons of time and practicality, there is no formal testing of Speaking, which will be assessed by Continuous Assessment only.)

For the 'Elective' course, the End-of-Year Exam will focus exclusively on *Reading and Writing*.

Each exam will conform to the Specifications given in Appendix Three (a) and (b). The *same* Specifications are used for both of the Core courses ('A' and 'B'). However, the actual *content* of the test papers should be different, so as to take into account the level of the students and particular topics and language points studied in the two different courses.

- End-of-Year Exams in Grade 11 will be prepared, marked and administered **by the regions**.
- End-of-Year Exams in Grade 12 will be prepared, marked and administered **centrally**.

In Grade 11, there are no 'Re-sit' exams. In Grade 12, there is a 'Re-sit' (or 'Second Session') exam, which uses the same Specifications as the 'First Session' exam.

5. RECORDING and REPORTING

5.1 Weightings

In the two 'Core' courses, marks are allocated for the different assessment techniques, as follows:

Element	GRADE 11			GRADE 12			
	CA	End-of-Year Exam	TOTAL	Continuous Assessment (CA)		End-of-Year Exam	TOTAL
				Class-room	Short Test		
LST	5%	15%	20%	—	—	15%	15%
SPK	15%	—	15%	15%	—	—	15%
RDG	10%	15%	25%	5%	3%	17%	25%
WRT	10%	15%	25%	10%	2%	18%	30%
GRM/VCB	—	15%	15%	—	5%	10%	15%
Total	40%	60%	100%	30%	10%	60%	100%

In 'Elective' English, the weightings are as follows:

Element	GRADE 11			GRADE 12			
	CA	End-of-Year Exam	TOTAL	Continuous Assessment (CA)		End-of-Year Exam	TOTAL
				Class-room	Short Test		
RDG	10%	15%	25%	5%	5%	15%	25%
WRT	30%	45%	75%	25%	5%	45%	75%
Total	40%	60%	100%	30%	10%	60%	100%

5.2 Awarding Marks:

Detailed guidelines for the awarding of marks are provided in Appendix Four, in the form of **Rating Scales** for each of the sub-elements.

Each Rating Scale identifies and describes **five** different levels of performance/ achievement, and assigns to each a mark from 1 to 5. This mark corresponds to the five overall letter-grades used for assessment:

(A) Excellent (B) Very good (C) Good (D) Satisfactory (E) Needs further support

This five-point scale provides the basis for the awarding of all Continuous Assessment marks at these grade-levels. Teachers need to familiarize themselves thoroughly with the relevant Rating Scales — and to confer with supervisors, senior teachers and other teachers — so as to apply them with consistency and accuracy.

5.3 Record-keeping

Blank forms for the formal recording of student marks and grades are provided in Appendix Five. For each grade-level, there are two recording sheets: the 'Continuous Assessment Recording Chart' and the 'Assessment Summary Sheet'. (Note: Teachers should also keep *Informal Records* with additional, more detailed information about each of their students. Guidelines on how to do this are provided in Appendix Two, Section D.)

5.3.1 'CORE' courses ('A' & 'B')

The **Continuous Assessment Recording Chart** (or 'CAR-Chart') has either three or four main vertical sections, one for each of the elements covered by Continuous Assessment: '*Listening*' (*Grade 11 only*), '*Speaking*', '*Reading*' and '*Writing*', followed by a column for the student's total Continuous Assessment score. Also included is a column for each sub-element, with the maximum number of marks for that sub-element. This maximum score is always '5', except in the case of (SPK) 'Interaction', where it is '10'.

During the year, the teacher fills in each of the sub-element columns with **provisional** marks, as whole numbers from 1 to 5. These marks should be written **in pencil**, so that they can be amended during the year, as the teacher gathers further information about the student's achievement in the relevant sub-element.

At this stage, a typical (Grade 11 'A' or 'B') CAR-Chart will look as follows:

LST	SPEAKING			READING			WRITING						TOTAL
NS (5)	1-way (5)	2-way (10)	NS (15)	CB (5)	IND (5)	NS (10)	INTR (5)	INFM (5)	NRTV (5)	EVLTV (5)	Total (20)	NS (10)	NS (40)
4	3	4		4	5		4	3	3	3			

At the end of the year, the teacher makes the final decision as to the mark for each sub-element, and then enters it in the appropriate column **in ink**.

(**Note: In the special case of (SPK) 'Interaction' the mark will need to be *doubled*. At this point, the teacher *may* wish to award, where appropriate, 'in-between' scores such as '3', '5', '7' or '9': see example below.)

A typical record-sheet will now look as follows:

LST	SPEAKING			READING			WRITING						TOTAL
NS (5)	1-way (5)	2-way (10)	NS (15)	CB (5)	IND (5)	NS (10)	INTR (5)	INFM (5)	NRTV (5)	EVLTV (5)	Total (20)	NS (10)	NS (40)
4	3	7		4	5		4	3	3	3			

The teacher then calculates the '**NS**' (number score) for each element. The procedure for doing this varies according to the element. For *Listening*, the '**NS**' mark is already there. For *Speaking* and *Reading*, the teacher adds together the two sub-element scores and enters this total in the relevant '**NS**' column. In the case of *Writing*, the teacher adds together the four sub-element scores, enters the result under '**Total (20)**', and divides this score by two using the following table:

Total (20)	1- 2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	13-14	15-16	17-18	19-20
NS (10)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

The final step in completing the 'CAR-Chart' is to determine the student's overall Continuous Assessment mark for the year. This is done by adding together the '**NS**' scores for the four elements, and then entering the resulting total in the right-hand column on the chart [**Total/NS' (40)**].

The completed CAR-Chart (for Grade 11 'A' or 'B') now looks as follows:

LST	SPEAKING			READING			WRITING						TOTAL
NS (5)	1-way (5)	2-way (10)	NS (15)	CB (5)	IND (5)	NS (10)	INTR (5)	INFM (5)	NRTV (5)	EVLT (5)	Total (20)	NS (5)	NS (40)
4	3	7	10	4	5	9	4	3	3	3	13	7	30

This total mark for Continuous Assessment (CA) is then transferred to the **Assessment Summary Sheet**, where it is added to the End-of-Year Exam (EYE) score. The resulting percentage score is entered in the '**Overall / NS**' column.

[Note: In Grade 12, however, the CA-mark is added to the scores for the Short Test (ST) and the End-of-Year Exam (EYE).]

Finally, in order to determine the overall letter-grade, the table on page 1 of the Student Assessment Document is used. The resulting grade is entered in the '**Overall/ LG**' column.

5.3.1 'ELECTIVE' course

Recording of marks for '**Elective**' English likewise involves a 'Continuous Assessment Recording Chart' and an 'Assessment Summary Sheet'.

The **Continuous Assessment Recording Chart** (or 'CAR-Chart') has two main vertical sections, one for 'Reading' and one for 'Writing', as well as a column for the student's total Continuous Assessment score. Under 'Writing', five different sub-elements are listed, along with the maximum number of marks for each. (Note: These maximum scores are always either '5' or '10'.)

During the year, the teacher fills in each of the sub-element columns with **provisional** marks, as whole numbers from 1 to 5. These marks should be written **in pencil**, so that they can be amended during the year, as the teacher gathers further information about the student's achievement in Reading and Writing.

At this stage, a typical (Grade 11 'Elective') CAR-Chart will look as follows:

READING	WRITING						TOTAL
NS (10)	INTR (5)	INFM (5)	NRTV (10)	EVAL (5)	Interviews (5)	NS (30)	NS (40)
4	3	3	4	4	3		

NOTE: The teacher may also, where appropriate, wish to include 'plus' or 'minus' signs (or some other kind of notation) to indicate higher or lower levels of performance *within* a particular score band.

At the end of the year, the teacher makes the **final** decision as to the mark for each sub-element and enters it in the appropriate column **in ink**.

(**Note: In the case of 'Reading' and of (WRT) 'Narrative' the mark will need to be *doubled*. At this point, the teacher *may* wish to award, where appropriate, 'in-between' scores such as '3', '5', '7' or '9': see example below.)

The final step in completing the 'CAR-Chart' is to determine the student's total Continuous Assessment mark for the year. In the case of *Writing*, the teacher will first have to add together the five sub-element scores and enter the result under '**Writing/ NS (30)**'. Then, he/she adds together the '**NS**' scores for the two elements (*Writing* and *Reading*), and enters the resulting total in the right-hand column ('**Total/ NS**') on the chart.

The completed CAR-Chart (for Grade 11 'Elective') now looks as follows:

READING	WRITING						TOTAL
NS (10)	INTR (5)	INFM (5)	NRTV (10)	EVAL (5)	Interviews (5)	NS (30)	NS (40)
9	3	3	8	4	3	21	30

This total mark for Continuous Assessment is then transferred to the **Assessment Summary Sheet**, where it is added to the End-of-Year Exam (EYE) score. The resulting percentage score is entered in the '**Overall/ NS**' column.

[Note: In Grade 12, however, the CA-mark is added to the scores for the Short Test (ST) and the End-of-Year Exam (EYE).]

Finally, in order to determine the overall letter-grade, the table on page 1 of the Student Assessment Document is used. The resulting grade is entered in the '**Overall/ LG**' column.

5.4 Reporting

During the school year, parents receive a **descriptive report** regarding their son's or daughter's progress. In Grade 11, this report is issued in February; in Grade 12, it is issued in March.

The comment(s) made in this report should be as specific and informative as possible in the space provided. Writing '*Very good*' or '*Needs further support*' is not sufficient. The teacher should try to capture the student's main strengths and/or weaknesses, in terms of the learning outcomes and of their behavior, attitudes and learning strategies. A very wide variety of different comments are possible, but typical statements might, for example, be:

- "*Was at first very shy when Speaking, but is now gaining confidence.*"
- "*Shows good understanding of complex texts, but needs to spend more time reading independently.*"
- "*Needs to cooperate more with other students, especially when doing projects.*"
- "*Is able to communicate quite well in Writing, but should be more careful with Grammar.*"

In writing these comments, the teacher may wish to adopt some of the wordings used in the Rating Scales (see Apdx 3) and/or in the Learning Outcomes (see Apdx 1), but should avoid the use of any technical terms which may be unfamiliar to parents. (Note: These comments will, of course, appear on the Report Card *in Arabic*.) Teachers should also refer to the Informal Notes that they keep during the year for each student (see Apdx 2, Section D).

At the end of the year, parents will receive a **full report** giving information, in the form of letter-grades, regarding their son's or daughter's achievement of the learning outcomes.
