

## 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 5 to 10** (Basic and General 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, Grammar/Vocabulary. 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.
- In Grades 5 to 10, 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 5 to 10, the learning outcomes of the English language course are, for the purposes of assessment, grouped into **five elements**:

*Listening*                      *Speaking*                      *Reading*                      *Writing*                      *Grammar/ Vocabulary*

In order to ensure proper coverage of all of its important features, each element (except for *Grammar/ Vocabulary*) is further divided into **sub-elements**, as follows:

ELEMENT	Grades 5 + 6	Grades 7 + 8	Grades 9 + 10
<b>Listening</b>	– Everyday language + Texts	– Everyday language + Texts	– Everyday language + Texts
<b>Speaking</b>	– One-way – Two-way	– One-way – Two-way	– Presentations – Interaction
<b>Reading</b>	– Class-based – Independent	– Class-based – Independent	– Class-based – Independent
<b>Writing</b>	– Sentences – Short texts	– Interactive – Informative – Narrative – Evaluative	– Interactive – Informative – Narrative – Evaluative

A detailed description of these elements and sub-elements can be found in [Appendix One](#). This appendix lists 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. ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES

The learning outcomes mentioned in [Appendix One](#) are best assessed using a **variety** of different assessment techniques, which can be grouped under two labels: 'Continuous Assessment' and 'Formal Testing'.

##### 4.1 Continuous Assessment

Continuous Assessment (CA) provides a way of collecting information about student learning throughout the school year, primarily by **regular observation and evaluation of students' performance in normal classroom conditions**.

In Grades 5 to 9, Continuous Assessment of this kind accounts for **70%** of a student's overall mark. In Grade 10, Continuous Assessment of this kind accounts for **40%** of a student's overall mark.

Continuous Assessment has several strengths in terms of validity, fairness and student motivation. It also allows for the convenient assessment of Speaking.

General guidelines on the conducting of 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:

- Informal Class Tests                      – Portfolios                      – Project work                      – Presentations
- Generic Tasks                      – Groupwork                      – Self-Assessment                      – Giving feedback to students

**Informal Class Tests** (ICTs) play an important part in Continuous Assessment at all these levels **except Grade 10**. During the year, there will be a total of six ICTs. Each test accounts for 5% of a student's overall mark, so the total mark for ICTs is **30%**. For further information and guidance on the preparation and administration of Informal Class Tests, see [Appendix Two](#), Section C (vii).

## 4.2 Formal Testing

At the end of the year, a longer, more formal test will be administered, accounting for **30%** of a student's overall mark for English in Grades 5-9, and for **60%** in Grade 10.

This **End-of-Year Test/ Exam** will focus, in turn, on *Listening, Vocabulary, Grammar, Reading and Writing*. (Note: For reasons of time and practicality, there is no formal testing of Speaking, which will be assessed by Continuous Assessment only.)

The End-of-Year Test/ Exam will conform to the Specifications given in Appendix Three. The same Specifications are used for both Basic and General Education. However, the actual *content* of the exam papers should be different, so as to take into account the level of the students and particular topics and language points studied under the two different systems.

- The End-of-Year Tests in Grades 5 to 9 will be prepared, administered and marked **locally** by schools.
- The End-of-Year Exam in Grade 10 will be prepared **centrally**, and administered and marked in the regions.

## 5. RECORDING and REPORTING

### 5.1 Weightings

In **Grades 5 to 9**, the overall weightings for the five elements remain the same in all five grades. The allocation of marks for the elements and the different assessment techniques is as follows:

Element	Continuous Assessment		End-of-Year Test	COMBINED
	Informal Class Tests	Other Tools & Techniques		
<b>LST</b>	5%	5%	10%	20%
<b>SPK</b>	—	15%	—	15%
<b>RDG</b>	5%	10%	5%	20%
<b>WRT</b>	10%	10%	5%	25%
<b>GRM/VCB</b>	10%	—	10%	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>100%</b>

In **Grade 10**, the allocation of marks for the elements and the different assessment techniques is as follows:

Element	Continuous Assessment	End-of-Year Exam	COMBINED
<b>LST</b>	5%	15%	20%
<b>SPK</b>	15%	—	15%
<b>RDG</b>	10%	15%	25%
<b>WRT</b>	10%	15%	25%
<b>GRM/VCB</b>	—	15%	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 5.2 Awarding Marks

Detailed guidelines for the awarding of marks are provided in Appendix Four, 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 overall 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 Continuous Assessment 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 Record-keeping

Blank forms for the formal recording of student marks and grades are provided in Appendix Five. For each grade-level, there are two recording sheets to be completed: the 'Continuous Assessment Recording Chart' and the 'Assessment Summary Sheet'. (Note: Teachers should also keep *Informal Records* with additional, more detailed information about each of their students. Guidelines on how to do this are provided in Appendix Two, Section D.)

The **Continuous Assessment Recording Chart** (or 'CAR-Chart') has four main vertical sections, one for each of the elements covered by Continuous Assessment: '*Listening*', '*Speaking*', '*Reading*' and '*Writing*', as well as a column for the student's total Continuous Assessment score. Also included is a column for each sub-element, along with the maximum number of marks for that sub-element. This maximum score is always '5', except in the case of '2-way Speaking/ Interaction', where it is '10'.

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

At this stage, a typical (Grade 7) record-sheet will look as follows:

LST	SPEAKING			READING			WRITING						TOTAL
NS (5)	1-way (5)	2-way (10)	NS (15)	CB (5)	IND (5)	NS (10)	INTR (5)	INFM (5)	NRTV (5)	EVLTV (5)	Total (20)	NS (10)	NS (40)
4	4	3		4	5		4	3	3	2			

NOTE: The teacher may also, as 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 it in the appropriate column **in ink**.

NOTE: In the special case of '2-way Speaking' (or, in Grades 9 and 10, 'Interaction') the mark will need to be *doubled*. At this point, the teacher *may* wish to award, where appropriate, 'in-between' scores such as '3', '5', '7' or '9': see example below.)

A typical record-sheet will now look as follows:

LST	SPEAKING			READING			WRITING						TOTAL
NS (5)	1-way (5)	2-way (10)	NS (15)	CB (5)	IND (5)	NS (10)	INTR (5)	INFM (5)	NRTV (5)	EVLT (5)	Total (20)	NS (10)	NS (40)
4	4	7		4	5		4	3	3	2			

The teacher then calculates the 'NS' (number score) for each element. The procedure for doing this varies according to the element. For *Listening*, the 'NS' mark is already there. For *Speaking* and *Reading*, the teacher adds together the two sub-element scores and enters this total in the relevant 'NS' column. In the case of *Writing*, the teacher adds together the four sub-element scores, enters the result under '**Total (20)**', and divides this score by two using the following table:

Total (20)	1- 2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	13-14	15-16	17-18	19-20
NS (10)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

The final step in completing the 'CAR-Chart' is to determine the student's total Continuous Assessment mark for the year. This is done by adding together the 'NS' scores for the four elements, and then entering the resulting total in the right-hand column ('**Total /NS**') on the chart.

The completed CAR-Chart now looks as follows:

LST	SPEAKING			READING			WRITING						TOTAL
NS (5)	1-way (5)	2-way (10)	NS (15)	CB (5)	IND (5)	NS (10)	INTR (5)	INFM (5)	NRTV (5)	EVLT (5)	Total (20)	NS (10)	NS (40)
4	4	7	11	4	5	9	4	3	3	2	12	6	30

We now come to the **Assessment Summary Sheet**, which, in **Grades 5 to 9**, is divided into three sections: '*Continuous Assessment*' (CA), '*Informal Class Tests*' (ICTs) and '*End-of-Year Tests*' (EYTs).

During the year, the teacher fills in the relevant ICT scores **in ink** after each of the six tests has been administered and marked. He/She also indicates which two elements were tested in each ICT. [ For further details, see Appendix Two, Section D (i) ].

At the end of the year, the teacher arrives at the student's overall mark and grade for English through the following steps:

- 1) Transfer the Continuous Assessment total from the CAR-Chart to '**CA/ NS (40)**';
- 2) Add together the six ICT scores and enter the result under '**Total (60)**'.
- 3) Divide this total by two using the following table, and enter the result under '**ICT/ NS (30)**'.

Total (60)	1- 2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	13-14	15-16	17-18	19-20
NS (30)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Total (60)	21- 22	23-24	25-26	27-28	29-30	31-32	33-34	35-36	37-38	39-40
NS (30)	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Total (60)	41- 42	43-44	45-46	47-28	49-50	51-52	53-54	55-56	57-58	59-60
NS (30)	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30

- 4) Enter the total score for the End-of-Year Test under '**EYT/ NS (30)**'.
- 5) Add together the three '**NS**' scores above, and enter the result under '**Overall/ NS (100)**'.
- 6) Determine the overall letter-grade by referring to the table on page 1 of this document, and enter this letter-grade under '**Overall/ LG**'.

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

CA	INFORMAL CLASS TESTS (ICTs)								EYT	OVERALL	
	Test 1	Test 2	Test 3	Test 4	Test 5	Test 6	Total	NS			
NS (40)	GR/RD	VC/WR	RD/WR	VC/WR	LS/VC	GR/WR				NS (30)	NS (100)
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(60)	(30)			
30	8	7	6	8	9	8	46	23	19	72	C

The **Assessment Summary Sheet** for **Grade 10** is similar, but simpler in format. In this case, arriving at the student's overall end-of-year mark and grade for English involves only four steps:

- 1) Transfer the Continuous Assessment total from the CAR-Chart to '**CA/ NS (40)**';
- 2) Enter the total score for the End-of-Year Exam under '**EYE/ NS (60)**'.
- 3) Add together the three '**NS**' scores above, and enter the result under '**Overall/ NS (100)**'.
- 4) Determine the overall letter-grade by referring to the table on page 1 of this document, and enter this letter-grade under '**Overall/ LG**'.

## 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 behavior, 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 when Speaking, but is now gaining confidence.*"
- "*Shows good understanding of complex texts, but needs to spend more time reading independently.*"
- "*Needs to cooperate more with other students, especially when doing projects.*"
- "*Is able to communicate well in Writing, but should be more careful with Grammar.*"

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).

At the end of the year, parents will receive a **full report** giving information, in the form of letter-grades, regarding their son's or daughter's achievement of the learning outcomes.

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