

1. INTRODUCTION

This document, which is based on the *General Assessment Document* issued by the Ministry of Education, provides information and guidance for teachers on the assessment of students studying English in **Grades 1 to 4** of Basic Education.

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

2. ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES

- The updated assessment arrangements are based on the following principles: All assessments are to be based upon the **learning outcomes** which students are expected to achieve.
- These learning outcomes are organized into **elements**: i.e. Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing. These elements provide the framework, not only for Assessment but also for record- keeping and reporting.
- Teachers are to carry out continuous assessment of all students using a variety of assessment techniques. (Note: Testing is not introduced as a formal component of assessment until Grade 5.)
- In Grades 1 to 4, student achievement is to be reported as a letter-grade. The following table shows the breakdown of percentage marks and corresponding letter-grades.

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

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

3. LEARNING OUTCOMES

In Grades 1 to 4, the learning outcomes of the English language course are, for the purposes of assessment, grouped into **four elements**:

Listening *Speaking* *Reading* *Writing*

In order to ensure proper coverage of all of its important features, each element is further divided into **sub-elements**, as follows:

Element	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
LST	– Sentences – Texts	– Sentences – Short texts	– Short texts – Long texts	– Short texts – Long texts
SPK	– One-way – Two-way	– One-way – Two-way	– One-way – Two-way	– One-way – Two-way
RDG	– Words – Sentences	– Words/ Sentences	– Sentences – Texts	– Sentences – Texts
WRT	– Letters/ Words – Sentences	– Words / Sentences	– Words + Phrases – Sentences	– Words + Phrases – Sentences/ Short texts

Note: When sub-elements consist of two items divided by a slash (e.g. 'Words / Sentences'), this indicates that as the year progresses, the focus of both teaching and assessment gradually shifts from the first to the second item.

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

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

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

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

4. CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

Continuous Assessment (CA) provides a way of collecting information about student learning throughout the school year, primarily by **regular observation and assessment of students' performance in normal classroom conditions**. Continuous Assessment has several strengths in terms of validity, fairness and student motivation. It also allows for the convenient assessment of Speaking.

General guidelines for conducting Continuous Assessment can be found in [Appendix Two](#). These guidelines emphasise the need for teachers to:

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

[Appendix Two](#) also describes a number of important approaches to CA, including:

- Quizzes – Portfolios – Project work – Groupwork
- Self-Assessment – Giving feedback to students

5. RECORDING and REPORTING

5.1 Weightings

The weightings for the various elements in the different grades are as follows:

Element	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
Listening	30%	30%	30%	25%
Speaking	30%	30%	30%	25%
Reading	20%	20%	20%	25%
Writing	20%	20%	20%	25%

5.2 Awarding Marks:

Detailed guidelines for the awarding of marks are provided in [Appendix Three](#), in the form of **Rating Scales** for each of the sub-elements.

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

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

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

5.3 Formal Record-keeping

Blank forms for the recording of student marks and grades are provided in Appendix Four.

For each grade-level, there is one recording sheet to be completed by the teacher. This sheet is known as the **Assessment Summary Sheet**. Each Assessment Summary Sheet has five vertical sections, one for each of the four elements: ‘*Listening*’, ‘*Speaking*’, ‘*Reading*’ and ‘*Writing*’, and one for the subject as a whole: ‘*Overall*’.

Each of these five sections has a column for the student’s total number-score (‘**NS**’) in the element concerned and a column for the equivalent letter-grade (‘**LG**’). Also included is a column for each sub-element, along with the maximum number of marks for that sub-element, e.g. ‘(20)’.

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

At this stage, a typical (Grade 3) record-sheet would look as follows:

LISTENING				SPEAKING				READING				WRITING				OVERALL	
S- Texts (15)	L- Texts (15)	NS (30)	LG	1- way (15)	2- way (15)	NS (30)	LG	Sntcs (10)	Texts (10)	NS (20)	LG	Wds/ Phrs (10)	Sntcs (10)	NS (20)	LG	NS (100)	LG
4	3			4	5			3	3			3	3				

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

At the end of the year, the teacher makes the final decision as to the mark for each sub-element and enters this mark in the appropriate column **in ink**. Each mark will be based on the relevant five-point Rating Scale in Appendix Three. However, depending on the weighting assigned to the sub-element, the mark will need to be converted as follows:

Original Mark	Final Score		
	Max. 10	Max. 15	Max. 20
5	10	15	20
4	8	12	16
3	6	9	12
2	4	6	8
1	2	3	4

Note: At this point, the teacher *may* wish to award, where appropriate, ‘in-between’ scores such as ‘9’ (out of Max. 10), ‘13’ (out of Max. 15), ‘17’ (out of Max. 20), etc. Examples of this are given below, see (SPK) ‘2-way’ and (RDG) ‘Sntcs’.

A typical record-sheet will now look as follows:

LISTENING				SPEAKING				READING				WRITING				OVERALL	
Short Texts (15)	Long Texts (15)	NS (30)	LG	1- way (15)	2- way (15)	NS (30)	LG	Sntcs (10)	Texts (10)	NS (20)	LG	Wds/ Phrs (10)	Sntcs (10)	NS (20)	LG	NS (100)	LG
12	9			12	14			7	6			6	6				

In order to arrive at the student's total mark for the element (Listening, Speaking, etc.), the teacher then adds together the two sub-element scores and enters this total in the relevant 'NS' column.

In order to determine the student's letter-grade for the element, the teacher refers to the relevant column of the 'Number Score >> << Letter Grade Conversion Chart', which can be found at the end of Appendix Four. The resulting grade is then entered in the 'LG' column.

The record sheet will now look as follows:

LISTENING				SPEAKING				READING				WRITING				OVERALL	
S- Texts (15)	L- Texts (15)	NS (30)	LG	1- way (15)	2- way (15)	NS (30)	LG	Sntcs (10)	Texts (10)	NS (20)	LG	Wds/ Phrs (10)	Sntcs (10)	NS (20)	LG	NS (100)	LG
12	9	21	C	12	14	26	B	7	6	13	C	6	6	12	D		

Finally, the teacher must determine the student's **overall mark and grade for English**. The first step is to add together the 'NS' scores for the four elements, and enter the resulting percentage mark in the Overall 'NS' column. Then, in order to determine the overall letter-grade, the teacher again refers to the 'Number Scores >> << Letter Grades Conversion Chart', this time using the 'Max. 100' column. The resulting grade should be entered in the Overall 'LG' column.

The completed Assessment Summary Sheet for the year now looks as follows:

LISTENING				SPEAKING				READING				WRITING				OVERALL	
S- Texts (15)	L- Texts (15)	NS (30)	LG	1- way (15)	2- way (15)	NS (30)	LG	Sntcs (10)	Texts (10)	NS (20)	LG	Wds/ Phrs (10)	Sntcs (10)	NS (20)	LG	NS (100)	LG
12	9	21	C	12	14	26	B	7	6	13	C	6	6	12	D	72	C

5.4 Reporting

During the school year, parents receive a **descriptive report** regarding their son's or daughter's progress. This report is issued in February. The comment(s) made in this report should be as specific and informative as possible in the space provided. Writing 'Very good' or 'Needs further support' is not sufficient. The teacher should try to capture the student's main strengths and/or weaknesses, in terms of the learning outcomes and of their behaviour, attitudes and learning strategies. A very wide variety of different comments are possible, but typical statements might, for example, be:

- "Was at first very shy in Speaking, but is now gaining confidence."
- "Shows good understanding, but is having difficulty with forming the letters of the alphabet."
- "Needs to cooperate more with other students, especially in groupwork activities."
- "Is already able to write her own sentences, but should be more careful with punctuation."

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