

**The Requirements of Basic Academic Attainments
for Junior Secondary English
(*First Language)**

***English being used as the primary language of instruction**

2017

1. Basic rationale

Macao is unique for her cultural diversity and is becoming increasingly globalized. English serves as a bridge for effective communication with the world. It has a dominant role in many sectors like business, education, tourism, etc. It is essential to nurture new generations of students with adequate mastery of the English language so that they can meet the challenges of advancing Macao's social and economic development further.

On top of the functional purposes, English also serves as a medium for personal development, both intellectual and aesthetic, as a large proportion of the world's sources of information and language arts is in English. It is a tool that facilitates life-long learning, critical and creative thinking, and harmonious coexistence with others.

Junior secondary English curriculum with English as the primary language of instruction has the additional mission of helping students develop adequate English communication skills that will enhance their learning effectiveness in studying subjects in the content areas through the medium of English. More importantly, the English curriculum will help students increase their motivation to learn English, and cultivate their self-confidence to communicate in English.

On these grounds, the Requirements of Basic Academic Attainments for Junior Secondary English should comply with the following fundamental principles:

- (1) The Junior Secondary English Curriculum further strengthen and develop the following four basic rationales:
 - English as the primary language of instruction develops students' English for the purpose of enhancing students' personal and intellectual development, cultural understanding, and global competitiveness.
 - The curriculum should be student-centred, valuing each student as a unique learner. A rich environment of learning materials and teaching techniques will

help to diversify the classroom and promote motivation for life-long learning.

- Students should extend their basic competence of language skills that they have acquired by further developing their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. They will also grow as individuals as they develop knowledge and values through the learning of English.
- English as the primary language of instruction should be taught using a variety of teaching methods which value higher level thinking skills and multiple kinds of intelligence. Variety in teaching strategies is necessary to cater to learner diversity.

(2) Ensuring sufficient cognitive challenge

When students enter junior secondary school, they begin a rapid stage of physical, cognitive and psychological development. Junior secondary students, who are adolescents and early teens beginning to form their personal identity and becoming more curious about the world, will need a language learning experience that satisfies their cognitive and emotional needs. The junior secondary English curriculum should ensure that on top of the linguistic objectives (such as grammar and vocabulary), the subject-matter content of the learning resources as well as the learning experiences, should be sufficiently cognitively challenging to junior secondary students.

(3) Attending to the humanistic values of language learning

English should not, and need not, be taught solely for functional purposes. In fact, like any language, English can serve to impart humanistic values. When students begin junior secondary school, they have already built a foundation in the English language. Considering students have a more developed knowledge and mastery of the English language, junior secondary English curriculum should support them to acquire moral and civic values, so that they will become responsible and caring members of society.

(4) Providing students with learner training

Junior secondary students have better meta-cognitive skills, which lead to more reflective learning. Therefore, while students should continue to receive quality teaching input from teachers, they should also be provided with training from the beginning of junior secondary school that will help them become more independent and effective language learners. Examples of such training may cover metalinguistic awareness, language learning strategies, and self-assessment.

(5) Addressing the skills for studying through the medium of English

At junior secondary schools using English as the primary language of instruction, the English Language curriculum should take on the additional responsibility of equipping students with the language skills that will help them study subjects in the content areas more effectively.

II. Curriculum goals

- (1) Extend the knowledge, skills, and attitudes in English Language learning ;
- (2) Extend students' vocabulary knowledge for both receptive and productive language use;
- (3) Extend students' grammatical knowledge and their grammatical competence for more accurate comprehension and expression in language use;
- (4) Strengthen students' ability to understand varieties of spoken and written texts with richer content;
- (5) Enable students to describe factual events with richer details and better organisation in speaking and writing;
- (6) Enable students to describe personal experiences, express personal opinions, and report on simple projects coherently;
- (7) Develop students' ability to take part in conversations and debates;
- (8) Introduce students to literary texts to nurture their language appreciation skills;
- (9) Help students to engage personally with a variety of texts and draw connections between self, texts and the world in order to develop intellectual, emotional, socio-cultural and global awareness;
- (10) Enable students to articulate their personal and analytical response to informational and literary texts;
- (11) Cultivate students' ability to edit and revise their spoken and written productions for better communicative effect;
- (12) Nurture students' propensity in evaluating their own language learning progress;
- (13) Enable students to use a range of language references, both print and online, for solving language problems;
- (14) Sensitise students to cultural differences in different contexts of language use;
- (15) Equip students with the language skills that will help them study more effectively through the medium of English.

III. The requirements of basic academic attainments in different domains

Explanation of coding:

- (1) The capital English letters represent the requirements of basic academic attainment in different learning domains; A - Listening, B - Speaking, C - Reading, D – Writing;
- (2) The number following the English letter signifies the serial number of learning

categories in the learning domains.

Learning domain A: Listening

- A-1 Recognise key words in connected speech;
- A-2 Deduce the meaning of unknown words while listening;
- A-3 Follow spoken instructions;
- A-4 Identify the purpose of a spoken text;
- A-5 Understand various types of descriptions;
- A-6 Recognise the level of formality of spoken discourse;
- A-7 Recognise the connections between ideas in a simple spoken text from cohesive devices including pronoun reference and connectors;
- A-8 Distinguish between main points, specific details and examples in a spoken text;
- A-9 Predict the development of a spoken text and check predictions when listening;
- A-10 Follow the sequence of events in a spoken recount;
- A-11 Follow an oral explanation of how something happens, with visual support where suitable;
- A-12 Recognise the structure of more proceduralised oral exchanges;
- A-13 Make connections between spoken discourse and other sources of information such as diagrams and maps;
- A-14 Process spoken discourse on familiar topics at a pace adequate for sustaining a dialogue;
- A-15 Identify new or important information from stress and intonation;
- A-16 Recognise the use of intonation for topic management and turn-taking;
- A-17 Understand degrees of certainty and of obligation in spoken discourse;
- A-18 Understand feelings, attitudes and opinions of speakers or interlocutors from their stress and intonation, and tone of voice;
- A-19 Follow the reasoning of a simple oral argument or exposition;
- A-20 Request clarification during or after listening;
- A-21 Take down notes on the main points of a talk;
- A-22 Use information gained from spoken discourse for new purposes.

Learning domain B: Speaking

- B-1 Pronounce a new word from its spelling with reasonable accuracy;
- B-2 Use discourse markers to signal the organisation of spoken discourse;
- B-3 Establish cohesion through lexical and grammatical choices;
- B-4 Rephrase own utterances in light of an interlocutor's response;
- B-5 Recount the sequence of events of a personal experience;

Reference Only

- B-6 Give instructions for carrying out a task;
- B-7 Explain how or why a simple process occurs;
- B-8 Start and close a spoken interaction appropriately;
- B-9 Adjust the formality of speaking according to the context or relationship with the interlocutor;
- B-10 Indicate agreement and disagreement, directly and indirectly as appropriate;
- B-11 Use strategies to cope with the pressures of unplanned, spontaneous spoken discourse;
- B-12 Summarise or rephrase own or interlocutor's stretch of discourse;
- B-13 Give reasons to support a point of view;
- B-14 Respond appropriately to unplanned dialogues on familiar and school-related topics;
- B-15 Ask for clarification from the interlocutor, and give clarification when asked;
- B-16 Use stress and intonation patterns to highlight important or new information;
- B-17 Use appropriate intonation to express attitudinal meaning;
- B-18 Manage turn-taking and changes of topic with intonation and discourse markers;
- B-19 Show interest in what is said by an interlocutor, and tolerance and respect for opposing views.

Learning domain C: Reading

- C-1 Recognise previously learned vocabulary and accumulate vocabulary through various reading strategies;
- C-2 Work out the meaning of unfamiliar words from clues in the word or the text, and background knowledge;
- C-3 Understand meanings of words on different levels, including denotative and connotative levels, and words with more technical meanings;
- C-4 Set a purpose for reading and meet it by selecting appropriate reading strategies;
- C-5 Make predictions about the content of a text using prior knowledge, contextual clues, and features of text;
- C-6 Apply a variety of comprehension skills to understand a new text;
- C-7 Understand connections between ideas by identifying a larger range of cohesive devices such as pronoun and article reference and connectors;
- C-8 Make inferences and draw conclusions based on information supplied;
- C-9 Ask and answer questions while reading, and re-read to help determine or clarify the main ideas and key details of a text;
- C-10 Recognise a variety of basic text types and identify their purpose, structure and associated language features;

Reference Only

- C-11 Construct meaning and locate information from complex texts;
- C-12 Identify texts as more formal or less formal;
- C-13 Recognise all punctuation marks and demonstrate understanding by reading aloud sentences with the right pausing and intonation;
- C-14 Make effective and judicious use of the dictionary and language references to assist reading and understanding new words in texts;
- C-15 Take notes on the main points of a written text;
- C-16 Apply information gained from reading to new purposes and formats;
- C-17 Distinguish between presentations of an event in different genres;
- C-18 Interact with others around a text before, during and after reading;
- C-19 Gather information independently from multiple print and digital sources;
- C-20 Recognise writers' expression of greater or lesser certainty;
- C-21 Recognise writers' points of view, attitudes, intended meaning, and feelings;
- C-22 Demonstrate interest in reading for pleasure.

Learning domain D: Writing

- D-1 Use a range of vocabulary for everyday topics, along with some more school-related vocabulary;
- D-2 Demonstrate full control of basic conventions of English writing, such as spelling and punctuation;
- D-3 Use varying combinations of clauses;
- D-4 Use a wider range of grammar structures with reasonable accuracy;
- D-5 Use language to express degrees of certainty and of obligation in writing;
- D-6 Express attitudes, feelings and opinions in ways appropriate to the context;
- D-7 Write texts with structures and language features appropriate to their purpose;
- D-8 Use a simple range of resources, including paragraphs, connecting phrases, and word order, to organise text;
- D-9 Establish cohesion through lexical and grammatical choices;
- D-10 Write with a clear understanding of the purpose and audience awareness;
- D-11 Gather and organise ideas before writing by researching (from the Internet or other resources) and using pre-writing strategies such as mind-mapping;
- D-12 Write more formally or less formally according to the context;
- D-13 Write dialogues that simulate real-life conversations;
- D-14 Write personal and factual recounts to retell past events;
- D-15 Use appropriate formats for texts, such as for formal and informal letters;
- D-16 Write short stories that arouse the reader's interest;
- D-17 Write simple texts to explain a sequential process or phenomenon;

Reference Only

D-18 Write procedural texts to give instructions;

D-19 Write simple argumentative texts to present a point of view;

D-20 Proofread final drafts and correct mistakes in grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics;

D-21 Improve own and peers' drafts by enriching content, and improving textual organisation and wording;

D-22 Acknowledge sources of information in writing by giving references.