



Draft curriculum specification for Leaving Certificate Irish
- English medium schools (L2)

Approved for consultation

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Senior cycle

Learners in senior cycle are approaching the end of their time in school and are focusing on the directions they would like to take in their future lives. Senior cycle plays a vital role in helping learners to address their current needs as young adults and in preparing them for life in a changing economic and social context.

Senior cycle is founded on a commitment to educational achievement of the highest standard for all learners, commensurate with their individual abilities. To support learners as they shape their own future there is an emphasis on the development of knowledge and deep understanding; on learners taking responsibility for their own learning; on the acquisition of key skills; and on the processes of learning. The broad curriculum, with some opportunities for specialisation, supports continuity from junior cycle. It sets out to meet the needs of learners, some of whom have special educational needs, but who all share a wide range of learning interests, aptitudes and talents.

Curricular components at senior cycle promote a balance between knowledge and skills, and the types of learning strategies relevant to participation in a changing world where the future is uncertain.

Assessment in senior cycle involves gathering, interpreting and using information about the processes and outcomes of learning. It takes different forms and is used for a variety of purposes. It is used to determine the appropriate route for learners through a differentiated curriculum, to identify specific areas of difficulty or strength for a given student and to test and certify achievement. Assessment supports and improves learning by helping learners and teachers to identify and undertake the next steps in the teaching and learning process.

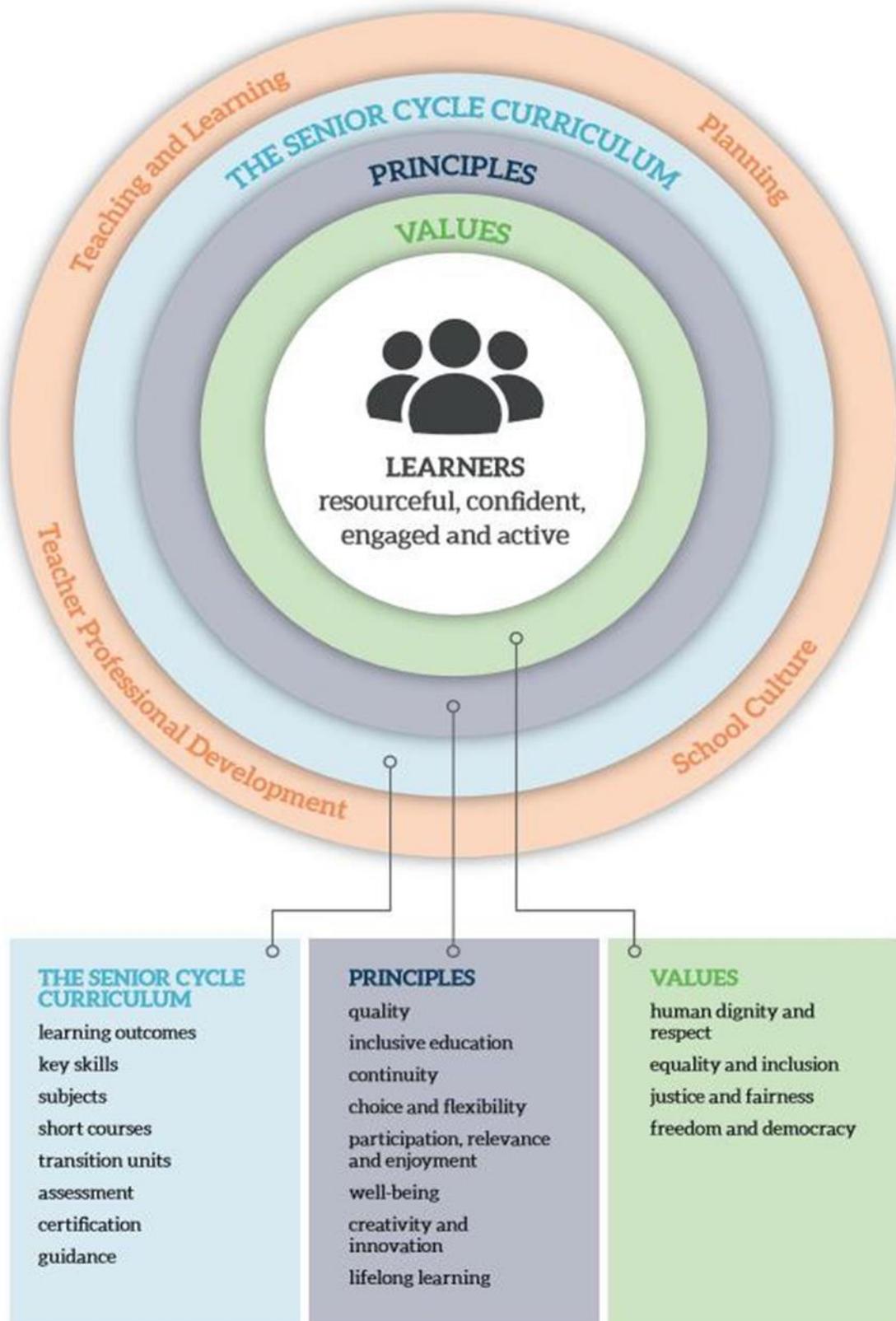


Figure 1: Overview of senior cycle

The experience of senior cycle

The vision of senior cycle sees the learner at the centre of the educational experience. That experience will enable students to be resourceful, to be confident, to participate actively in society, to build an interest in learning, and to develop an ability to learn throughout their lives.

This vision of the learner is underpinned by the values on which senior cycle is based. This vision of the learner is realised through the principles that inform the curriculum as it is experienced by students in schools. There are various elements to the curriculum: subjects and courses, embedded key skills, clearly-expressed learning outcomes, and a range of approaches to assessment that support it. The curriculum is the vehicle through which the vision becomes a reality for the learner.

At a practical level, the provision of a high-quality educational experience in senior cycle is supported by:

- effective curriculum planning, development, organisation and evaluation
- teaching and learning approaches that motivate and interest students, that enable them to progress, that deepen and apply their learning, and that develop their capacity to reflect on their learning
- professional development for teachers and school management that enables them to lead curriculum development and change in their schools
- a school culture that respects students, that encourages them to take responsibility for their own learning over time, and that promotes a love of learning.

Senior cycle education is situated in the context of a broader education policy that focuses on the contribution that education can make to the development of the learner as a person and as a citizen. It is an education policy that emphasises the promotion of social cohesion, the development of society and the economy, and the principle of sustainability in all aspects of development.



Figure 2: The vision of the learner

Who is this specification for?

This specification for Leaving Certificate Irish is aimed at students who use the Irish language as a second language, primarily in schools that operate as English-medium schools.

In English-medium schools, English is the working language of the school and Irish (L2¹) is taught, through Irish, as a subject. The different language backgrounds of students who attend English-medium schools are recognised including those whose primary language at home is English and those who speak English and/or another language at home.

It is very important that students are provided with a continuous learning experience in the interest of their language development and their progress in general. This specification aims to develop, enrich and advance language skills. This specification caters for the Irish learning needs of students that have completed the L2 Specification for Junior Cycle Irish.

What is the significance of the language community² for students studying this specification?

These students are effectively dependent on the Irish classroom as the Irish language community is not always on the doorstep of the Irish classroom. Therefore it is important because of their immediate language environment to foster valuable links with the language community to support students

- find other opportunities to use the language
- discover accurate and genuine language exponents
- avail of opportunities to innovate
- participate in the Irish language community.

This emphasis on the language community is inherent in this specification and this is in line with the vision set out in the 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030 (2010) in particular with regard to

¹ L1 is the language through which the school operates (English in English-medium schools; Irish in Irish-medium schools.) Irish as L1 refers to the teaching of Irish as the first language in Irish-medium schools. Irish as L2 refers to the teaching of Irish as the second language in English-medium schools.

² Language community: a community in which the target language is spoken as the regular language for communication both inside and outside the home.

'the critical need to give life to the Irish language outside the classroom for the young people who study it in the formal education system'.³

The students' attitudes to using the Irish language as a living language develops through their appreciation and exposure to the language community, and how they consider themselves as language learners. This helps foster more positive attitudes towards learning and using the Irish language.

What language skills are students developing?

This specification builds on the language skills developed through learning experiences in junior cycle Irish. In the junior cycle specifications for Irish, students consolidate and deepen their understanding of Irish. Students are enabled to communicate in an effective, interactive, confident manner in both formal and informal settings in the language community. The fostering and development of awareness is emphasised: language awareness, cultural awareness as well as students' self-awareness as language learners.

This development is enhanced through the strands and the learning outcomes of this specification. Students' communication skills and awareness are developed. The students' creativity, imagination and enjoyment of learning Irish are fostered through learning opportunities that contribute to students' well-being and resilience. Senior cycle key skills are embedded in the learning outcomes and are developed, as appropriate.

All of the languages skills do not have to be at the same level, speaking skills could be at a higher level than writing for example. Students rely on feedback and guidance from teachers, their own self-awareness as language learners and opportunities to use the target language to further develop their language skills.

Time allocation

The Irish specification is designed for at least 180 hours of class contact time.

³ Government of Ireland. (2010). 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030, p.12.

Rationale

Leaving Certificate Irish supports students' cognitive, personal and social growth. Studying Irish is essential to students' development as a person and their identity. By learning and using Irish, students are able to manage various demands associated with school, the community, employment, further education and life as a whole.

Students have various linguistic backgrounds in multicultural, multilingual settings that can be found in Ireland. It is recognised that dialects add richness and culture to Ireland's linguistic context. This specification is intended for students who attend English-medium schools, including those whose primary language at home is English and those who speak English and/or other language(s) at home.

The quest to acquiring a language, from the learner to an independent active user, is a continuum. Straight from the journey completed during the early years, learning from primary and post-primary education is built on. Students' identity and awareness grows as they use the language, with a specification based on their needs, interests and talents. By completing tasks, students develop an understanding of their own learning strategies and are motivated to confidently take ownership of the language. Leaving Certificate Irish develops students' language awareness which helps them assume an active role in a multilingual society with confidence.

This specification empowers students to express their personal attitudes and emotions with an appropriate structure and with accurate syntax. Students' understanding of appropriate language use in various contexts and for different purposes is developed. The learning opportunities in this specification foster an awareness and a respect for Irish culture and heritage. Learning achieved through Irish helps students to develop a respect for differences between languages and they become aware of their own identity and culture and other cultures. By seizing the communication opportunities that arise in the specification, students develop confidence and skills that will help them become active users in the language community.

Creative, analytic and thinking abilities are expanded in students through studying texts⁴, including literary and non-literary texts. The canon of Irish literature provides students with rich sources of exemplary and regular language usage. They encompass a wide range of subjects and linguistic styles;

⁴ All products of language use, including oral, written, visual, or multimodal media, can be described as texts.

aspects that help students as they develop their language skills. Students gain an insight into the language community by studying different literary works.

Aim

Students' awareness of the Irish language is developed and deepened through the Leaving Certificate Irish specification while they also expand their competencies and skills as effective language users. Students are empowered to consolidate/strengthen their language and literacy skills, which will support them in making considered language choices in the language and empower them to assume ownership of their own language learning, something which will stand to them in life.

Objectives

The specification for Leaving Certificate Irish (L2) encourages students to:

- add to their vocabulary
- study a broad range of literary texts from various genres
- understand different language registers
- approach the language as a system (i.e. recognising, understanding and using language patterns) in Irish and in other languages
- develop awareness of Irish culture and heritage and showing respect for other languages and cultures
- exploit opportunities for language use in order to participate in the language community
- enjoy being creative with the language while communicating by their own volition and creating texts in various genres
- understand and demonstrate the difference between spoken and written language.

Related Learning

Early childhood

Aistear: the early childhood curriculum framework, celebrates early childhood as a time of wellbeing and enjoyment where children learn from experiences as they unfold. The theme of Exploring and thinking is about children making sense of the things, places and people in their world by interacting with others, playing, investigating, questioning, and forming, testing and refining ideas. The theme of communicating is about children sharing their experiences, thoughts, ideas, and feelings with others with growing confidence and competence, in a variety of ways and for a variety of purposes.

Primary Language Curriculum

The Primary Language Curriculum (2019) is an integrated curriculum. There are two versions of the curriculum: one which is focused specifically on Gaeltacht schools and Irish-medium schools and another which is focused specifically on English-medium schools.

The Primary Language Curriculum recognises that skills and certain concepts are transferable between languages. This creates opportunities for skill enhancement and for the transfer of literacy skills and learning strategies to other languages.

The Primary Language Curriculum emphasises the development and enhancement of

- communicative competence
- positive attitudes to learning languages
- language awareness (exploring and using language)
- self-awareness and ability to self-direct.

All these features of the Primary Language Curriculum correspond well with the rationale and aims of the specification for junior cycle Irish. This helps to provide a continuous learning experience for students as they add to their language and learning skills in junior cycle.

Junior cycle

Junior Cycle Irish builds on the language development achieved during primary schooling. Students' needs and interests are central to these specifications. The learning at the heart of the junior cycle, as specified in the Junior Cycle Framework statements of learning (2015), emphasises the importance of

developing students' understanding of language skills and competency. The emphasis placed on self-awareness as a learner as well as cultural, literary and heritage awareness are developed. When embarking on the junior cycle L2 specification students enhance their vocabulary and their language accuracy.

Senior cycle

Irish is closely related to many other senior cycle subjects including history, English, and foreign languages. The skills and competencies that they learn in Irish are also very important for their learning in other subjects. For example, there are many similarities between Irish, other languages and computer science as elements such as recognising patterns, syntax, technical analysis and forming arguments are relevant to all three study areas. Studying history, geography or Politics and Society, for example, impacts students' attitudes to culture and heritage. Irish provides students with a context to develop metacognitive skills that will help them when they become responsible for their own learning.

After the senior cycle

This specification encompasses a wide range of transferable and cross-discipline competencies such as creative thinking and creativity. Leaving Certificate Irish supports students to undertake further study of the Irish language in third level institutions or in work places that operate through Irish. The emphasis placed on learning the key competencies in Leaving Certificate Irish will support effective participation of learners in a range of further education opportunities in which self-direction, leadership and reflection are important. Given that Irish is an official European language, opportunities as translators and interpreters are available to the students, as well as employment opportunities in a wide range of sectors in Ireland.

Living Community and Living Society

Community links are a valuable resource for schools and students participating in Leaving Certificate Irish. An example of these links is to collaborate with local community groups. Students will gain an appreciation for the Irish community and the effect that language has on people. Students' self-awareness is developed and citizenship and active participation in the community in general are encouraged.

Leaving Certificate Irish includes studying and discussing current affairs, igniting an interest and a curiosity in the students, helping them to apply what they have learned to events or real life situations.

Key Skills of Senior Cycle

There are five key skills identified as being central to teaching and learning in senior cycle curriculum. These are: information processing; being personally effective; communicating; critical and creative thinking; and working with others. It is important for all students to develop these key skills in order to achieve their full potential, both during their time in school and in the future. This will allow them to participate fully in society, including family life, the world of work and lifelong learning. The key skills are embedded in this specification's learning outcomes and will be assessed in the context of the learning outcomes.



Figure 4: Key skills of senior cycle

Key Skills and Language Competencies in this Specification

Students develop their language production skills and receptive language abilities through active participation in their own learning. Students develop and improve their communication skills as they take part in collaborative learning, and express their opinions and ideas through conversation, discussion, reading and writing. Students are encouraged to engage in dialogue, and to listen carefully and critically to other peoples' opinions and attitudes. They develop skills to provide information in an appropriate and comprehensible manner by critically engaging with a range of texts from various genres, analysing the texts and by developing writing skills in different areas.

Students engage with linguistic concepts and the language learning process by participating in a range of communication tasks. Students develop information processing, critical thinking and creativity skills by actively completing language tasks. Students' ability to investigate and understand a text develops as they recognise and gather particular information from texts and through creating a range of creative texts.

Students develop an awareness of themselves as language learners as they try and develop learning strategies. This self-awareness empowers students to grow and develop. Students learn how to approach and solve problems as they engage with different language learning strategies.

The 'Awareness' strand allows students to play an active role in their learning by setting goals, developing action plans and receiving and using feedback. Students add to their competencies, skills and values over time as they become familiar with the strands in an integrated manner.

Students are encouraged to take ownership of their learning in the 'Language Creativity' strand; opportunities are created for them to demonstrate their linguistic, thinking, creative and innovative capabilities through their own interest areas.

Learning and Teaching

Senior cycle students are encouraged to develop the knowledge, skills, competencies and values that will enable them to become more independent in their learning and to develop a lifelong commitment to improving their learning. This specification gives teachers in partnership with students the flexibility to use a range of appropriate learning and teaching strategies that are relevant to the various contexts in which the language is used. In this way students' interests and needs are emphasised in the learning and teaching of this specification. Irish is the language of learning and communication in the Irish language classroom. The aim of teaching is the natural acquisition of the language among young Irish speakers.

There are many contexts in which more than one language skill is required. For this reason, the strands are not studied in isolation but the integration of skills and competencies is emphasised. Skill integration occurs when students are able to interact naturally in the language. This approach also allows teachers to provide students with feedback on their progress in various skills.

Literary and non-literary texts are important sources in language learning and teaching. Students develop literacy skills as they become familiar with various texts. Literacy is the capacity to recognise, understand, filter and interpret various forms of communication. Language awareness is an important element of literacy development. This awareness will help students to make informed choices.

Teachers have expertise or special knowledge of the language and this helps create a rich language input as part of the teaching. When students encounter challenges and difficulties; teachers provide guidance, encouragement, help, feedback and support so that they may progress. Teachers guide students in exploiting opportunities for use and communication in the language environment and encourage a respect for the language and for Irish culture.

Language teaching and the language community

Different opportunities for learning that cater for different language functions and the abilities of each student are created as students engage with the learning outcomes. In this way, students develop the ability to play an active role in a language community. The language community provides students with examples of the living language, students observe and imitate elements of this language, which in turn act as a stimulus for them in their acquisition of the language. Accordingly, the students

understand the disparity between their own language and the language provided by the language community. Students' bilingual/multi-lingual identity is developed when they compare and contrast Irish with other languages.

Fellow students play an important role in learners' progress. Students' understanding of themselves as language learners and users is developed by interacting with fellow students and through contemplation. Students achieve language production by taking advantage of opportunities to communicate with fellow students in group work and in pairs in class and in everyday relationship contexts outside of school.

Self-awareness as learners

Students plan, monitor and assess their own learning and develop a positive attitude regarding their ability to learn by conquering their learning and through autonomous reflection. It is recognised that certain circumstances greatly influence student development as they learn and acquire a language. These include motivation; attitude; self-awareness as a language learner; awareness of personal development; language awareness; rich language input; and opportunities to use the language in the language community (output).

Students take responsibility for their learning by setting goals, developing action plans and receiving and responding to assessment feedback. Balanced and direct feedback can support learners' willingness to fully embrace new learning opportunities, it also develops resilience in the learners when progress is slow and challenging.

This specification aims to support students on their language learning and acquisition journey so that they can become capable, independent and autonomous language users. Students gradually develop their own learning strategies on their language acquisition journey. These various learning strategies support students as they engage in different tasks required for Irish and in other subjects across the curriculum through Irish. They also help students as they engage with the language community.

Language portfolio

Over the two years of Leaving Certificate Irish (T2) students develop a language portfolio. A language portfolio gives students an opportunity to develop a collection of samples of their own work. The portfolio is a feature of the formative assessment that contributes to the students' self-directing and self-reflection skills while on the language acquisition journey. Throughout the portfolio development process, students set personal learning objectives and record their own progress. The students' portfolios comprise a wide range of texts in various formats, and students actively participate in creating and choosing the portfolio. Students partake in conversation and discussion about their portfolio as part of the oral assessment⁵. However, the portfolio itself is not assessed for certification.

Texts

Literary and non-literary Irish texts support the integrated development of students' skills and competencies. All strands are included in that integration.

Definitions of text in this specification

All products of language use, including oral, written, visual, or multimodal media, can be described as texts.

A **literary text** is a creative text which demonstrates the state or circumstances of an individual, a story which derives from emotions, life experience and memories of a person. Students' are given an insight to the culture of their own language community and that of other cultures in the literary texts.

A **non-literary text** is a text that is created to share knowledge or information. Literary elements could be evident in a non-literary text.

A **genre** is the type of text made up of many sentences, whether it is oral or written, which was composed with particular objectives. They have particular organisational patterns, depending on their purpose and audience, as well as appropriate language registers.

⁵ Guidance will be provided regarding the composition and use of the portfolio.

The role of texts in the learning process.

Literary and non-literary texts of the language are a vital and valuable source for the student. It is through engaging with texts for different goals that student's develop awareness of the various media through which Irish can be used, his language awareness and self as a language learner and which enables him to demonstrate language abilities and his creative ability used in the creation of texts in Irish across a range of genres.

The integration of the manipulation of literary or non-literary texts and the development of language skills and abilities is a basic principle of this specification. Students develop their reading, analytical and learning skills when they manipulate literary and non-literary texts. They practice all of the language abilities/skills: listening, reading, speaking, spoken interaction and writing.

Irish language literature plays a particular role in this specification and is central to the process of the student learning and acquisition of the Irish language. Literature is an important aspect of language learning and contextualisation. Irish language literature is an important resource in giving students an expert insight into elements of the culture and heritage of Ireland and Europe and it adds to their personal development and development of cultural identity.

Skills and competencies

Irish language literature is a learning resource:

- which builds students' vocabulary and richness of expression;
- it provides samples of language accuracy and grammatical traits in the context of the living language;
- it empowers students to undertake independent reading;
- it assists students in developing analytical skills and independent thinking.

Culture and heritage of Ireland and Europe

Irish language literature gives students expert insight and understanding:

- into the culture, history, and heritage of Ireland, in times past and present;
- on elements of the cultural and political heritage of Ireland and Europe;
- on the Irish language itself as a creative medium and as a living community language;
- on the environment and on local, national and international cultural heritage.

Personal development and empathy

The reading of literature nurtures imagination and self-understanding in various ways:

- it provides students with mental and imaginative stimulation;
- it inspires creativity and novel thinking in students;
- it nurtures the development of humanity in students and inspires empathy and emotional sensitivity;
- it challenges students and entices them to understand opposing insights and go beyond the limits of their own experience;
- it awakens an understanding of the beauty of literature itself and the pleasure of reading.

Selection of texts

In order to support the aims of this specification, texts are chosen from a designated list.

The students' role in choosing the texts is extremely important. Teachers help students to investigate the possibilities to choose the most appropriate text. Students choose the texts in partnership with their teachers.

The following guidelines demonstrate the scope of texts and genres that should, at the minimum, be studied as part of Leaving Certificate Irish.

Higher level	
Poetry/verse texts	At least 5 complete poems/songs to be chosen
(a) complete play (b) complete visual text (c) 2 complete short stories*	At least 2 to be chosen from (a), (b) or (c)
Prose literature One complete text from the following genres must be studied: novel short stories collection* biography folklore work.	At least one complete text to be chosen

**If (c) is chosen, students must study two complete short stories. If it is chosen to also study a collection of short stories, these two short stories should not be chosen from that collection of short stories.*

Ordinary level	
Poetry/verse texts	At least 3 complete poems/songs to be chosen
Complete play / visual text	At least one complete text to be chosen
Complete short story	At least one to be chosen
Folklore story	At least one to be chosen

Course Overview

The 'Communication' strand is the main strand of the specification; the two other strands, 'Awareness' and 'Language Creativity', actively support the Communication strand to create the students' learning experience. The strands support one another to create learning experiences for students. These strands build on students' experiences and learning from the junior cycle. Students' learning experience is deepened and broadened through the integration of the strands. While the learning outcomes associated with each strand are specified separately in this specification, this does not imply that the strands are to be studied in isolation. An effort is made to foster, develop and maintain the various skills and competencies by using an integrated approach.

Structure of the specifications

There are three integrated strands to this specification: Communicating, Awareness and Creativity.

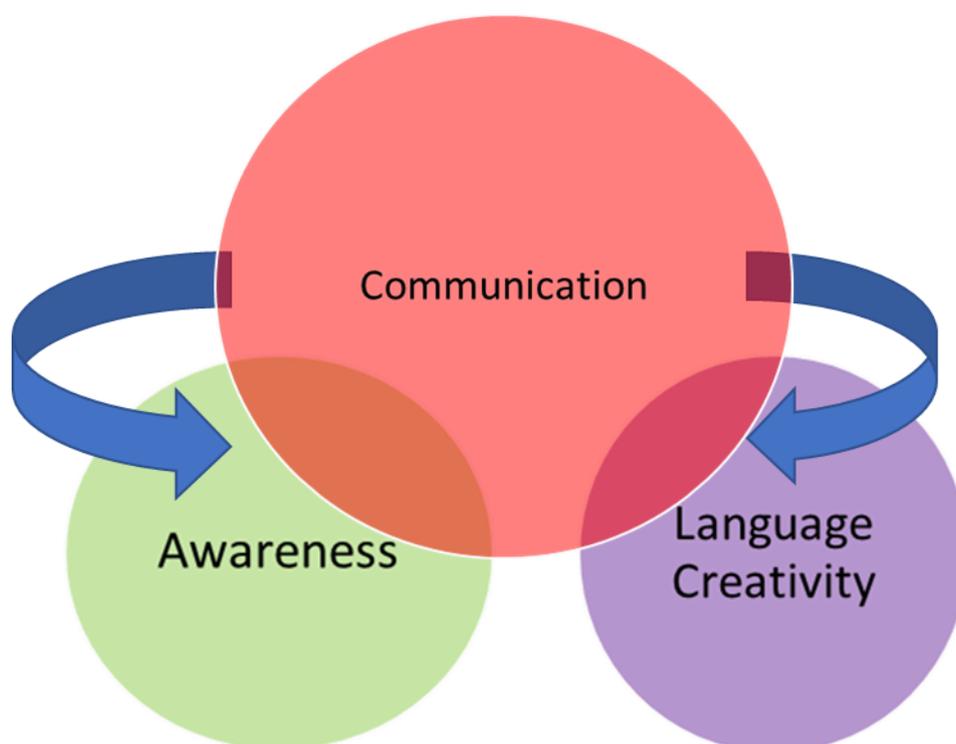


Figure 3: The specification's strands

Communication

The 'Communication' strand is the main strand of the specification, and the two other strands actively support the Communication strand in the language acquisition process. Communication competence consists of students' competencies in the following five key skills: listening, reading, speaking, spoken production, and writing. These are skills required to be an active language user. Students manage to discuss and justify information, ideas and attitudes in an accurate, clear and appropriate manner as they develop communication abilities and competencies.

Awareness

The 'Awareness' strand encompasses language awareness, the learner's self-awareness and cultural awareness. Language awareness is students' knowledge and understanding of correct use, systems, and the natural flow of Irish as a language; this then helps them become more effective and more confident as independent capable language users.

Learners' self-awareness relates to the awareness they have of themselves as language learners. Students add to their understanding of their own learning processes by developing language awareness. They take ownership self-directing their own language learning activities. Students concentrate on their own style and individual attributes. They use suitable learning strategies which enable them to overcome difficulties and challenges relating to the accurate and vibrant use of language, for example, which will help them with their learning.

Cultural awareness helps students develop an understanding of the language community and to place themselves inside the language community and other cultures. Students are encouraged to reflect on their own culture, the culture of the Irish language community, and other cultures by thinking about and studying Irish and elements of Irish language culture and heritage.

Language Creativity

This strand on 'Language Creativity' focuses on developing confident, critical and creative thinkers. Language creativity is an essential lifelong skill that is relevant to every age-group, each level of ability

and all communities. This strand encompasses cognitive and social skills, as well as students' attitudes and emotions as they learn. It focuses on developing students' imagination and thought process. Students express themselves with novel thinking and through creative communication. Students are encouraged to explore and use their own methods of expression that are appropriate and engaging for the target audience, as they partake in relevant learning opportunities.

Intellectual and physical functionality contribute to students' well-being and resilience – essential elements to successful learning. Due to the ever-changing nature of society and the speed at which things change in the workplace, these competencies and skills are essential as students prepare for learning and for life in general.

Learning opportunities based on student interests awaken the students' various capabilities, skills and strengths. Student's imagination and curiosity are roused as they encounter a range of texts and areas of interest. Opportunities are created for students to take a chance and to analyse different solutions to questions. Students are empowered to be innovative so that they can enjoy and progress with their language acquisition. Student learning abilities are encouraged through creative and fun learning experiences and students deepen their ownership of the language acquisition process.

Strands and Learning Outcomes

Strand 1: Communication

'Communication' encompasses the students' abilities in the following five skills: listening, reading, speaking, spoken production, and writing, which are needed to communicate. They are capable of functioning confidently and effectively in the language in communicative interpersonal settings in the language community. They are capable of understanding and using the everyday familiar language at normal speed in the language community while communicating. They enjoy communicating and interacting with other users. They notice rich and accurate language and use that rich and accurate language to speak and write in Irish. They read a wide range of texts, including literary and non-literary texts, that are used in the language community and demonstrate a critical understanding of the subject matter. They compose their own relevant texts for communicating.

There are five elements within this strand and learning outcomes are specified for each element.

Listening

Students should be able to:

- 1.1 understand texts* from various genres** in the main dialects
- 1.2 recognise and understand the stance, attitude and messages of the speakers
- 1.3 recognise Irish pronunciation and sounds
- 1.4 recognise the similarities and differences between texts*
- 1.5 understand different language registers
- 1.6 critically choose texts* that relate to their particular interests so that they can enjoy and understand it
- 1.7 respond to texts* from various genres** in the main dialects

Reading

Students should be able to:

- 1.8 use a wide range of authentic literary and non-literary texts* to develop their language capabilities
- 1.9 understand, manipulate and critically analyse literary and non-literary texts* from various genres**
- 1.10 read a personal selection of texts* independently for research and pleasure
- 1.11 understand the reliability of sources of information
- 1.12 compare and contrast texts*
- 1.13 read texts* that provide a broader insight to humans and to life in general

Oral Language

Students should be able to:

- 1.14 perform, interpret, demonstrate, narrate, or give a presentation in a range of genres** on their subject of choosing for different target audiences
- 1.15 use rich and accurate Irish in an effective and confident manner in a wide range of subjects
- 1.16 accurately use Irish pronunciation and sounds
- 1.17 develop their spoken language
- 1.18 voice and explain personal opinions and understandings, and justify them in an effective and confident manner
- 1.19 take and express a particular stance in a structured manner

Spoken Interaction

Students should be able to:

- 1.20 actively participate in conversations in different contexts
- 1.21 question, verify and exchange information, opinions and attitudes
- 1.22 enjoy holding conversations with fellow students and with other Irish users
- 1.23 develop language in their areas of interest in order to make conversation with fellow students
- 1.24 maintain eye contact when communicating and to overcome difficulties with understanding by checking and confirming information and opinions

Writing

Students should be able to:

- 1.25 use the writing process to develop their writing capabilities in a range of genres**
- 1.26 demonstrate an understanding of accurate Irish syntax
- 1.27 use various sources to support their writing
- 1.28 develop positions and arguments in a structured manner
- 1.29 give a personal response to texts* by other writers from a range of genres and give critical insight into them
- 1.30 effectively use feedback to enhance their writing capabilities
- 1.31 compare different written texts*

* All products of language use, including oral, written, visual, or multimodal media, can be described as texts. See definition on p. 21.

** 'Genre' refers to is types of text made up of many sentences, whether it is oral or written, which was composed with particular objectives. See definition on p. 21.

Strand 2: Awareness

In this strand students develop their language awareness, their self-awareness as language learners and cultural awareness as they engage with the learning outcomes. They develop an understanding of the accurate use of the Irish language and they reflect on how they learn the language as individuals. They reflect on the progress that has been made and that is still to be made to become an independent language user. They gain experience in using feedback effectively. Students develop an understanding of recognising and using appropriate language in specific circumstances. Students add to their understanding of the language communities and cultures, of a multilingual society, and of Irish culture.

There are three elements within this strand and learning outcomes are specified for each element.

Language Awareness

Students should be able to:

- 2.1 recognise accurate, rich input for each of the language skills
- 2.2 recognise and accurately use syntax and grammatical patterns in the language
- 2.3 understand the differences between Irish syntax and grammar and those of other languages
- 2.4 compare Irish pronunciation and sounds with those used in other languages
- 2.5 use the correct language register for the context of the communication
- 2.6 recognise, understand and correct personal mistakes in speaking and writing Irish
- 2.7 recognise accurate spelling
- 2.8 develop an understanding of the value of being bilingual/multilingual
- 2.9 compare different written texts* from the various main dialects

The learner's self-awareness

Students should be able to:

- 2.10 set personal learning objectives and take steps to achieve them
- 2.11 recognise and use language learning styles with confidence
- 2.12 find and exploit opportunities for language use in the language community
- 2.13 deal effectively with feedback as part of their language learning process
- 2.14 reflect on their own progress and share this insight with fellow students
- 2.15 use reliable language resources to develop accuracy, richness and fluency in the language

Cultural awareness

Students should be able to:

- 2.16 choose, research and present on elements of Irish culture through whichever means they choose
- 2.17 understand the evolution, status and context of the Irish language
- 2.18 recognise and explore the language and culture as part of their own identity

Strand 3: Language Creativity

This strand's learning outcomes empower students to develop language skills in various ways. Students are encouraged to present and perform the language in new and creative ways. Students are enabled as confident, critical and creative speakers. This strand encourages the students to partake in learning opportunities, either by themselves or collaboratively, in a creative and imaginative manner. Cognitive skills are developed which contribute to the students' identity. Students are encouraged to take risks when using the language, to develop, analyse critically and re-assess various ideas.

Students should be able to:

- 3.1 demonstrate an understanding of their personal preferences regarding composition and to share this
- 3.2 creatively use a range of genres** to develop their language skills
- 3.3 enjoy using the Irish language by developing an imagination and creative skills
- 3.4 create texts* by themselves or in a group
- 3.5 demonstrate proficiency of the presented subject
- 3.6 explore, understand and develop different responses to/opinions on questions
- 3.7 question common opinions to arrive at their own personal perspective
- 3.8 explore possibilities to come to different solutions or to embrace difficulties / challenges and try to overcome them

- 3.9 provide an interpretation, demonstration or perform texts* from a range of genres** either by themselves or in a group
- 3.10 demonstrate an understanding of their target audience while presenting a message
- 3.11 develop communication skills (accent, pronunciation, gestures, rhythm) for the performance/demonstration
- 3.12 explain the chosen style for the performance/demonstration
- 3.13 express ideas and opinions on concepts through various media
- 3.14 develop their own personal style or voice
- 3.15 recognise and develop personal opinions, understandings, perspectives and skills that arise while composing
- 3.16 use various techniques and styles to present different messages

Assessment for certification

Assessment in senior cycle takes different forms and is used for a variety of purposes. It is used to determine the appropriate route for learners through a differentiated curriculum, to identify specific areas of difficulty or strength for a given learner and to test and certify language achievement. Assessment supports and improves learning by helping learners and teachers to identify next steps in the language teaching and learning process.

As well as varied teaching strategies, varied assessment strategies will support language learning and provide information that can be used as feedback so that teaching and learning activities can be modified in ways that best suit individual learners. By setting appropriate and engaging language tasks, asking higher order questions and giving feedback that promotes learner autonomy, assessment will support language learning and summarise achievement.

Assessment for certification in Leaving Certificate Irish (L2) is based on the aims, objectives and learning outcomes of this specification. In any year, the learning outcomes to be assessed will constitute a sample of the outcomes from both strands. The key skills of senior cycle are embedded in the learning outcomes and will be assessed in the context of the learning outcomes.

Assessment components

Leaving Certificate Gaeilge (L2) will be assessed through:

- oral examination
- aural examination
- written examination

Each component will be administered and assessed by the State Examinations Commission. Each component of the assessment will reflect the integrated approach across the three strands set out in this specification.

There are two levels of examination, Ordinary level and Higher level, to which a differentiated allocation of marks will apply, as outlined below in Figure 5 and Figure 6.

Assessment component	Higher level
Oral language/spoken interaction	35%
Listening in context	10%
Reading in context and language awareness	15%
Creative composition tasks	20%
Personal response to literary texts	20%

Figure 5: Overview of Assessment (higher level)

Assessment component	Ordinary level
Oral language/spoken interaction	35%
Listening in context	10%
Reading in context and language awareness	35%
Creative composition tasks	20%

Figure 6: Overview of Assessment (ordinary level)

Leaving Certificate Grading

Leaving Certificate Irish is graded using an 8-point grading scale at both Ordinary level and Higher level. The highest grade is a Grade 1, the lowest grade a Grade 8. The highest seven grades (1-7) divide the marks between 100% and 30% into seven equal bands, with a grade 8 being awarded for percentage marks of less than 30%.

The grades at Higher Level and Ordinary Level are differentiated by prefixing H or O respectively. This gives H1-H8 at Higher Level, and O1-O8 at Ordinary Level.

Grade	% Marks
A1/G1	90-100
A2/G2	80<90
A3/G3	70<80
A4/G4	60<70
A5/G5	50<60
A6/G6	40<50
A7/G7	30<40
A8/G8	<30

Figure 7: Leaving Certificate grading scale

Reasonable accommodations

The scheme of Reasonable Accommodations at the Certificate Examinations operated by the State Examinations Commission (SEC) facilitates access to certificate examinations by students who would have difficulty in accessing the examination or communicating what they know because of a physical, visual, hearing and/or learning difficulty. The scheme assists students who have special educational needs to demonstrate what they know and can do in the certificate examinations, without compromising the fairness or integrity of the assessment. It provides accommodations for students with a variety of complex special educational needs including learning difficulties as well as permanent or temporary physical, visual, hearing, medical, sensory, emotional, behavioural or other conditions. Support arrangements are provided only to those who need them and the application process is school based. Further information about the scheme is available from the SEC.

