



**NCCA**

An Chomhairle Náisiúnta  
Curraim agus Measúnachta  
National Council for  
Curriculum and Assessment

# Draft Leaving Certificate Arabic Specification

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## Contents

<b>Senior cycle.....</b>	<b>1</b>
The experience of senior cycle.....	2
<b>Language learning and education .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Leaving Certificate Arabic.....</b>	<b>8</b>
A framework approach.....	8
Aim.....	9
Objectives.....	10
Related learning.....	10
The role of Modern Standard Arabic and Dialectical Arabic within Arabic language communities .....	13
<b>Overview .....</b>	<b>15</b>
Structure.....	15
Time allocation .....	17
Key skills.....	17
Information processing and critical and creative thinking.....	18
Communicating .....	18
Working with others and being personally effective .....	18
Literacy .....	19
Learning and teaching .....	19

The language learning journey .....	20
Texts .....	22
Language portfolio .....	25
Differentiation.....	26
<b><i>Outline of strands</i></b> .....	<b>28</b>
Communicative Language Competence Strand.....	28
Plurilingual and Pluricultural Competence Strand.....	28
Strands of study .....	29
<b><i>Assessment for certification</i></b> .....	<b>40</b>
Assessment components.....	41
Oral examination .....	42
Aural and written examination.....	43
General assessment criteria .....	43
Leaving Certificate grading .....	48
Reasonable accommodations.....	49
<b><i>Glossary</i></b> .....	<b>50</b>
<b><i>Appendix</i></b> .....	<b>53</b>
Self-assessment grid (with online interaction and mediation).....	57
<b><i>Written assessment grid</i></b> .....	<b>60</b>
Qualitative features of spoken language (expanded with phonology).....	62

## 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 them 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 futures there is an emphasis on: the development of knowledge and deep understanding; learners taking responsibility for their own learning; the acquisition of key skills; and 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 kinds of learning strategies relevant to participation in, and contribution to, 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: (a) determine the appropriate route for learners through a differentiated curriculum; (b) identify specific areas of difficulty or strength for a given learner; and (c) test and certify achievement. Assessment supports and improves learning by helping learners and teachers to identify next steps in the teaching and learning process.

## The experience of senior cycle

The vision of senior cycle sees the learner at the centre of the educational experience. This experience will enable them to be resourceful and 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 and it is realised through the principles that inform the curriculum as it is experienced by learners in schools. The curriculum, made up of subjects and courses, embedded key skills, clearly expressed learning outcomes, and supported by a range of approaches to assessment, 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, deepen and apply their learning, and 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 growth of society and the economy, and the principle of sustainability in all aspects of development.

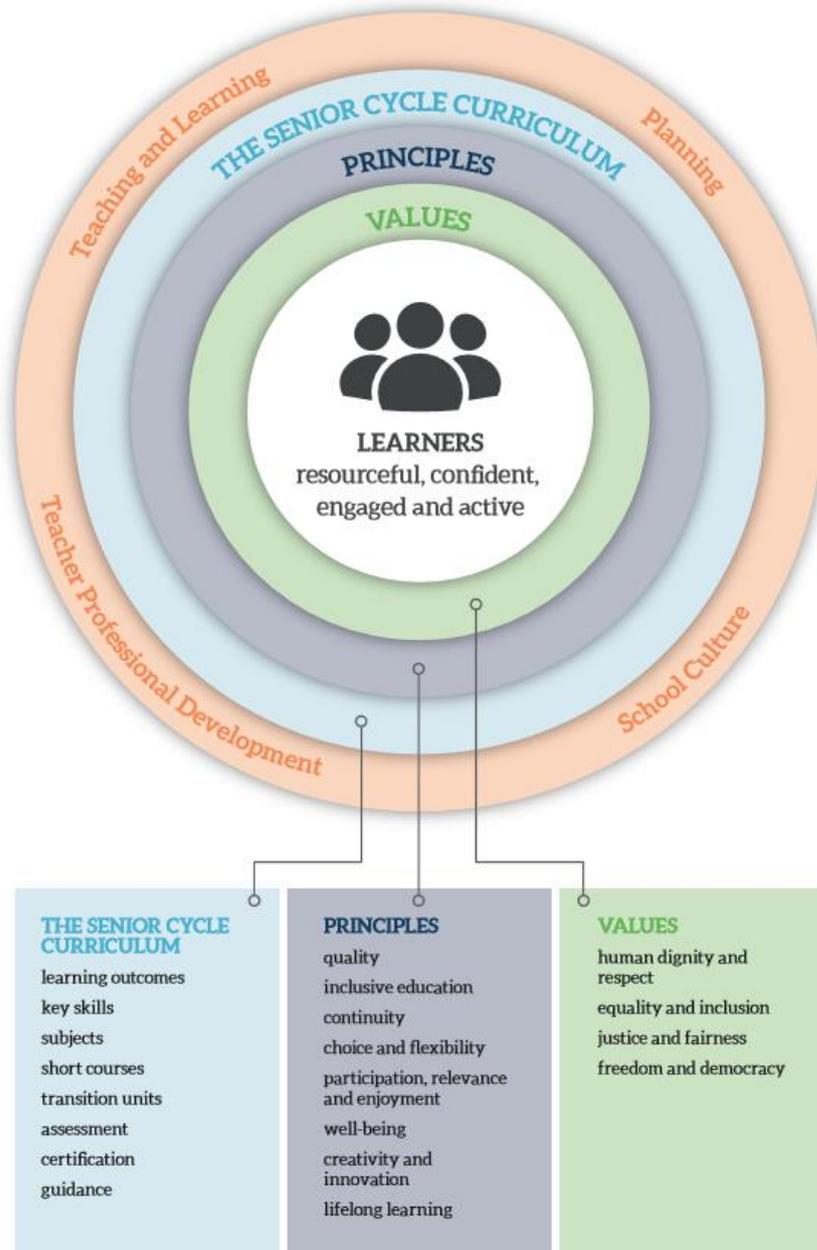


Figure 1: Overview of senior cycle



Figure 2: The vision of the learner

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## Language learning and education

Language is one of the means by which we think, organise our knowledge, express our thoughts and feelings, and communicate with others. We live in a world which is rich in languages and Ireland, too, has its own linguistic heritage<sup>1</sup>. All activities, in whatever language, are exercises in thinking.

One of the main ways that societies define and share their culture and identity is through language. It is a medium of interaction through which knowledge and experience are communicated and organised. Every language has its own rich, distinctive features and complexities, as well as an intrinsic value as a resource for social participation, social cohesion, lifelong employment possibilities and mobility opportunities.

Language is also the means of self-expression and interpersonal communication as well as being the conduit for learning in the education process. It is a central factor in the growth of the learner as a person: how we learn about ourselves, others and the multilingual and multicultural world in which we live. Language learning also gives us access to the richness of the culture and the mindset of the people who use that language.

Young people in 21st century Ireland are growing up in a dynamic, multilingual and multicultural society which is rapidly changing at local, national and global levels. They live in a world in which digital technologies, migration and mobility are bringing people closer together than ever before. In this society, shaped by social, political and economic forces, the opportunity to develop their plurilingual repertoire can be a source of empowerment for learners. Being exposed to language-learning experiences offers them skills, knowledge,

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<sup>1</sup> Framework for Consultation on a Foreign Languages in Education Strategy for Ireland (DES, 2014, p.3)

understanding and values with which to negotiate these changes so that they can participate fully and effectively in our multilingual society and in the world of work.

When learners use more than one language, the spheres in which they can communicate are expanded. This empowers them to more fully enjoy and appreciate a variety of cultural backgrounds; to participate in and contribute to society as global citizens; and to access employment and mobility opportunities.

As well as benefitting society, a rich language learning repertoire has positive effects for learners' personal and intellectual development and their leisure activities. Cognitive development is enhanced by language learning, and it can contribute to higher levels of achievement in other educational areas such as mathematical abilities and the formulation of scientific hypotheses.

The school curriculum in Ireland is language-rich and therefore progress in every learning area involves competence in language. There are two official state languages, Irish and English<sup>2</sup>, both of which are offered to learners alongside a range of languages from within and beyond Europe. Language learners gain a range of skills that relate to and build upon learning in other senior cycle subjects, enabling them to apply their existing language knowledge to new knowledge and to transfer their skills across all learning on their journey of lifelong learning.

In common with other subjects, an important feature of this language specification is the development of the ability of learners to use language across the four modes of

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<sup>2</sup> The Irish Sign Language Act 2017 (Act 40 of 2017) enacted in December 2020. This legislation recognises the right of Irish Sign Language users to use ISL as their native language and the right to use, develop and preserve the language.

communication (reception, interaction, production and mediation)<sup>3</sup>. Thus, an integrated skills approach to accessing, organising and presenting information is taken in this specification.

These modes of communication are central and essential to the full experience of languages and help promote and support an action-oriented approach to language learning and teaching. Each learner undertaking Leaving Certificate Foreign Languages brings their own unique language repertoire and experiences to learning a language. It is also important to acknowledge that learners may have varying levels of competence across the modes of communication arising from their prior learning and existing plurilingual repertoire.

It is intended that the experience of learning languages in senior cycle will be highly relevant to the lives of learners today and in the future. It will inspire in them an interest and curiosity about how they can use and learn languages and cultivate an appreciation of the similarities and differences between different countries, communities and cultures. This will set a solid foundation for learners to embark on a lifelong journey as plurilingualists, empowering them to have the skills and strategies to become more autonomous learners, to engage with the wider world, to integrate socially, and to become active citizens.

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<sup>3</sup> CEFR Companion Volume, 2018, p.33.

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# Leaving Certificate Arabic

## A framework approach

A framework approach has been used to develop this specification for the learning and teaching of a number of Leaving Certificate curricular languages, including Arabic. This involves a common approach across each specification including the introduction, aims, expectations for learners and assessment approaches.

The Leaving Certificate foreign language specification for Arabic is intended for learners from all language backgrounds. This includes, but is not limited to, learners from heritage language backgrounds. It offers opportunities to develop communicative capacity and linguistic and intercultural awareness in a wide range of real-life contexts.

The target language of this specification is Modern Standard Arabic. It is used across the four modes of communication: reception, interaction, production and mediation. The specification was designed, however, with an awareness of the many variations that exist within the Arabic language. In developing the learning experiences for Leaving Certificate Arabic, account is taken of the many variations of Dialectical Arabic in common use in oral contexts. Oral and aural aspects will be inclusive of the diversity of Arabic speakers and, as such, the learning outcomes and experiences are intended to meet the needs of all learners.

While the CEFR Companion Volume is not generally used in relation to Arabic, for transparency and consistency this specification has been informed by the educational aims of

CEFR. The expectations for learners articulated in this specification are notionally aligned to A2/B1 levels of the CEFR<sup>4</sup>

It is available to all learners, including those from a heritage language background who wish to improve some or all of the skills within their communicative repertoire, as well as those who have no prior experience with the language. Assessment will be offered at both Higher and Ordinary levels.

## Aim

The aim of Leaving Certificate Arabic is to develop the ability of a diverse range of learners to use the Arabic language for communicative purposes; explore the interdependence between language and culture; foster an appreciation of the value of languages for lifelong personal, educational, vocational and leisure purposes; and derive enjoyment from language learning.

It aims to develop the plurilingual and pluricultural competence of learners through language awareness by encouraging language-learning strategies, fostering an understanding of how languages, in particular Arabic, work, and recognising that connections between languages can assist the process of language learning.

Finally, this specification aims to support social integration and active citizenship as well as an appreciation for the unique and exciting opportunities offered by languages at school, outside the classroom and in the workplace.

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<sup>4</sup> The communicative competences that language learners need, in order to be effective users of a second language, are described by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), published by the Council of Europe in 2001 and updated in 2018. The aim of the CEFR is to provide a 'common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe' (Council of Europe 2001, p. 1: [www.coe.int/portfolio](http://www.coe.int/portfolio)).

## Objectives

The objectives of Leaving Certificate Arabic are to enable learners to:

- communicate effectively and participate in everyday communications in a variety of media, in the medium of Arabic
- develop the capacity to communicate effectively with others from across diverse Arabic-speaking communities, using mediation where required
- develop the capacity to use appropriate structures and vocabulary across the four modes of communication
- extract information and derive enjoyment from a variety of sources, including a range of media and authentic texts, in Arabic
- become reflective and autonomous language learners who are actively involved in monitoring and assessing their own progress
- foster an appreciation of linguistic and cultural diversity and of the value of using their linguistic repertoire to better understand, celebrate and foster links with Arabic communities
- enjoy their language learning experiences and develop appropriate language proficiency to actively pursue leisure activities, further language study, and/or career opportunities through the medium of Arabic
- develop a greater awareness of how languages work and relate to one another, building on their linguistic knowledge and skills to support and motivate lifelong language learning and learning in general.

## Related learning

Language education begins in the home, is embedded in *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*, the primary school curriculum and is further developed in junior cycle. This process provides continuity and progression for senior cycle subjects including Leaving Certificate Arabic.

## **EARLY LEARNING AND PRIMARY EDUCATION**

Children begin language learning in the home and in their community. The home languages of Irish children may be one (or more) of up to two hundred languages.

Language is central to the theme of communicating in *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* (NCCA, 2009). This encourages and enables children to share their experiences, thoughts, ideas and feelings with others with growing confidence and competence in a variety of ways in a range of languages.

Most children have experience of learning at least two languages in the Primary School Curriculum—Irish and English. In tandem with this, the continuous development and maintenance of home languages is central to children’s language learning experiences. The curriculum acknowledges and encourages the use of other languages with a focus on socio-cultural and intercultural aspects and language knowledge and awareness.

## **LANGUAGES AT JUNIOR CYCLE**

The majority of learners continue to study Irish and English in the post-primary phase of their education. In addition, all junior cycle students are given the opportunity to learn a third or subsequent language.

Junior cycle language specifications equip learners with the skills and strategies to underpin further language learning, including additional languages which they can use for meaningful purposes. Learners are enabled to reflect on their language-learning journey, to compare their target language with other languages they know, and to reflect on and become more aware of their own and other cultural identities.

## **LANGUAGES AT SENIOR CYCLE**

In the initial part of senior cycle, Transition Year (TY) students may be exposed to a new language, which enables them to add to their plurilingual and pluricultural repertoire.

Leaving Certificate Established curricular language learning options currently include Irish and English, a range of European languages, Russian, Arabic, Japanese, Ancient Greek, Latin and Hebrew Studies.

Students following the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme can study English and Communications, Communicative Irish, Modern Languages, and Sign Language.

The majority of senior cycle learners will have already been exposed to several languages at this point. Their home language may be different to the language of schooling and they may have classmates who speak other languages outside class. In this way they bring many of the transferable language-learning skills and plurilingual competencies acquired previously to the task of learning another language. The learning of senior cycle languages aims to help the learner build on these skills and competencies.

The study of languages also relates to other subject areas. By learning about the way of life of Arabic speaking communities, learners heighten their awareness of social and cultural diversity, the diversity of cultural heritage, literature, visual arts, music, history, geography and so on. In turn, they are enabled to reflect on and become more aware of their own and other cultural and linguistic identities.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES**

Learners' engagement and sense of progress is enhanced as they are scaffolded into making connections between Arabic and other languages they know. Their motivation is enhanced as they use Arabic to successfully and meaningfully communicate with their diverse language communities, be they within the classroom, the school environment or the wider language community.

Exposure to Arabic language communities, or any other language communities, provides learners with examples of the living language and plays a central role in their learning progress. Learners observe and engage with elements of the language which, in turn, acts as a stimulus for more learning. They come to understand the variances and overlaps between

their own language and that of the language community. This development of language, and intercultural awareness, helps to deepen their appreciation of Arabic language communities.

To reflect the linguistic diversity of the communities where Arabic is spoken, learners will be exposed to a range of phonological, lexical and grammatical variations that exist within the spoken language. Oral communication may involve using one of the many variations of Arabic in common use, even if it is different to that of the interlocutor/ speaker, with mediation being used as required.

## **The role of Modern Standard Arabic and Dialectical Arabic within Arabic language communities**

Arabic is a Semitic language. Standard Arabic (Classical and Modern) has been and continues to be the basis for a rich heritage of classical poetry and literary prose as well as the language of religious texts.

Today, speakers of Arabic come from a variety of social, cultural and religious backgrounds. Their views, cultures and beliefs are manifested in the language they use formally and informally in every aspect of their private lives and public affairs. Language is an inseparable part of their identity and the way they view themselves and the world around them.

The Arabic language has two forms: Modern Standard Arabic (fuṣṣḥā) and Dialectical Arabic (lahjah/ ammiyah). Modern Standard Arabic is the official language taught worldwide and used in formal situations, such as at school, at university and in official media. Dialectical Arabic is used in everyday situations, such as at home and in the marketplace, the street, restaurants, cafés, and popular and social media.

Modern Standard Arabic is common to all countries of the Arabic-speaking world, while Dialectical Arabic varies according to geographical location. Arabic speakers often switch between standard Arabic and the dialectical language depending on the context, using

Modern Standard Arabic as a medium of mediation between speakers from different dialectical Arabic backgrounds.

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## Overview

The Leaving Certificate Arabic specification is presented in two inter-related and inter-dependent strands.

## Structure

The strands in the specification are communicative language competence and plurilingual and pluricultural competence. Learners develop their communicative language competence through reflective language use which is, in turn, informed by plurilingual and pluricultural competence.

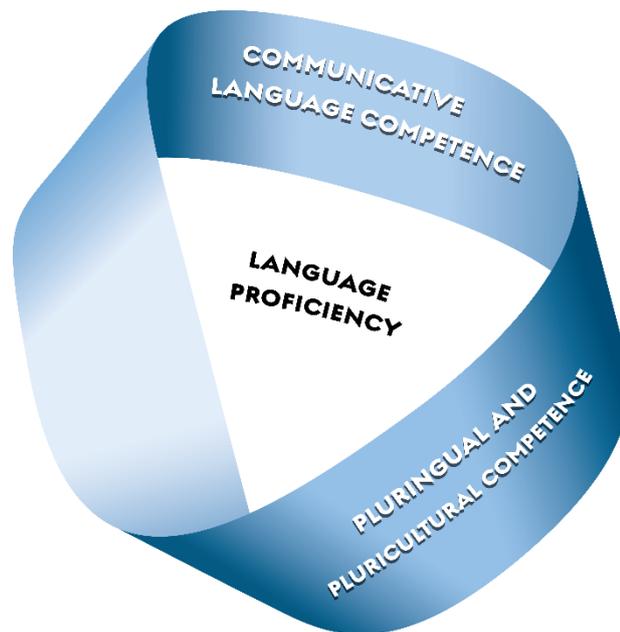


Figure 3: The integrated and interdependent nature of the strands within this specification

The structure of the strands is set out to support teachers in planning for learning, teaching and assessment and should not be considered in isolation. Teachers identify pathways through the specification that respond to learners' prior learning. This leads to deeper comprehension and application of their language skills in increasingly complex situations up to the point of being more proficient and confident language users.

In designing the strands and learning outcomes for this specification, the following concepts and ideas were given particular attention:

- Languages are interrelated and interconnected, especially at the level of the individual.
- Every learner brings a unique and varied linguistic repertoire to their language learning experience.
- Languages and cultures are not kept in separate mental compartments.
- All knowledge and experience of languages contribute to building up communicative competence.
- Barriers between languages can be overcome in communication and different languages can be used purposefully for conveying messages in the same situation.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> CEFR Companion Volume, Council of Europe, 2018, p. 157.

## Time allocation

The Arabic specification is designed for a minimum of 180 hours of class contact time.

## Key skills

Curriculum and assessment focus on the embedding of key skills within learning outcomes. This is accompanied by a varied approach to assessment in which learners can generate responses that reveal the depth of their understanding. The embedding of key skills requires careful consideration of the balance between knowledge and skills in the curriculum and in learning, and of finding appropriate ways of assessing them.

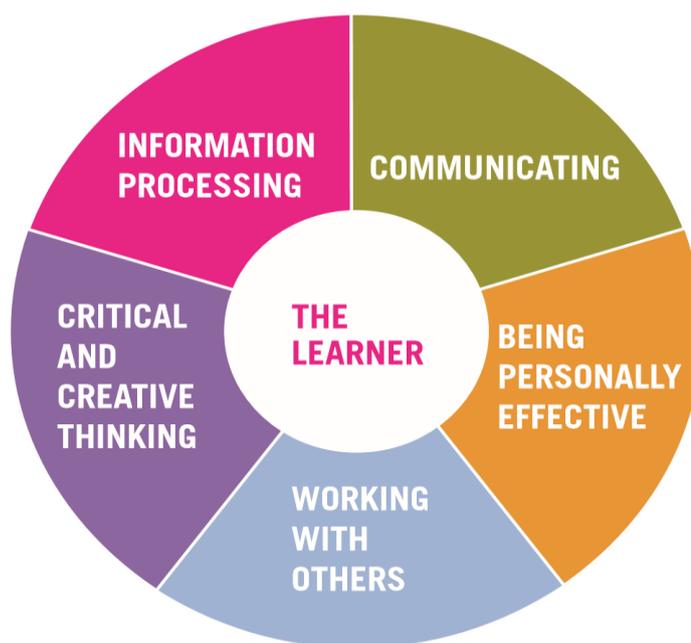


Figure 4: Key skills of senior cycle

There are five skills identified as central to teaching and learning across the curriculum at senior cycle. These are: information processing; being personally effective; communicating; critical and creative thinking; and working with others. It is important for all learners to develop these key skills which contribute to helping them achieve their full potential, both during their time in school and into the future. This foundation will allow them to participate fully in society, including family life, the world of work and lifelong learning. This specification is designed to help learners to develop language proficiency, including cross-linguistic skills, as they build on their knowledge and understanding of language learning and form positive attitudes to learning in general.

## **Information processing and critical and creative thinking**

Learners engage with the fundamental concepts and processes of language learning through participation in a range of learning and communication activities where they encounter the key skills in an integrated way. Learners develop information processing skills and critical and creative thinking skills by engaging in language activities which require them to explore and understand authentic texts, to identify and gather specific information from texts for a particular purpose and to develop a range of creative texts.

## **Communicating**

Communication skills are developed as learners collaborate and as they express and share their opinions and ideas. This encourages them to engage in conversation and discussion, listening attentively and critically and eliciting opinions, views and emotions. They also learn to provide information in a way that is relevant and understandable to people with diverse levels of language knowledge and understanding.

## **Working with others and being personally effective**

As language is communicative by nature, learning languages enables learners to cultivate an appreciation of working collectively. This can help motivation and capitalise on all talents within a group. Learners develop the capacity to discuss and share their different language

learning strategies. Self-awareness and persistence in the face of challenges enable learners to grow and to develop. They develop the skill of being personally effective as they develop strategies to learn and to build on previous knowledge.

## **Literacy**

Literacy includes the capacity to read, understand and critically appreciate various forms of communication including spoken language, printed text, broadcast media, and digital media. Literacy acquisition is a central component of language acquisition. As learners become familiar with various texts and media (including multi-modal texts), they develop literacy skills. In creating their own texts, communicating online, or seeking information in the Arabic classroom, learners' language and digital skills are developed and this significantly enhances their overall literacy, including digital literacy. The use of technology contributes significantly to fostering creativity, the acquisition of literacy and the satisfaction learners get from using language.

Translanguaging, the process whereby multilingual speakers use their plurilingual repertoire as an integrated language system, is a key element in learners' ability to navigate the complex social and cognitive demands involved in the acquisition of new languages. Learners engaging in oral communication may naturally use plurilingualism, utilising a combination of Modern Standard Arabic and Dialectal Arabic (lahjah/ ammiyah), using mediation as required.

Language awareness is an important element of learners' literacy development. This awareness will help them to make informed choices while manipulating subjects, ideas and concepts. Quantitative and numerical concepts also form part of language learning, deepening learners' numeracy skills.

## **Learning and teaching**

Throughout their time in senior cycle, learners are encouraged to develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will enable them to become more independent learners and to develop a lifelong commitment to improving their language learning.

While the learning outcomes associated with each strand are set out separately, this does not imply they are to be studied in isolation. Learner's engagement and learning are optimised by a fully integrated experience of both strands. This specification gives learners and teachers the flexibility to use a range of learning and teaching approaches and strategies that are appropriate and relevant to the various contexts in which they use the language.

The interconnectivity between our language, our society and our interpersonal relationships should be embedded into classroom learning and teaching through which teachers are encouraged to highlight the social nature of language.

The section below outlines the learning and teaching approaches embedded in the integrated strands of the specification.

## **The language learning journey**

The learning and acquisition of Arabic can be viewed as a language learning journey. The focus of learners on this journey is to become capable, independent and self-governing language users. An important part of the journey is prior language learning and acquisition. While they may not have learned Arabic before, the skills learners have developed acquiring their first and subsequent language(s) play a very important role in the acquisition and development of this new language. They develop language learning strategies that are transferable across different languages, enabling them to make connections between aspects of language and everyday experiences.

Self-awareness is the most effective tool that language learners can use to make progress. With help and feedback from teachers and by reflecting on their language learning journey, learners take the necessary steps to develop language proficiency. Learners and teachers collaborate on this aspect of lifelong language learning. The interactive, communicative use of Arabic by both parties provides the input that is essential for language development. Teachers have expertise in the language and have particular knowledge and special skills relating to the teaching and assessment of language to facilitate learning. When learners

encounter challenges and difficulties, teachers provide guidance, encouragement, help, feedback and support so that they may progress. Output is of particular importance for learners on this journey, as is a language-rich learning environment and opportunities for use of and interaction in the language.

To support this language-rich environment, it is desirable that learners are encouraged and scaffolded to engage with authentic texts. This involves both fiction and non-fiction texts, including magazine and newspaper articles, poems, short stories, films, simple novels, blogs/vlogs, comic strips, lyrics etc, taking into account the interests of the learners and the motivation to learn. The role and uses of texts is outlined in the next section.

Classmates, the learning environment and the community also have a role to play. By taking advantage of opportunities to communicate with classmates in group work, pair work and other collaborative activities and by engaging in tasks through Arabic, learners can interact through Arabic and develop skills in communication, listening to each other and reflecting on their own work and that of others.

Engaging in a variety of meaningful tasks and language activities will enable learners to take charge of their own learning, motivating them to set goals, develop action plans, and to receive, respond to and reflect on assessment feedback. As well as varied teaching strategies, varied assessment strategies will support learning and provide information that can be used as feedback. In this way learning and teaching activities can be designed and/or delivered in ways that best suit individual learners and their language skills. By setting appropriate, real-life and engaging tasks, by asking higher-order questions and by giving feedback that promotes learner agency, assessment will support learning as well as capturing achievement.

Observation is another tool used by learners to make progress. A sense of curiosity and a desire to learn are created, and learners become self-aware. Through this awareness, they acknowledge the disparity between the level of their own language system (interlanguage) and richer, more accurate and more natural versions and examples of the language produced

by others. They understand why they make mistakes and take responsibility for correcting those mistakes, producing richer, more accurate and more natural language themselves.

As described below, learners may use their language portfolio to regularly describe what they observe about the language, reflect on their progress and on the cultures and communities associated with the Arabic language. They might also describe the steps they must take to make progress as a learner and a language user. Such elements necessarily underpin their ongoing progress in the language.

## **Texts**

Literary and non-literary Arabic texts are used to support the integrated development of the skills and competencies of learners.

### **DEFINITIONS OF TEXT IN THIS SPECIFICATION**

All products of language use—oral, written, visual, or multi-modal—can be described as texts.

An authentic text is a literary or non-literary text that was created to fulfil some personal or social purpose, a genuine communicative purpose, in the language community in which it was produced.

A genre is the term used to indicate the type of text, whether oral or written. Genres have particular objectives and organisational patterns depending on their purpose and audience, as well as appropriate language registers.

A literary text is a creative text which demonstrates the state or circumstances of an individual, a narrative, poem, song or drama which derives from emotions, life experience and memories of a person. Learners are given an insight into the culture of their own language community and that of other cultures through engaging with literary texts.

A multi-modal text combines language with other systems for communication, such as print text, visual images, sound and the spoken word.

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.

### THE ROLE AND USES OF TEXTS IN THE LEARNING PROCESS

A rich and wide variety of literary and non-literary texts is a valuable and important source of language for learners. They develop an awareness of the various mediums/ contexts in which Arabic can be used by engaging with texts that serve a variety of purposes. This allows learners to develop both their language awareness and their awareness as language learners, which empowers them to demonstrate their language competence and creative abilities when creating texts across a range of genres in Arabic.

An underlying principle of this specification is the integrated nature of the development of language skills and the exploration of texts (both literature and non-literary texts). Learners expand their reading skills, their analytical skills and their general learning skills when exploring texts and in doing so, they use all their language skills and competences: listening, reading, speaking, interacting, and writing.

Arabic literature is of particular importance within this specification and is central to the learners' language acquisition and learning process. Literature is important in terms of the learning and the contextualisation of the language. It is an important resource that provides learners with insights into aspects of cultures associated with the Arabic language. Literature is also an important resource for personal development and the development of cultural identity.

#### Skills and competencies

Arabic literature is a learning resource which:

- builds learners' vocabulary and richness of expression
- provides samples of language accuracy and grammatical traits in the context of the living language
- empowers learners to undertake independent reading



Figure 5: Summary of the role and use of texts in the learning process

## Language portfolio

Over the two years of Leaving Certificate Arabic each learner develops a language portfolio. The language portfolio focuses on the learner's language journey, on the process and progress of their language-learning experiences. It places the learner at the centre of learning, teaching and assessment and facilitates autonomous learning.

The purpose of the language portfolio is to create a space in which learners can record and reflect on their growing language proficiency. It provides them with an opportunity to set personal learning goals across the four modes of communication (reception, interaction, production and mediation) and to develop their plurilingual and pluricultural competence by becoming more aware of themselves as language learners and users.

Using the language portfolio supports ongoing formative assessment in the language classroom and facilitates learners in showcasing their language-learning achievements. Self-assessment is fundamental to the language portfolio and learners are encouraged to set goals for their learning and monitor their own progress through evaluative reflection. In addition to teacher feedback, learners will be encouraged to self-assess and peer-assess their work. This will further develop their autonomy as language learners and users.

The language portfolio will include a broad range of items, such as written texts, projects, audio-visual materials, learning logs, learner reflections and learning goals. It is recognised that in this context, the learners' created texts<sup>6</sup> may be presented in different formats—handwritten, multi-modal, and so on.

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<sup>6</sup> All products of language use—oral, written, visual, or multi-modal—can be described as texts. Multi-modal texts combine language with other systems for communication, such as print text, visual images, sound and the spoken word.

Using the portfolio as a means of documenting and reflecting on their learning will help learners to develop an awareness of the language-learning process, to develop language-learning strategies and to become more independent in their language learning.

As outlined in the assessment section of this specification, learners will engage in conversation about their language portfolio during the oral examination. The language portfolio is a stimulus for conversation and discussion. However, the portfolio itself will not be assessed for certification purposes.

## **Differentiation**

The Leaving Certificate Arabic specification is differentiated to cater for students of different abilities and levels of achievement. Differentiation is supported:

- through the learning outcomes of the specification
- in the process of learning and teaching
- through assessment for certification.

The learning outcomes in this specification should be achievable for every student who chooses to study LC Arabic. They promote learning, teaching and assessment processes that develop the knowledge and understanding of learners. They enable learners, through a variety of language learning experiences, to respond, analyse, evaluate and demonstrate their competencies as they progress.

Teachers support learners by engaging their interests through the many possibilities available to them in the language classroom, such as learning and teaching strategies. Teachers differentiate by text, task, outcome, support (teacher support as well as other forms of support), learners' interests and preferences, and by using a variety of teaching approaches.

Teachers give learners the opportunity to think critically and creatively about the tasks they are involved in, encouraging them to draw on their own plurilingual and pluricultural

repertoire. They can offer learners multiple learning experiences based on the work and processes being undertaken in the classroom so that they meet learners' needs.

Assessment of Leaving Certificate Arabic will be based on the learning outcomes in the specification. Learners will be assessed at two levels, Higher and Ordinary. All learning outcomes may be assessed at both Higher and Ordinary—this is outlined in detail on the section on Assessment for Certification.

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## Outline of strands

### Communicative Language Competence Strand

Language use is central to the development of overall language proficiency. The learning outcomes in this strand are organised under the four modes of communication identified in the CEFR Companion Volume<sup>7</sup>:

- Reception
- Interaction
- Production
- Mediation.

Active engagement with the learning outcomes in this strand enables learners to communicate effectively in Arabic for meaningful purposes and to develop overall language proficiency.

### Plurilingual and Pluricultural Competence Strand

Plurilingual and pluricultural competence is developed by and through the use of Arabic. As outlined in the CEFR:

*Plurilingual and pluricultural competence refers to the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent, has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures... The various cultures (national, regional, social), to which a*

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<sup>7</sup> CEFR, Council of Europe, 2001.

*learner has gained access, do not just exist side by side but they are compared, contrasted and they actively interact to produce an enriched, integrated pluricultural competence*<sup>8</sup>

The learning outcomes in this strand are organised as follows:

- Plurilingual competence
- Pluricultural competence.

Active engagement with these learning outcomes is central to supporting the development of overall language proficiency.

## **Strands of study**

The strands and their associated learning outcomes are set out below. While the learning outcomes are numbered, this is for ease of identification and does not imply a hierarchy of approach. The strands themselves are not numbered because it is recognised that, in order to acquire language proficiency, one needs to develop communicative competence and plurilingual and pluricultural competence in an integrated way.

### **COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE COMPETENCE STRAND**

This strand encompasses linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences. As indicated earlier, learning outcomes in this strand are organised by the four modes of communication (reception, interaction, production and mediation). In this strand, learners will actively engage

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<sup>8</sup> CEFR, Council of Europe, 2001, p. 168.

in tasks and activities in order to develop their ability to communicate effectively in a wide range of scenarios/contexts/situations.

**Learners learn**

**about:**

**Learners should be able to:**

Reception	CLC1. Follow classroom interactions including pair and group work, presentations and detailed instructions.
	CLC2. Explore a range of authentic oral, written and multi-modal literary and non-literary texts in a variety of genres and formats for pleasure, research or comparison.
	CLC3. Identify and gather specific information from a range of oral, written and multi-modal literary and non-literary texts for a particular purpose.
	CLC04. Understand a wide lexical range at the level of individual words and expressions, as well as idioms and collocations in context.
	CLC5. Identify factual information, the main line of argument, different viewpoints and conclusions in a range of oral, written and multi-modal literary and non-literary texts.
	CLC6. Understand the main points of oral, written and multi-modal literary and non-literary texts such as news bulletins, advertisements, announcements, narratives and other interactions expressed in a range of registers and variations of Arabic.

Learners learn about:	Learners should be able to:
Interaction	CLC7. Understand descriptions of places, events, personal experiences, feelings and perspectives expressed in everyday language
	CLC8. Interact with others in various ways: engaging in discussion, debate, transactions, problem-solving and the exchange of information
	CLC9. Give accounts of social and personal events, experiences and activities, and respond with reasonable detail in real time in face-to-face and online interactions.
	CLC10. Use a range of suitable expressions, phrases and idioms to initiate, maintain and close simple face-to-face conversations, such as giving instructions, asking for details and/or clarifications as appropriate.

**Learners learn**

**about:**

**Learners should be able to:**

Production	CLC11. Use a range of strategies to help focus a discussion, such as by summarising the main point, reporting back, reacting to what has been said, inviting others to contribute.
	CLC12. Convey their message clearly enough to be understood with generally clear pronunciation, intonation, stress and rhythm.

	CLC13. Use linguistic patterns, structures and strategies to communicate with reasonable precision in familiar contexts.
	CLC14. Produce continuous and coherent text using spelling, punctuation and a range of linguistic devices appropriately to connect simple elements.
	CLC15. Express opinions, feelings and experiences, in writing and orally, on subjects relating to everyday life and use simple expressions to justify viewpoints, plans and/or actions.
	CLC16. Develop a range of creative texts on subjects of personal interest in oral, written and multi-modal formats, for example, songs, poems, drama, stories.

**Learners learn**

**about:**

**Learners should be able to:**

Reception	CLC1. Follow classroom interactions including pair and group work, presentations and detailed instructions.
	CLC2. Explore a range of authentic oral, written and multi-modal literary and non-literary texts in a variety of genres and formats for pleasure, research or comparison.

	CLC3. Identify and gather specific information from a range of oral, written and multi-modal literary and non-literary texts for a particular purpose.
	CLC04. Understand a wide lexical range at the level of individual words and expressions, as well as idioms and collocations in context.
	CLC5. Identify factual information, the main line of argument, different viewpoints and conclusions in a range of oral, written and multi-modal literary and non-literary texts.
	CLC6. Understand the main points of oral, written and multi-modal literary and non-literary texts such as news bulletins, advertisements, announcements, narratives and other interactions expressed in a range of registers and variations of Arabic.
<b>Learners learn about:</b>	<b>Learners should be able to:</b>
Interaction	CLC7. Understand descriptions of places, events, personal experiences, feelings and perspectives expressed in everyday language
	CLC8. Interact with others in various ways: engaging in discussion, debate, transactions, problem-solving and the exchange of information
	CLC9. Give accounts of social and personal events, experiences and activities, and respond with reasonable detail in real time in face-to-face and online interactions.

	CLC10. Use a range of suitable expressions, phrases and idioms to initiate, maintain and close simple face-to-face conversations, such as giving instructions, asking for details and/or clarifications as appropriate.
<b>Learners learn about:</b>	<b>Learners should be able to:</b>
<b>Production</b>	CLC11. Use a range of strategies to help focus a discussion, such as by summarising the main point, reporting back, reacting to what has been said, inviting others to contribute.
	CLC12. Convey their message clearly enough to be understood with generally clear pronunciation, intonation, stress and rhythm.
	CLC13. Use linguistic patterns, structures and strategies to communicate with reasonable precision in familiar contexts.
	CLC14. Produce continuous and coherent text using spelling, punctuation and a range of linguistic devices appropriately to connect simple elements.
	CLC15. Express opinions, feelings and experiences, in writing and orally, on subjects relating to everyday life and use simple expressions to justify viewpoints, plans and/or actions.
	CLC16. Develop a range of creative texts on subjects of personal interest in oral, written and multi-modal formats, for example, songs, poems, drama, stories.

Learners learn about:	Learners should be able to:
Mediation	CLC17. Convey, in writing and orally, the main points involved in clear, well-structured literary and non-literary texts on subjects that are familiar and of personal or current interest.
	CLC18. Collaborate in simple practical tasks, asking what others think, making suggestions and understanding responses, asking for repetition or reformulation, as necessary.
	CLC19. Communicate the main point of what is heard/read in predictable, everyday situations, inviting others to explain things, indicating understanding and/or agreement or disagreement.
	CLC20. Support a shared communication culture by introducing people and exchanging information about priorities, recognising when difficulties occur and using simple phrases to seek compromise and agreement.
	CLC21. Respond to creative authentic oral, written and multi-modal literary and non-literary texts in a range of ways, for example, by relating events to personal experiences, explaining the significance of events, making connections between them and describing characters and their relationships.
	CLC22. Explain the main points of ideas and problems, summarising factual information including data, identifying advantages and disadvantages, and giving a personal response through written and multimodal texts in familiar contexts.

## **PLURILINGUAL AND PLURICULTURAL COMPETENCE STRAND**

In this strand learners will develop their plurilingual and pluricultural competence.

Plurilingualism places value on the linguistic and cultural diversity of learners. Learners' knowledge of different languages and cultures is not compartmentalised; all knowledge and experience of languages and cultures interact and contribute to building communicative competence.

Plurilingualism highlights the need for learners to draw on all of their linguistic and cultural resources and experiences in order to more fully participate in social and educational contexts<sup>9</sup>. This helps them to achieve mutual understanding, to gain access to knowledge and thus further develop their linguistic and cultural repertoire. The aim is not simply to achieve 'mastery' in one, two or three languages, each in isolation, but rather to 'develop a linguistic repertory, in which all linguistic abilities have a place'<sup>10</sup>. Plurilingual comprehension involves, for example, using one's receptive knowledge in one language to deduce the meaning of texts in another language.

Pluriculturalism describes the use of pluricultural competences in a communicative situation when competences other than language competences come into play<sup>11</sup>. The various cultures to which a learner has access to do not coexist side by side; they are not mentally compartmentalised. They are compared, contrasted and actively interact to enable the learner to communicate more effectively, for example, taking into consideration differences in behaviours (including gestures, tones and attitudes), discussing over-generalisations and stereotypes.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> CEFR Companion Volume, Council of Europe, 2018, p. 157.

<sup>10</sup> CEFR, Council of Europe 2011, Section 1.3, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 53.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 158.

**Learners learn**

**about:**

**Learners should be able to:**

Plurilingual competence	PPC1. Make sense of unfamiliar words by considering the constituent parts of the word, such as word roots and lexical elements, as well as the wider context of an oral, written and multi-modal text.
	PPC2. Know how to use language resources (e.g. dictionary, thesaurus and online resources) in order to assist their vocabulary development.
	PPC3. Recognise a range of linguistic patterns and structures (for example verbal system, syntax) and understand their meaning in context.
	PPC4. Apply communication and compensation strategies when communication is impaired (such as by describing something similar, using synonyms, gestures, translanguaging) and thereby avoid misunderstandings.
	PPC5. Further develop learning strategies to recall, understand and use Arabic for the purpose of oral and written communication.
	PPC6. Creatively exploit their plurilingual repertoire in different languages and dialects in order to communicate with others in unexpected situations or to make sense of texts.

	PPC7. Recognise similarities and differences in the way concepts are expressed and understood across different languages and dialects.
	PPC8. Compare and contrast linguistic patterns and lexical expressions in the languages they know to support their comprehension of oral, written and multi-modal texts.
	PPC9. Reflect on the language-learning process, using feedback to improve.

**Learners learn**

**about:**

**Learners should be able to:**

Pluricultural competence	PPC10. Explore and appreciate popular culture through a range of media.
	PPC11. Research and discuss a range of aspects of country/countries, communities and cultures associated with the Arabic language, for example geographical features, significant historical events, facts, famous people and places.
	PPC12. Research aspects of the diverse cultural heritage, for example cuisine, folklore, music, traditions, the arts and religions.
	PPC13. Interpret aspects of cultures and communities associated with the Arabic language in everyday living, social conventions, interpersonal relations and evolving values and beliefs through engagement with a range of oral, written and multi-modal texts.

PPC14. Develop and demonstrate awareness of customs, beliefs and attitudes of people in cultures and communities associated with the Arabic language.

PPC15. Explain features of the cultures and communities associated with the Arabic language to people with different cultural backgrounds, using a range of relevant formats and media.

PPC16. Demonstrate an awareness of and use appropriate verbal and non-verbal social conventions when interacting with others.

PPC17. Consider similarities and differences between cultures associated with the Arabic language and other cultures, respectfully recognising the feelings and different world views of others.

PPC18. Support communication and interaction across cultures by showing interest, empathy, agreement and understanding.

PPC19. Explore their own cultural identity and consider common stereotypes of their own and other cultures.

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## 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 supporting 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 Arabic 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 will focus on: the ability to use language effectively with accuracy and fluency appropriate to the age and stage of learning<sup>13</sup>; understanding Arabic as a linguistic system; manipulating it for a range of communicative purposes; the ability of learners to develop their

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<sup>13</sup> The specification is notionally aligned with A2/B1 of the CEFR.

awareness as language users; and learners' understanding of the interdependence of language and culture.

In the oral examination, learners may use plurilingualism and mediation skills, in responding to questions. This may involve some use of Dialectical Arabic, to aid communication.

Stimulus materials used in aural assessment will be culturally and linguistically representative of a diverse range of Arabic speakers.

Written assessment for certification will be conducted through Modern Standard Arabic.

## Assessment components

Leaving Certificate Arabic will be assessed through three assessment components:

- an oral examination
- an aural examination
- a written examination.

Each component will be administered and assessed by the State Examinations Commission (SEC). All components of assessment will reflect the integrated approach outlined 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.

The different mark allocation applied to Ordinary and Higher levels is based on the understanding that for most language learners the development of receptive skills outpaces the development of productive skills during the process of language learning. Therefore, a greater proportion of the marks is allocated to receptive tasks at Ordinary level and to productive and interactive tasks at Higher level.

Assessment component	Ordinary level	Higher Level
Oral examination	25%	30%
Aural examination	30%	25%
Written examination	30% Reading	25% Reading
	15% Writing	20% Writing

Figure 5: Overview of assessment

## Oral examination

The oral examination will assess language proficiency. It will focus, in part, on discussion about the language portfolio<sup>14</sup>.

The oral examination will specifically assess the ability of learners to:

- use Arabic with accuracy, fluency and complexity consistent with the requirements of the specification, while engaging in spoken reception, interaction, production and mediation
- demonstrate an awareness of the communities and cultures associated with the Arabic language

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<sup>14</sup> See page 30 for more information about the Language Portfolio.

- discuss the development and contents of their language portfolio, reflecting on the plurilingual and pluricultural dimensions of their language learning journey.

## Aural and written examination

The aural and written examination papers will consist of two components and be presented at Higher and Ordinary level.

The first component (aural examination) will assess listening reception and mediation.

The second component (written examination) will assess written reception, written production and mediation.

## General assessment criteria

### ORAL COMPONENT

#### *Note for all levels*

In the oral examination, learners may use plurilingual and mediation skills, including a dialect of Arabic, in responding to questions.

High level of achievement	Moderate level of achievement	Low level of achievement
Characterised by high levels of accuracy, fluency, coherence and a wide range of vocabulary appropriate to the level.	Characterised by moderate levels of accuracy, fluency, coherence and an adequate range of vocabulary.	Characterised by limited accuracy, fluency, and coherence.

<p>Learners can understand, present, offer their views and interact with confidence in unscripted conversations and a wide range of familiar situations and topics.</p>	<p>The learners' range of vocabulary and structures allows them to communicate clearly enough to be understood and with a degree of confidence in unscripted conversations and familiar situations and topics. They can present, offer their views and interact using direct or simple phrases.</p>	<p>The learners' range of vocabulary and structures allows them to communicate with limited confidence and effectiveness in unscripted conversations and about very familiar situations and topics, using very simple phrases.</p>
<p>Inaccuracies and occasional requests for repetition do not cause significant misunderstandings. Learners demonstrate an ability to self-correct where appropriate.</p>	<p>Inaccuracies sometimes cause misunderstandings, and they may request repetition, a slower speed of communication and clarifications.</p>	<p>Inaccuracies cause misunderstandings, impeding communication. They frequently request repetition, clarification and reformulation and require a slower speed of communication.</p>
<p>Learners can demonstrate high levels of awareness and understanding of cultures associated with the Arabic language,</p>	<p>Learners can demonstrate adequate levels of awareness and understanding of cultures associated with the Arabic</p>	<p>Learners can demonstrate very little awareness or understanding of cultures associated with the Arabic language,</p>

appropriate to their stage of learning.	language, appropriate to their stage of learning.	appropriate to their stage of learning.
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## AURAL COMPONENT

Stimulus materials used in aural assessment will be culturally and linguistically inclusive of the diverse range of Arabic speakers.

High level of achievement	Moderate level of achievement	Low level of achievement
Characterised by learners' ability to understand shorter and extended speech on relatively familiar topics and in a variety of contexts.	Characterised by learners' ability to understand shorter and extended speech on familiar topics and in a variety of contexts, which they encounter in their sphere of experience.	Characterised by learners' more limited ability to understand shorter and extended speech on very familiar topics.
Learners can demonstrate very good awareness of cultural conventions associated with Arabic.	Learners can demonstrate a good awareness of cultural conventions associated with Arabic.	Learners can demonstrate a limited awareness of cultural conventions associated with Arabic.

## WRITTEN COMPONENT

Written assessment for certification will be conducted through Modern Standard Arabic.

High level of achievement	Moderate level of achievement	Low level of achievement
<p>Characterised by learners' ability to communicate effectively and accurately in Modern Standard Arabic, demonstrating a good range of vocabulary and structures and characterised by a high level of coherence.</p>	<p>Characterised by learners' ability to communicate quite effectively and with an adequate degree of accuracy in Modern Standard Arabic, demonstrating a sufficient range of vocabulary and structures and characterised by an adequate level of coherence.</p>	<p>Characterised by a limited ability to communicate accurately and with a basic degree of accuracy in Modern Standard Arabic, demonstrating a limited range of vocabulary and structures which allows learners to produce simple written texts, characterised by short sentences and basic argumentation.</p>
<p>Register is appropriate to the task and reveals a very good understanding of the purpose and potential audience for the communication and, where appropriate, aspects of communities or cultures</p>	<p>Register is generally appropriate to the task and reveals an adequate understanding of the purpose and potential audience for the communication and, where appropriate, aspects of communities or cultures</p>	<p>Register is sometimes appropriate to the task and reveals a limited understanding of the purpose and potential audience for the communication and, where appropriate, aspects of communities</p>

associated with the Arabic language	associated with the Arabic language	or cultures associated with the Arabic language
Learners can understand a range of questions about texts written in Modern Standard Arabic.	Learners can understand and answer questions on a range of texts written in Modern Standard Arabic, particularly if expressed in relatively high-frequency language.	Learners can understand and demonstrate basic understanding and ability to answer questions about the main points of texts in Modern Standard Arabic, particularly if expressed in high-frequency language and close to their sphere of experience, although they may give short answers.
Learners demonstrate good ability to capture the cultural conventions associated with Modern Standard Arabic.	Learners demonstrate adequate ability to capture the cultural conventions associated with Modern Standard Arabic.	Learners demonstrate limited ability to capture the cultural conventions associated with Modern Standard Arabic.

## Leaving Certificate grading

The Leaving Certificate Arabic examination will be graded using an 8-point grading scale at both Ordinary level and Higher level. The highest grade is a grade 1, the lowest grade is a grade 8. The highest seven grades, 1-7, divide the marks range 100% to 30% into seven equal grade bands, each 10% wide, with a grade 8 being awarded for percentage marks of less than 30%. The grades at Higher level and Ordinary level are distinguished by prefixing the grade with H or O respectively, giving H1-H8 at Higher level, and O1-O8 at Ordinary level.

Grade	% marks
H1/O1	90-100
H2/O2	80<90
H3/O3	70<80
H4/O4	60<70
H5/O5	50<60
H6/O6	40<50
H7/O7	30<40
H8/O8	<30

Figure 6: 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 learners 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 learners 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 learners 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.

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## Glossary

This glossary is intended to clarify concepts and terms used in this specification.

**Action-oriented:** This approach views learners as social agents and active participants in their own learning. It implies the use of Arabic by learners while engaging in purposeful, collaborative tasks.

**Aural:** In aural reception activities, the language user receives and processes a spoken input produced by one or more speakers<sup>15</sup>.

**Authentic texts:** A literary or non-literary text that was created to fulfil some personal or social purpose, a genuine communicative purpose, in the language community in which it was produced.

**CEFR:** Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, published by the Council of Europe in 2001. This is a framework of reference that provides tools, guidelines and resources for the development of language curricula, textbooks and assessment tools and programmes to support the teaching and learning of languages. The CEFR Companion Volume was published in 2018.

**Dialectical Arabic:** Dialectical Arabic is used in everyday situations, such as at home and in the marketplace, the street, restaurants, cafés, and in popular and social media. Dialectical Arabic varies according to geographical location.

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<sup>15</sup> CEFR, Council of Europe, 2001, p. 65.

Input: Instructions, materials, etc. selected or produced by teachers and/or learners<sup>16</sup>.

Interaction: Interaction includes communicating, collaborating, turn-taking and/or asking for clarification in order to co-construct meaning and is fundamental to language learning.

Modern Standard Arabic: Modern Standard Arabic is the official language taught worldwide and used in formal situations, such as at school, at university and in official media. Modern Standard Arabic is common to all countries of the Arabic-speaking world.

Mediation: In mediation, the user/learner acts as a social agent who creates bridges and helps to construct or convey meaning, sometimes within the same language, sometimes from one language to another (cross-linguistic mediation). The focus is on the role of language in processes like: creating the space and conditions for communicating and/or learning; collaborating to construct new meaning; encouraging others to construct or understand new meaning; and passing on new information in an appropriate form. The context can be social, pedagogic, cultural, linguistic or professional.

Multilingualism: The co-existence of different languages in society.

Oral: In oral production activities the language user produces a spoken output.

Oral interaction: In oral interaction at least two individuals participate in an oral exchange in which production and reception alternate and may in fact overlap.<sup>17</sup>

Output: Language composed or generated by the learners themselves.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p55.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid p.9

**Plurilingualism:** Plurilingualism is the dynamic and developing linguistic repertoire of an individual user/learner<sup>18</sup> in which they draw on all of their linguistic and cultural resources and experiences in order to participate more fully in social and educational contexts<sup>19</sup>.

**Pluriculturalism:** In a person's cultural competence, the various cultures (national, regional, social) to which that person has gained access do not simply co-exist side by side; they are compared, contrasted and actively interact to produce an enriched, integrated pluricultural competence.<sup>20</sup>

**Reception:** Receiving and processing language through listening and/or reading.

**Task-based language learning:** An approach to language learning where learners engage with real-life and authentic tasks through communication, providing meaningful opportunities to acquire language by using it.

**Text:** All products of language use—oral, written, visual, or multi-modal—can be described as texts. Multi-modal texts combine language with other systems for communication, such as print text, visual images, sound and the spoken word.

**Translanguaging:** The process whereby multilingual speakers use their plurilingual repertoire, as an integrated language system. This is also known as code-switching.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 28.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p. 157.

<sup>20</sup> CEFR, Council of Europe, 2001, p. 6.

## Appendix

As the expectations for learners in this specification are notionally aligned with A2/B1 levels of the CEFR (CoE, 2018), the illustrative descriptor scales which follow are samples taken from it. They are not intended to replace learning outcomes, but to provide guidance about A2 and B1 levels. All CEFR illustrative descriptor scales can be found in the CEFR Companion Volume (ibid). The learning outcomes can be found on pages 38-45 of this document.

	A2	B1
GENERAL LINGUISTIC RANGE	<p>Has a repertoire of basic language, which enables him/her to deal with everyday situations with predictable content, though he/she will generally have to compromise the message and search for words.</p> <p>Can produce brief everyday expressions in order to satisfy simple needs of a concrete type: personal details, daily routines, wants and needs, requests for information.</p> <p>Can use basic sentence patterns and communicate with memorised phrases, groups of a few words and formulae about him/herself and other people, what he/she does, places, possessions etc.</p>	<p>Has a sufficient range of language to describe unpredictable situations, explain the main points in an idea or problem with reasonable precision and express thoughts on abstract or cultural topics such as music and films.</p> <p>Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events, but lexical limitations cause repetition and even difficulty with formulation at times.</p>

	Has a limited repertoire of short, memorised phrases covering predictable survival situations; frequent breakdowns and misunderstandings occur in nonroutine situations.	
<b>OVERALL READING COMPREHENSION</b>	<p>Can understand short, simple texts on familiar matters of a concrete type which consist of high frequency everyday or job-related language.</p> <p>Can understand short, simple texts containing the highest frequency vocabulary, including a proportion of shared international vocabulary items.</p>	Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to his/her field and interests with a satisfactory level of comprehension.
<b>OVERALL SPOKEN INTERACTION</b>	<p>Can interact with reasonable ease in structured situations and short conversations, provided the other person helps if necessary.</p> <p>Can manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort; can ask and answer questions and exchange ideas and information on familiar topics in predictable everyday situations.</p>	<p>Can communicate with some confidence on familiar routine and non-routine matters related to his/her interests and professional field.</p> <p>Can exchange, check and confirm information, deal with less routine situations and explain why something is a problem.</p>

	<p>Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters to do with work and free time.</p> <p>Can handle very short social exchanges but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of his/her own accord.</p>	<p>Can express thoughts on more abstract, cultural topics such as films, books, music etc.</p> <p>Can exploit a wide range of simple language to deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling.</p> <p>Can enter unprepared into conversation of familiar topics, express personal opinions and exchange information on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).</p>
<p>OVERALL WRITTEN INTERACTION</p>	<p>Can write short, simple formulaic notes relating to matters in areas of immediate need.</p>	<p>Can convey information and ideas on abstract as well as concrete topics, check information and ask about or explain problems with reasonable precision.</p> <p>Can write personal letters and notes asking for or conveying simple information of immediate relevance, getting across the point he/she feels to be important.</p>

SPOKEN FLUENCY	<p>Can make him/herself understood in short contributions, even though pauses, false starts and reformulation are very evident.</p> <p>Can construct phrases on familiar topics with sufficient ease to handle short exchanges, despite very noticeable hesitation and false starts.</p>	<p>Can express him/herself with relative ease. Despite some problems with formulation resulting in pauses and 'cul-de-sacs', he/she is able to keep going effectively without help.</p> <p>Can keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production.</p>
OVERALL SPOKEN PRODUCTION	<p>Can give a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines, likes/dislikes etc. as a short series of simple phrases and sentences linked into a list.</p>	<p>Can reasonably fluently sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within his/her field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points.</p>
OVERALL WRITTEN PRODUCTION	<p>Can write a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like 'and,' 'but' and 'because'.</p>	<p>Can write straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within his/her field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence.</p>

## Self-assessment grid (with online interaction and mediation)

	A2	B1
SPOKEN INTERACTION	<p>I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities.</p> <p>I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.</p>	<p>I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken.</p> <p>I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).</p>
WRITTEN AND ONLINE INTERACTION	<p>I can engage in basic social interaction, expressing how I feel, what I am doing or what I need, and responding to comments with thanks, apology or answers to questions.</p> <p>I can complete simple transactions such as ordering goods, can follow simple instructions and can collaborate in a shared task with a supportive interlocutor.</p>	<p>I can interact about experiences, events, impressions and feelings provided that I can prepare beforehand.</p> <p>I can ask for or give simple clarifications and can respond to comments and questions in some detail.</p> <p>I can interact with a group working on a project, provided there are visual aids such as images, statistics and graphs to clarify more complex concepts.</p>

<p><b>SPOKEN PRODUCTION</b></p>	<p>I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job</p>	<p>I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes &amp; ambitions.</p> <p>I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.</p> <p>I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.</p>
<p><b>WRITTEN PRODUCTION</b></p>	<p>I can write a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like “and”, “but” and “because”.</p>	<p>I can write straightforward connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest.</p>
<p><b>MEDIATING A TEXT</b></p>	<p>I can convey the main point(s) involved in short, simple texts on everyday subjects of immediate interest provided these are expressed clearly in simple language</p>	<p>I can convey information given in clear, well-structured informational texts on subjects that are familiar or of personal or current interest.</p>
<p><b>MEDIATING CONCEPTS</b></p>	<p>I can collaborate in simple, practical tasks, asking what others think, making suggestions and understanding responses, provided I can ask for repetition or reformulation from time to time.</p>	<p>I can help define a task in basic terms and ask others to contribute their expertise.</p> <p>I can invite other people to speak, to clarify the reason(s) for their views or</p>

	<p>I can make suggestions in a simple way to move the discussion forward and can ask what people think of certain ideas.</p>	<p>to elaborate on specific points they made.</p> <p>I can ask appropriate questions to check understanding of concepts and can repeat back part of what someone has said to confirm mutual understanding.</p>
<p><b>MEDIATING COMMUNICATION</b></p>	<p>I can contribute to communication by using simple words to invite people to explain things, indicating when I understand and/or agree.</p> <p>I can communicate the main point of what is said in predictable, everyday situations about personal wants and needs.</p> <p>I can recognise when speakers disagree or when difficulties occur and can use simple phrases to seek compromise and agreement.</p>	<p>I can support a shared communication culture by introducing people, exchanging information about priorities, and making simple requests for confirmation and/or clarification. I can communicate the main sense of what is said on subjects of personal interest, provided that speakers articulate clearly and that I can pause to plan how to express things.</p>

## Written assessment grid

	A2	B1
Overall	Can write a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like “and”, “but” and “because”. Longer texts may contain expressions and show coherence problems which makes the text hard to understand.	Can write straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within his/her field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence. The texts are understandable but occasional unclear expressions and/or inconsistencies may cause a break-up in reading.
Range	Uses basic sentence patterns with memorised phrases, groups of a few words and formulae in order to communicate limited information mainly in everyday situations.	Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events.
Coherence	Can link groups of words with simple connectors like “and”, “but” and “because”.	Can link a series of shorter discrete elements into a connected, linear text.
Accuracy	Uses simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes. Errors may sometimes cause misunderstandings.	Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used “routines” and patterns associated with more common situations.

		Occasionally makes errors that the reader usually can interpret correctly on the basis of the context.
Description	<p>Can write very short, basic descriptions of events, past activities and personal experiences.</p> <p>Can write short simple imaginary biographies and simple poems about people.</p>	<p>Can write accounts of experiences, describing feelings and reactions in simple connected text.</p> <p>Can write a description of an event, a recent trip – real or imagined.</p> <p>Can narrate a story.</p> <p>Can write straightforward, detailed descriptions on a range of familiar subjects within his/her field of interest.</p>
Argument	There are no descriptors for argument at A2 level.	<p>Can write short, simple essays on topics of interest.</p> <p>Can summarise, report and give his/her opinion about accumulated factual information on a familiar routine and non-routine matters, within his field with some confidence.</p> <p>Can write very brief reports to a standard conventionalised format, which pass on routine factual information and state reasons for actions.</p>

## Qualitative features of spoken language (expanded with phonology)

	A2	B1
Range	Uses basic sentence patterns with memorised phrases, groups of a few words and formulae in order to communicate limited information in simple everyday situations.	Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events.
Accuracy	Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes.	Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used “routines” and patterns associated with more predictable situations.
Fluency	Can make him/herself understood in very short utterances, even though pauses, false starts and reformulation are very evident.	Can keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production.
Interaction	Can ask and answer questions and respond to simple statements.  Can indicate when he/she is following but is rarely able to understand	Can initiate, maintain and close simple face-to-face conversation on topics that are familiar or of personal interest.

	enough to keep conversation going of his/her own accord.	Can repeat back part of what someone has said to confirm mutual understanding.
Coherence	Can link groups of words with simple connectors like “and,” “but” and “because”.	Can link a series of shorter, discrete simple elements into a connected, linear sequence of points.
Phonology	Pronunciation is generally clear enough to be understood, but conversational partners will need to ask for repetition from time to time. A strong influence from other language(s) he/she speaks on stress, rhythm and intonation may affect intelligibility, requiring collaboration from interlocutors. Nevertheless, pronunciation of familiar words is clear.	Pronunciation is generally intelligible; can approximate intonation and stress at both utterance and word levels. However, accent is usually influenced by other language(s) he/she speaks.