Junior Cycle English

Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessment and Assessment Task

Contents

Introduction

This document, *Junior Cycle English: Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessment and Assessment Task*, provides

- general information on Classroom-Based Assessments

- detail of the nature and scope of the Classroom-Based Assessments described in the specification for Junior Cycle English

- the Features of Quality used to describe the level of achievement for each Classroom-Based Assessment

- guidelines for schools, teachers and students on completing the Classroom-Based Assessments

- details of the Assessment Task in English and how the school supports its completion.

These guidelines should be used in conjunction with the curriculum specification for Junior Cycle English and the NCCA's online assessment support material for junior cycle, which includes further details of the subject learning and assessment review process and other aspects of junior cycle assessment set out in these guidelines.

All documentation can be accessed at https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Junior-Cycle-Subjects/English. An outline of assessment in junior cycle can be found in the Framework for Junior Cycle 2015, which can be accessed at https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Framework-for-Junior-Cycle-2015.pdf.

Classroom-Based Assessments: General Information

Classroom-Based Assessments are best described as the occasions when the teacher assesses the students using the specific task(s) set out in the subject specification. They are included within the time allocated for English, which is a minimum of 240 hours. The Classroom-Based Assessments and the Features of Quality, which support teacher judgement, are set out in these guidelines.

Although the assessment is similar to the ongoing assessment that occurs every day in class, in the case of Classroom-Based Assessments, the teacher's judgement is recorded for Subject Learning and

Assessment Review and is used in the school's reporting to parents and students. Students prepare for the Classroom-Based Assessments over specified periods of time in second and third year. The results of other projects, homework or tests undertaken by the students in the course of their normal classwork do not add up to the award of a descriptor for the Classroom-Based Assessment.

The autonomy of the school in preparing students for the Classroom-Based Assessments

These guidelines set out a range of options for the Classroom-Based Assessments so that they can suit the particular needs and circumstances of students and the school. Students and teachers have a choice of topics and formats for the Classroom-Based Assessments. A variety of possibilities are presented as to how Oral Communication can be conducted, the nature of the communication itself and the role the teacher plays in facilitating the students' communication. Similarly, when completing the second Classroom-Based Assessment, the Collection of the Student's Texts, students are encouraged to create texts in a range of genres and to present their work in a variety of formats e.g. handwritten, typed, digital, multi-modal etc. Within the parameters set by these guidelines, the range of themes and topics for the assessments can be determined independently by the school, teachers and students.

How the school supports the completion of the Classroom-Based Assessments

The school supports the completion of the assessments by

- ensuring that the NCCA *Specification* and *Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessment and Assessment Task* are provided to teachers

- supporting teachers in recording the level descriptors awarded to each student

- retaining records and pieces of work, as appropriate, for the purposes of Subject Learning and Assessment Review

- applying the guidelines for Subject Learning and Assessment Review

- supporting teachers and students in the completion of the Assessment Task

- following arrangements for transfer of the completed Assessment Tasks to the State Examinations Commission for marking

- applying inclusive assessment practices and ensuring accessibility of assessment for all students

- reporting the outcomes of Classroom-Based Assessments to students and their parents/guardians as part of the school's on-going reporting procedures and through the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

To facilitate providing feedback to students during their engagement with assessment, the process of completing the Classroom-Based Assessments should be viewed as part of teaching and learning, and not solely for assessment purposes. It is envisaged that teachers will guide, support and supervise throughout the process. Support may include:

- clarifying the requirements of the task

- using annotated examples of student work to clarify the meaning and interpretation of the Features of Quality to students

- providing instructions at strategic intervals to facilitate the timely completion of the assessments

- providing supports for students with special educational needs (SEN)

Note that only work which is the student's own can be accepted for assessment in the JCPA.

Inclusive assessment practices

Schools facilitate inclusive assessment practices whether as part of ongoing assessment or Classroom-Based Assessments. Where a school judges that a student has a specific physical or learning difficulty, reasonable supports may be put in place to remove, as far as possible, the impact of the disability on the student's performance in Classroom-Based Assessments. These supports e.g. the support provided by a special needs assistant or the support of assistive technologies, should be in line with the arrangements the school has put in place to support the student's learning throughout the year.

Classroom-Based Assessments in English

There are two Classroom-Based Assessments in English. They are assessed at a Common Level. They relate to specified learning outcomes and are scheduled to be undertaken by students in a defined time period within class contact time to a national timetable (as advised by the NCCA) in the school calendar. This timetable for Classroom-Based Assessments for all subjects will be provided on an annual basis at www.ncca.ie/junior-cycle and at www.curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle.

Following the second of these assessments students will complete an Assessment Task which is marked by the State Examinations Commission as part of the state-certified examination in English. The Classroom-Based Assessments for English and indicative timings are outlined in Table 1 below.

Classroom-Based Assessments	Format	Student preparation
Oral Communication	Individual or group communication or presentation	During a period of 3 weeks, with support/guidance by the teacher
Collection of the Student's Texts	Two texts chosen by the student from his/her collection of texts	Texts produced over time with support and guidance by the teacher

Table 1: Classroom-Based Assessments for English

Assessment Task

The Assessment Task is a written task completed by students during class time. It is not marked by the class teacher but is sent to the State Examinations Commission for marking as part of the state-certified examination in English. The Assessment Task is specified by the NCCA and is related to the learning on which the second Classroom-Based Assessment is based. In the case of English this is the Collection of the Student's Texts. The details of the Assessment Task are set out in these guidelines and are outlined in Table 2 below.

	Format	Student preparation	Completed
The Assessment Task (AT)	Students complete a specified written task which is sent to the SEC for marking	The Assessment Task will link to the Collection of the Student's Texts	Following completion of the second Classroom-Based Assessment in Year 3

Table 2: Assessment Task for Classroom-Based Assessment 2, The Collection of the Student's Texts

Classroom-Based Assessment 1: Oral Communication

The Classroom-Based Assessment, Oral Communication, has two priorities – the development of students' basic research skills and the communication.

> *Students are given an opportunity to choose a topic or issue that is of interest or importance to them and to carry out an exploration over time. The development of basic research skills will be central here, e.g. searching for information, reading and note-making, organising material, using key questions to give shape to ideas, developing a point of view, preparing a presentation, using props, hand-outs etc. This task provides useful opportunities for practice of a range of oral presentation styles. In addition, the task offers students opportunities, where appropriate, to collaborate with classmates and others in gathering and developing materials, leading to the Oral Communication for summative assessment.*

Junior Cycle English: Curriculum Specification (2014)

The main learning outcomes to be assessed through **Oral Communication** are:

Oral Language 1, 5, 7, 9, 13   **Reading** 3   **Writing** 3, 5

OL1 Know and use the conventions of oral language interaction, in a variety of contexts, including class groups, for a range of purposes, such as asking for information, stating an opinion, listening to others, informing, explaining, arguing, persuading, criticising, commentating, narrating, imagining, speculating.	**R3** Use a wide range of reading comprehension strategies appropriate to texts, including digital texts: to retrieve information; to link to previous knowledge, follow a process or argument, summarise, link main ideas; to monitor their own understanding; to question, analyse, synthesise and evaluate.
OL5 Deliver a short oral text, alone and/or in collaboration with others, using appropriate language, style and visual content for specific audiences and chosen purposes.	**W3** Write for a variety of purposes, for example to analyse, evaluate, imagine, explore, engage, amuse, narrate, inform, explain, argue, persuade, criticise, comment on what they have heard, viewed and read.
OL7 Choose appropriate language, style and visual content for specific audiences and chosen purposes: persuading, informing, narrating, describing a process.	**W5** Engage with and learn from models of oral and written language use to enrich their own written work.
OL9 Apply what they have learned about the effectiveness of spoken texts to their own use of oral language.	**OL13** Develop their spoken language proficiency by experimenting with word choice, being creative with syntax, being precise, stimulating appropriate responses relative to context and purpose.

Guidelines for completing Oral Communication Classroom-Based Assessment

There are two areas of activity to the assessment of Oral Communication: preparation and communication. Students will be credited for preparation they have done for their Oral Communication. The evidence of this preparation will be demonstrated during the Oral Communication itself.

Oral Communication promotes student engagement through:

▪ Choice about the topic on which to focus

▪ Choice about communication formats

▪ The possibilities for student collaboration, including, where appropriate, a group presentation in which each group member has a meaningful part to play. The number of students in a group should be such as to allow each group member to make an individual contribution to the assessment.

Choosing the format and topic

In completing the Oral Communication CBA, students may use the following formats:

1. Performance	The student(s) may participate in a scripted or improvised performance, including drama, alone or with others.
2. Presentation	The student(s) may speak with or without notes, and a reading of a prepared script is allowable.
3. Interview ▪	The student may respond to questions asked by the teacher and/or other students; the student may assume the role of interviewer as well as respondent in a dialogue setting.
4. Response to stimulus material	Stimulus material—visuals, written text, aural text, and so on—may be used by the teacher and/or student/s to promote, prompt or guide oral communication.

These formats are open to interpretation by students and teachers. For example, a debate as a form of **presentation**, a radio **interview**, a commentary on a sporting or cultural event as a **response to a**

stimulus, a comedy sketch, recitation, mock **interview** or parody as a form of **performance**. Note that this list of examples is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to suggest that student approaches to and formats for the oral communication classroom-based assessment may vary and/or overlap.

Oral Communication can be completed by the student as **an individual** or as **a member of a group**. The number of students in a group should be such as to allow each group member to make a meaningful contribution.

Each student or group of students will identify **one topic.** In general, topics may range from school-based or course-related topics (e.g. an exploration of or response to a text being studied) to surveys regarding matters of interest to students, to investigations of issues outside school. Suggested topics

An interesting sports person; writer, performer, or film director; hobby etc.	An organisation with which the student is involved	An investigation of a text, or writer, or film	An activity or interest or pastime the student is involved in, e.g. music, sport, fashion, drama, film[1] etc.

Students may wish to start considering possible formats and topics for the Oral Communication CBA shortly before the three-week period for work on the assessment begins and are encouraged to select formats and topics of genuine interest to them. Students are encouraged to consider a wide variety of possible formats/topics and are not restricted to formats and topics which have featured or will feature in their classroom studies in English.

Preparation

While oral communication will form part of everyday learning and teaching across Years One and Two, the preparation for and communication by students of their Oral Communication Classroom-Based Assessment must be completed over a period of three school weeks.

Preparation might include some original investigative work by the student e.g. interview, survey, emailing, letter writing, and so on. Where sources are used, the use of more than one source will give students scope to cross-reference. This is particularly important where students use internet-based sources, where they should be encouraged to search effectively and ethically, and to evaluate and synthesise material. As the purpose of this assessment is to encourage confidence and proficiency in

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[1] This final suggested topic might involve choosing a question or issue and finding the answer, e.g. *Social media: tips and pitfalls*. Topics might arise from interests of a cross-curricular nature, e.g. from history, CSPE, SPHE, and so on.

oral communication, students should be encouraged to experiment with their oral communication or presentation by practising short pieces on other students where possible or with a recording device.

In preparation for the assessment each student must complete a Student Reflection Note (see Appendix 1). Completion of the note is the student's declaration of the part that he or she has played in the assessment. The note is submitted to the teacher.

Although this phase of the task is monitored by the teacher, the preparation is the student's own work, carried out individually or in active, meaningful collaboration as part of a group.

Communication

As a guideline, Oral Communication by a student should last about three minutes, including time set aside for engagement with the listener/audience. Teacher support for the student's communication, in the form of questions or interventions, may be part of Oral Communication. Where students communicate in groups, the duration of each student's contribution should be such as to allow each group member to make a meaningful contribution, as appropriate to the format chosen. It is not envisaged that a simple formula of three minutes per student be applied to pair or group communication: groups of three do not need to create a 9-minute piece of drama, for example, as group communication requires listening and responding to cues from other group members even when not speaking.

A small sample of the students' oral communications will be recorded once to bring to and discuss at the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings. Teachers should not assume that the results of a group of students being assessed will follow any particular distribution pattern, as the students' work is being judged only against the Features of Quality rather than other students' performances.

Teacher judgements about the quality of student work, with the aim of arriving at a shared understanding of standards and expectations, are supported by annotated examples of student work published on curriculum online; by the features of quality in these guidelines; and by collaboration and discussion with colleagues during Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings.

Oral Communication: advice for students

The preparation for this assessment will be monitored and supported by your teacher. As part of your Oral Communication you must complete a written Student Reflection Note. This will include:

- A title

- An account of the part you played and the materials or sources you accessed during your preparation

- A short personal reflection on your Oral Communication.

You will have freedom to choose the format and topic from the options outlined, bearing in mind the following:

- Even at the start of your preparation remember that this is an oral communication task, so think about how you / your group will communicate with your listener/audience.

- The format and topic should be interesting for you / your group but remember you need to complete your preparation and practice within the time allowed.

- Ask one or more key questions about the format and topic to help you / your group to focus and organise your preparation and communication.

With the agreement of your teacher you may collaborate with classmates in the following ways:

- Choosing a format and topic
- Planning and preparation
- Practising and finalising the communication
- Participating in the communication as part of a group in which each member has a part to play.

You may work on the Classroom-Based Assessment in pairs or groups. However, please note that it will be your individual role and contribution to the work that is the focus of assessment for the JCPA. You must complete *your own* Student Reflection Note.

Deciding on the level of achievement: Oral Communication

When using the Features of Quality to assess the level of student achievement in a Classroom-Based Assessment, teachers use 'on-balance' judgement. The teacher should read the Features of Quality (starting with *Yet to meet expectations*) until they reach a descriptor that best describes the work being assessed. While it should be noted that none of the descriptors imply faultless achievement, evidence of work for the award of Exceptional should closely match the criteria for that level within the Features of Quality. Where it is not clearly evident which quality descriptor should apply, teachers must come to a judgement, based on the evidence from the student's work, to select the descriptor that best matches the student's work overall. This 'best fit' approach allows teachers to select the descriptor that 'on balance' describes the work being assessed.

Features of Quality

Key Features of Quality in support of student and teacher judgement for Oral Communication are described here. The Features of Quality are the criteria that will be used to assess the student work as best fitting one of the following Descriptors:

Exceptional describes a piece of work that reflects the Features of Quality for the Classroom-Based Assessment to a very high standard. While not necessarily perfect, the strengths of the work far outstrip its flaws, which are minor. Suggestions for improvement are easily addressable by the student.

Above expectations describes a piece of work that reflects the Features of Quality for the Classroom-Based Assessment very well. The student shows a clear understanding of how to complete each area of the task. Feedback from the teacher might point to the necessity to address some aspect of the work in need of further attention or polishing, but, on the whole the work is of a high standard.

In line with expectations describes a piece of work that reflects most of the Features of Quality for the Classroom-Based Assessment well. It shows a good understanding of the task in hand and is free from significant error. Feedback might point to areas needing further attention or correction, but the work is generally competent and accurate.

Yet to meet expectations describes a piece of work that falls someway short of the demands of the Classroom-Based Assessment and its associated Features of Quality. Perhaps the student has made a good attempt, but the task has not been grasped clearly or is marred by significant lapses. Feedback will draw attention to fundamental errors that need to be addressed.

Features of Quality for Oral Communication
Exceptional The student's communication is remarkable for its fluency and its control of material used. The communication is imaginatively shaped to a very clear purpose. The student's engagement with the audience/listener is compelling and sustained.
Above expectations The student's communication is clear and convincing, and material has been very well chosen. Communication is fully shaped to its intended purpose. Engagement with the audience/listener is highly effective.
In line with expectations Communication is clear and convincing for the most part, showing knowledge of the subject of the communication. Communication is shaped to a purpose. Engagement with the audience/listener is reasonably well sustained.
Yet to meet expectations Communication is unconvincing although some knowledge of the subject of the communication is shown. The purpose of the communication is often unclear. Engagement with the audience/listener is haphazard or poorly sustained.

These features of quality will be applied to authentic examples of student work. Arising from this process:

- adjustments may be made to the Features of Quality

- amended Features of Quality, where necessary, will be published in the assessment guidelines

- annotated examples of student work will be published on www.curriculumonline.ie

Students complete Oral Communication towards the end of year two and expectations of the standard they achieve will be at a level appropriate to their age and experience at that stage of junior cycle.

Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting

Shared understanding of standards within junior cycle will arise through professional discussion in Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings, where staff bring their own examples of student work and compare their judgements with other colleagues and with annotated examples of student work provided by the NCCA. Over time, this process will help develop a greater understanding of standards and ensure consistency of judgement about student performance.

A small sample of the students' oral communications will be recorded once to bring to and discuss at the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting. Where feasible, a sample of a student at each of the four descriptor levels will be recorded. Teachers' professional judgement underpinned by a good understanding of the Features of Quality, with knowledge of the students' strengths and areas for development, will be important factors in identifying the sample of students to be recorded. Any audio or audio-visual recording device, such as a tablet, mobile phone, laptop or video camera, available in the school can be used. School rather than personal devices should be used. The recording should take place with cognisance of child protection guidelines and in line with the school's acceptable use and GDPR policies.

In preparation for the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting, each teacher will identify one sample of students' work for each descriptor, where feasible, and will have these available for discussion at the meeting. Further details on managing and participating in the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting are included in the Appendix and are available online at https://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting/slar-meetings .

Recording and reporting CBA results

Following the Subject Learning and Assessment Review each individual teacher re-considers the judgement they had made of their student's work, based on the outcomes of the meeting, and where necessary makes the appropriate adjustments to the level of achievement awarded to the work. The descriptors awarded are used in reporting progress and achievement to parents and students as part of the school's ongoing reporting procedures and through the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

Where it arises that a student does not submit any work for their Classroom-Based Assessment, a descriptor cannot be awarded, as there is no work to discuss against the Features of Quality. In such

cases, 'Not reported' should be selected when inputting results for the JCPA. Further information in relation to reporting Classroom-Based Assessment descriptors for the JCPA is available from the DES at the following link: https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/Returns/Post-Primary-Online-Database-P-POD-Project/

Using feedback

Providing effective feedback is a crucial step in using the oral communication classroom-based assessment to support learning. Students will be informed of the Descriptor they have been awarded once the SLAR meeting has taken place and its outcomes have been processed. However, effective feedback goes beyond the naming of the Descriptor awarded. Feedback on the strengths of the student's work, and on areas for improvement can be used to support their future learning. Further information on the use of feedback can be found at https://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting/focus-on-learning

Querying a result

Queries in relation to the Descriptors awarded for the Classroom-Based Assessments, where they arise, will be dealt with by the school.

Classroom-Based Assessment 2: The Collection of the Student's Texts

Creative writing is a vital part of English, but students are not 'born' writers. They need to develop a voice and an identity, a good sense of audience, and an awareness of the process of writing – making notes from their reading and personal experience, trying things out, revising, and polishing for 'publication'. This is best done over time, with supportive feedback and scaffolding from the teacher. This assessment offers students a chance to celebrate their achievements as creators of texts by compiling a collection of their texts in a variety of genres over time and choosing a number of pieces to present for assessment.

Junior Cycle English: Curriculum Specification (2014)

The main learning outcomes to be assessed through **The Collection of the Student's Texts** are:

Oral language 1   **Reading** 2, 6, 8   **Writing** 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 11

OL1 Know and use the conventions of oral language interaction, in a variety of contexts, including class groups, for a range of purposes, such as asking for information, stating an opinion, listening to others, informing, explaining, arguing, persuading, criticising, commentating, narrating, imagining, speculating.	**R2** Read for a variety of purposes: learning, pleasure, research, comparison. **R6** Read their texts for understanding and appreciation of character, setting, story and action: to explore how and why characters develop, and to recognise the importance of setting and plot structure.	**R8** Read their texts to understand and appreciate language enrichment by examining an author's choice of words, the use and effect of simple figurative language, vocabulary and language patterns, and images, as appropriate to the text
W1 Demonstrate their understanding that there is a clear purpose for all writing activities and be able to plan, draft, re-draft, and edit their own writing as appropriate	**W2** Discuss their own and other students' written work constructively and with clear purpose	**W3** Write for a variety of purposes, for example to analyse, evaluate, imagine, explore, engage, amuse, narrate, inform, explain, argue, persuade, criticise, comment on

		what they have heard, viewed and read.
W4 Write competently in a range of text forms, for example letter, report, multi-modal text, review, blog, using appropriate vocabulary, tone and a variety of styles to achieve a chosen purpose for different audiences	**W6** Use editing skills continuously during the writing process to enhance meaning and impact: select vocabulary, reorder words, phrases and clauses, correct punctuation and spelling, reorder paragraphs, remodel, manage content	**W9** Engage in the writing process as a private, pleasurable and purposeful activity and using a personal voice as their individual style is thoughtfully developed over the years
W11 . Use language conventions appropriately, especially punctuation and spelling, to aid meaning and presentation and to enhance the reader's experience		

In the majority of cases, the work in the student's collection will arise from normal classwork. So a student might write a report having studied report writing and then select that piece of work for the collection. If, at a later date, the student considers another piece of work to be of better standard, then that piece can be added to or replace the former. The development of the student's skills and appreciation of writing, as well as attendant skills in oral communication and reading, is the main purpose of the process.

The Collection of the Student's Texts promotes student engagement when students:

- Think about and choose what the text will be about

- Choose the formats in which to create texts, including digital texts

- Can develop texts through engagement with and creative imitation of a wide variety of texts/genres encountered in junior cycle

- Collaborate through the discussion and exploration of genres, topics and texts, along with their responses to them.

Completing the Collection of the Student's Texts

The focus of activity will be on the creation of a range of student texts which might include pieces in the following genres: opinion piece, descriptive piece, a functional writing piece, autobiography, humorous piece, media piece, critique, narrative, an expressive piece (including a poem), drama or film script, and so on.

Note that the list of text types or genres suggested here is not intended to be exhaustive, but to suggest that the student's collection should be a varied one. Furthermore, some overlap between text forms and genres is to be expected e.g. a descriptive poem, a humorous opinion piece etc.

For the purposes of this assessment students will, during Years Two and Three, plan to complete and retain at least four pieces of work (texts). The texts retained should cover at least four genres.

The specification recommends that students build up their varied collection of texts over time with guidance and direction from the teacher. Underlying and informing this task is a focus on the developmental nature of writing and on developing the student's understanding of the writing process. This will be best supported by consistent student practice in the art and craft of writing. To this end, students will include any draft work relating to the piece of writing although this work will not be assigned a Descriptor.

Completion of this Classroom-Based Assessment in Year Three involves each student choosing two texts from their collection to submit for assessment. A Student Reflection Note must be included with each of the texts.

Teachers will retain samples of The Collection of the Student's Texts (both texts) that they will use for discussion at the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings. An example at each of the four Descriptor levels, where feasible, will be needed for this purpose.

Teachers should not assume that the results of a group of students being assessed will follow any particular distribution pattern, as the students' work is being judged only against the Features of Quality rather than other students' performances.

Teacher judgements about the quality of student work, with the aim of arriving at a shared understanding of standards and expectations, are supported by annotated examples of student work published on curriculum online; by the features of quality in these guidelines; and by collaboration and discussion with colleagues during Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings.

The Student Reflection Note

A template for a Student Reflection Note is provided in Appendix 2. The note provides space for the student to set out a very brief aim or intention for the piece of work and spaces to include reflection on what has been learnt from creating the text and what the student might do differently on another occasion.

The note is used in the following ways:

- Students use it as a support for their ongoing practice in the art and craft of writing

- A completed Reflection Note accompanies each text to be included in The Collection of the Student's Texts.

- Previous draft work related to each piece of writing may assist students in completing the student reflection note and undertaking the assessment task.

The Collection of the Student's Texts: advice for students

Work for this assessment will be monitored and supported by your teacher.

In choosing your two texts you must complete a written Student Reflection Note for each text. This will include:

- The title and genre

- A brief note as to why you chose this genre

- A reflection on the piece of work.

You are free to choose any two texts you have worked on over the time period, bearing in mind that you may:

- Choose those texts that you think represent your best work **and/or**

- Consult with your teacher as to which texts represent your best work.

Deciding on the level of achievement: the Collection of the Student's Texts

When using the Features of Quality to assess the level of student achievement in a Classroom-Based Assessment, teachers use 'on-balance' judgement. The teacher should read the Features of Quality (starting with *Yet to meet expectations*) until they reach a descriptor that best describes the work being assessed. While it should be noted that none of the descriptors imply faultless achievement, evidence of work for the award of Exceptional should closely match the criteria for that level within the Features of Quality. Where it is not clearly evident which quality descriptor should apply, teachers must come to a judgement, based on the evidence from the student's work, to select the descriptor that best matches the student's work overall. This 'best fit' approach allows teachers to select the descriptor that 'on balance' describes the work being assessed.

Features of Quality

Key Features of Quality in support of student and teacher judgement for The Collection of the Student's Texts are described here. The Features of Quality are the criteria that will be used to assess the student work as best fitting one of the following Descriptors:

Exceptional describes a piece of work that reflects all of the Features of Quality for the Classroom-Based Assessment to a very high standard. While not necessarily perfect, the strengths of the work far outstrip its flaws, which are minor. Suggestions for improvement are easily addressable by the student.

Above expectations describes a piece of work that reflects the Features of Quality for the Classroom-Based Assessment very well. The student shows a clear understanding of how to complete each area of the task. Feedback from the teacher might point to the necessity to address some aspect of the work in need of further attention or polishing, but, on the whole the work is of a high standard.

In line with expectations describes a piece of work that reflects most of the Features of Quality for the Classroom-Based Assessment well. It shows a good understanding of the task in hand and is free from significant error. Feedback might point to areas needing further attention or correction, but the work is generally competent and accurate.

Yet to meet expectations describes a piece of work that falls someway short of the demands of the Classroom-Based Assessment and its associated Features of Quality. Perhaps the student has made a good attempt, but the task has not been grasped clearly or is marred by significant lapses. Feedback will draw attention to fundamental errors that need to be addressed.

Features of Quality for the Collection of the Student's Texts
Exceptional The student's text shows creativity and command of the chosen genre. The writing is highly competent, marked by original ideas, and imaginative word choices are perfectly suited to the purpose of the text. The work is fully shaped for its intended receiver/audience.
Above expectations The student's text shows very good control of the chosen genre. The writing is consistently competent, and effective word choices are very well matched to the purpose of the text. The work is clearly shaped with the receiver/audience in mind.
In line with expectations The student's text shows good awareness of the chosen genre. The writing is generally competent, and word choices match the purpose of the text well. Content and development of ideas reveal consistent awareness of the receiver/audience.
Yet to meet expectations The student's text shows little awareness of the chosen genre. The writing lacks competence, and word choices may be inappropriate to the intended purpose of the text. Content and development of ideas reveal little awareness of a receiver/audience.

These features of quality will be applied to authentic examples of student work. Arising from this process:

- adjustments may be made to the Features of Quality

- amended Features of Quality, where necessary, will be published in the assessment guidelines

- annotated examples of student work will be published on www.curriculumonline.ie

Reporting on achievement in the Collection of the Student's Texts

The descriptor used in the JCPA to report on student achievement in Classroom-Based Assessment 2, The Collection of the Student's Texts, is the one which best captures the student's achievement as a writer and creator of texts. Where the two texts the student has submitted for assessment are awarded the same descriptor (e.g. both texts *In line with expectations*, both texts *Above expectations*), this descriptor is recorded in the JCPA.

Where the two texts the student has submitted for assessment are awarded different descriptors (e.g. one text In line with expectations, one text Above expectations), it is important to remember that these two texts have been selected from a wider Collection. If the student does not have two texts which represent achievement at one level (e.g. two texts Above expectations), then the descriptor which best captures the student's achievement is the lower descriptor, as the student has not consistently achieved the higher standard across their Collection.

The Assessment Task

Students undertake a written Assessment Task to be submitted to the State Examinations Commission (SEC) for marking as part of the state-certified examination for English. The Assessment Task is based on the principal objective of The Collection of the Student's Texts, which *offers students a chance to celebrate their achievements as creators of texts by compiling a collection of their texts in a variety of genres*. The knowledge and skills developed by students during this Classroom-Based Assessment emerge from their growing awareness of *the process of writing*.

The Assessment Task will comprise of **some or all** of the following:

- Engagement with a short stimulus in written, audio, audio-visual or multi-modal format to prepare for the written task

- A written task that tests the students in one or more of

    - their ability to outline and/or discuss their experience of compiling The Collection of the Student's Texts

    - their understanding and evaluation of that experience

- their capacity to demonstrate and reflect on the skills they have developed.

The Assessment Task relates to the second Classroom-Based Assessment, The Collection of the Student's Texts, which assesses the following learning outcomes

Oral Language	Reading	Writing
OL 1	R 2, 6, 8	W 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 11

These outcomes encourage the student to read, write and listen to a wide variety of texts and registers. It is expected that, at a level appropriate to their age and experience, students will have developed an awareness of key features of a range of texts, such as purpose, register and audience and will have developed some familiarity with the process of drafting and editing.

The Assessment Task for English will be undertaken following the completion of the Classroom-Based Assessment. Schools will have some flexibility in choosing the 2 class periods for completion, with a period of one week being identified during which the Assessment Task must be undertaken by students.

The Assessment Task consists of two stages: firstly, engaging with and discussing a piece of stimulus material to prepare for the written task; and secondly, reflecting upon and writing about their experiences as creators of texts. The Assessment Task is offered at a Common Level and the questions posed will take into account the broad cohort of students taking the assessment.

Including the experience of the stimulus material, the Assessment Task takes a double class period or two single class periods (i.e. a total of 80 minutes) to complete. The first class should be given over to engagement with stimulus material made available by the NCCA, and to student reflection on their collection of texts in preparation for completion of the answer booklet. The completion of the answer booklet will take place in the second lesson. The student response is written into a pro-forma booklet and the school forwards the completed student booklets for the Assessment Task along with the final examination scripts in accordance with arrangements set out by the SEC.

Where a student is absent for the completion of all or part of the Assessment Task, schools should make local arrangements in the school to allow the student to complete the task as close as possible to the timeframe scheduled for completion.

The mark awarded for the Assessment Task will be aggregated by the SEC with the mark awarded for the examination to determine the overall grade for the state-certified final examination in English. The Assessment Task will be allocated 10% of the marks used to determine the overall grade.

Examples of Assessment Tasks and guidelines on how to organise and manage the Assessment Task in the time provided are available at https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Junior-Cycle-Subjects/English-(1)/Assessment-and-reporting/Assessment-Task.

Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting

Shared understanding of standards within junior cycle will arise through professional discussion in Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings, where staff bring their own examples of student work and compare their judgements with other colleagues and with annotated examples of student work provided by the NCCA. Over time, this process will help develop a greater understanding of standards and ensure consistency of judgement about student performance.

Samples of student texts from their Collection will be gathered for discussion at the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings. In preparation for the meeting, each teacher will identify one sample of students' work for each descriptor, where feasible, and will have these available for discussion at the meeting. Further details on managing and participating in the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting are included in the Appendix and are available online at https://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting/slar-meetings .

Students build their collection or portfolio of texts over time. The key date to establish at the outset is the date to be set aside for the Subject Learning and Assessment Review. In setting the date the school should be guided the timeline provided in these guidelines and by its own local circumstances bearing in mind that the assessment of students' texts must be completed by end of year three. Once the school has decided on this date the teachers and students can plan for the completion of the Classroom-Based Assessment.

Recording and reporting CBA results

Following the Subject Learning and Assessment Review each individual teacher re-considers the judgement they had made of their student's work, based on the outcomes of the meeting, and where necessary makes the appropriate adjustments to the level of achievement awarded to the work. The descriptors awarded are used in reporting progress and achievement to parents and students as part of the school's ongoing reporting procedures and through the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

Where it arises that a student does not submit any work for their Classroom-Based Assessment, a descriptor cannot be awarded, as there is no work to discuss against the Features of Quality. In such

cases, 'Not reported' should be selected when inputting results for the JCPA. Further information in relation to reporting Classroom-Based Assessment descriptors for the JCPA is available from the DES at the following link: https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/Returns/Post-Primary-Online-Database-P-POD-Project/

Using feedback

Providing effective feedback is a crucial step in using the Collection of the Student's Texts to support learning. Students will be informed of the Descriptor they have been awarded once the SLAR meeting has taken place and its outcomes have been processed. However, effective feedback goes beyond the naming of the Descriptor awarded. Feedback on the strengths of the student's work, and on areas for improvement can be used to support their future learning. Further information on the use of feedback can be found at https://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting/focus-on-learning

Appealing or querying a result

Student appeals regarding the state-certified examination grade, inclusive of the Assessment Task, will be processed as per the current appeal arrangements. Queries in relation to all other aspects of the JCPA, where they arise, will be dealt with by the school.

Appendix A Oral Communication: Template for Student Reflection

Note

SCHOOL	STUDENT	
TITLE		
The part I played in communication and preparation, including material used/accessed		
Personal reflection on the Oral Communication		
One important thing I learned from doing the task:	Things I would change or try to improve on:	
Student	Teacher	Date

Appendix B The Collection of the Student's Texts: Template for

Student Reflection Note

SCHOOL	STUDENT	
TITLE and GENRE		
I chose this genre because…		
My assessment of my work…		
What I learned from creating this text:	What I would do differently next time:	
Student	Teacher	Date

Appendix C   Subject Learning and Assessment Review Meeting:

Facilitator's Report

Subject:	Date/time:
Attendance	
Key decisions taken	
Points of note for future review meetings	
Any further comment?	

Facilitator

Date

Appendix D: Support for teacher judgement: Subject Learning and Assessment Review

Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings enable teachers to collaboratively reach consistency in their judgments of student work against common, externally-set Features of Quality. Greater understanding of standards and expectations will develop over time as teachers come together in professional discussion to reflect on the quality of their own students' work, informed by the subject specification, assessment guidelines and other support material including annotated examples of students' work provided by the NCCA.

Overview

The review process is centred on teachers discussing student work at structured meetings. It will play an important role in helping teachers to develop an understanding of standards and expectations by enabling them to reflect on the evidence of students' work and to share the learning and teaching strategies supporting that work.

The objectives of the review process are to achieve

- greater consistency of teachers' judgement

- better feedback to students

- greater alignment of judgements with expected standards

and to assure parents and others that students are receiving appropriate recognition of their achievements in line with standards and expectations.

The time for review meetings will be provided for in the school calendar from the allocated 22 hours of professional time for each full-time teacher each year. One teacher of each subject will be allocated two additional hours by school management to prepare for and coordinate each review meeting. This role will normally be rotated among the relevant teachers.

Each meeting will

- be subject-specific

- be approximately two hours long

- take place at a time as near as possible to the completion of the Classroom-Based Assessment

- involve the review of student work related to a specific Classroom-Based Assessment.

Where there is a single teacher of a subject in a school, the teacher can be facilitated to participate in a Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting in another school. In the case of an Irish-medium school, the single teacher of a subject can participate in a Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting in another Irish-medium school.

Facilitator's guide

Teachers will fulfil the role of facilitator during Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings on a rotational basis. The facilitator will model effective questioning during the discussion of the samples of student work focusing on how well students' work matches the Features of Quality. During review meetings, where it is not clearly evident which descriptor should apply, the group should look for the evidence in the student's work that matches all or nearly all of the Features of Quality associated with a particular descriptor. This 'best fit' approach allows teachers at the review meeting to select the descriptor that 'on-balance' best matches the work being assessed. The facilitator will submit a short report (see Appendix D) of the review meeting to the school principal.

Teachers should not assume that the results of a group of students being assessed will follow any particular distribution plan as the student's work is being judged only against the Features of Quality rather than other students' performance.

Before the meeting

As a first step, teachers may find it helpful to review some of the relevant NCCA-annotated examples prior to coming to decisions about their own students' work.

Once students have completed their Classroom-Based Assessment, the teacher will carry out a provisional assessment of the students' work based on the Features of Quality. These provisional assessments may be modified in light of the discussions that take place at the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting.

The teacher will make a note of the descriptor allocated to each student and any other point they may wish or find useful to refer to during and after the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting. This note will be for the teacher's own use.

In preparation for the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting, each teacher will identify one sample of student's work for each descriptor, where feasible, and will have these available for discussion at the meeting.

During the meeting

The facilitator leads the meeting and keeps the record of the decisions made in a template, which is used to generate the report of the meeting (see Appendix D). It is recommended that the meeting should generally follow this sequence:

- The facilitator explains that the purpose of the meeting is to support consistency of judgement about students' work and to develop a common understanding about the quality of student learning. The value of the meeting in providing feedback to students on how they might improve their work should also be highlighted.

- The facilitator asks one member of staff to introduce a sample of work they have assessed as Yet to reach expectations.

- Following a short introduction by the teacher, the facilitator leads a general discussion on the extent to which the student's work matches the relevant Features of Quality. If the meeting affirms the judgement, this is noted in the meeting record by the facilitator.

- Where there is a lack of agreement, the facilitator should refer to relevant annotated examples of student work provided by the NCCA and, if appropriate, a couple of examples of student work that other teachers in the group have assessed and awarded that descriptor to.

- The facilitator should look to establish consensus during the discussion of examples but the emphasis should be on developing teachers' professional knowledge and skills rather than on seeking unanimous agreement over every Feature of Quality in every example.

- The emphasis in affirming judgements during the review meetings should always be on a 'best fit' approach which allows teachers to agree the descriptor that 'on-balance' is most appropriate for the work being assessed.

- While reasonable time should be allowed for discussion, the facilitator should use his/her professional judgement to decide when it would be appropriate to proceed to the next sample.

- If possible, there should be discussion of at least two samples for each descriptor and the facilitator should ensure that each teacher has at least one of their samples discussed during the meeting.

- The process is repeated, in turn, with samples assessed as In line with expectations, Above expectations and Exceptional being discussed and shared in the group. At the end of the meeting, the facilitator briefly summarises the key points from the discussion.

- It is important that each teacher notes the implications of the decisions made during the meeting for the rest of the student work they have already assessed, particularly in the case of descriptors where their judgement did not align with the view of the majority of teachers at the meeting.

After the meeting

After the meeting, each teacher considers the assessment of their students' work based on the outcomes of the meeting and, where it is considered necessary, makes the appropriate adjustments to their provisional assessments. Following the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting, the facilitator submits their report from the meeting focusing on the outcomes of the discussion of student work at the meeting and submits it to the school principal.

The facilitator may also ask teachers, should they wish, to contribute some student work to a bank of examples

- to support the induction of new teachers

- to support future Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings

- to use with students and parents in demonstrating the standard of work achieved.

Appendix E: Oral Communication note-taking templates (see below)

Features of Quality for Oral Communication	ORAL COMMUNICATION NOTE-TAKING TEMPLATE 1
Exceptional The student's communication is remarkable for its fluency and its control of material used. The communication is imaginatively shaped to a very clear purpose. The student's engagement with the audience/listener is compelling and sustained.	**Communication and subject knowledge/materials used** remarkable fluency and control of material used clear and convincing and material very well chosen clear & convincing for the most part and shows knowledge of subject unconvincing although some knowledge shown
Above expectations The student's communication is clear and convincing, and material has been very well chosen. Communication is fully shaped to its intended purpose. Engagement with the audience/listener is highly effective.	**Purpose – shaping of communication** imaginatively shaped to a very clear purpose fully shaped to intended purpose shaped to a purpose purpose often unclear
In line with expectations Communication is clear and convincing for the most part, showing knowledge of the subject of the communication. Communication is shaped to a purpose. Engagement with the audience/listener is reasonably well sustained.	
Yet to meet expectations Communication is unconvincing although some knowledge of the subject of the communication is shown. The purpose of the communication is often unclear. Engagement with the audience/listener is haphazard or poorly sustained.	**Engagement with audience/listener** compelling and sustained highly effective reasonably well sustained haphazard or poorly sustained
LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT - best fit, on balance judgement:	

Features of quality for Oral Communication	ORAL COMMUNICATION NOTE-TAKING TEMPLATE 2
Exceptional The student's communication is remarkable for its fluency and its control of material used. The communication is imaginatively shaped to a very clear purpose. The student's engagement with the audience/listener is compelling and sustained.	**Communication and subject knowledge**
Above expectations The student's communication is clear and convincing, and material has been very well chosen. Communication is fully shaped to its intended purpose. Engagement with the audience/listener is highly effective.	**Purpose – shaping of communication**
In line with expectations Communication is clear and convincing for the most part, showing knowledge of the subject of the communication. Communication is shaped to a purpose. Engagement with the audience/listener is reasonably well sustained.	**Engagement with audience/listener**
Yet to meet expectations Communication is unconvincing although some knowledge of the subject of the communication is shown. The purpose of the communication is often unclear. Engagement with the audience/listener is haphazard or poorly sustained.	

LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT - best fit, on balance judgement: