

Linking The Primary Language Curriculum & Junior Cycle English

Junior Cycle English places significant emphasis on the continuum of language development from primary school. The Specification for English explicitly refers to this in the rationale:

“The study of language enables students to build on their learning in primary school and further develop their skills and enjoyment in using it effectively. Through language learning and use, students discover information, develop thinking, and express ideas and feelings. They learn about language, and how to use it well in all areas of their studies (p4).”

The Key Skills of the Framework for Junior Cycle embody the Priorities of the Primary Curriculum and promote a natural transition and progression from Primary to First Year of Junior Cycle. The table below shows the clear links between the **Junior Cycle Key Skills and the Primary Priorities**.

Primary Priorities	Framework for Junior Cycle Key Skills
Communicate well	Communicating
Be well	Staying well
Engage in learning	Managing myself
Develop thinking, learning and life skills	Managing information and thinking
Having a strong sense of identity and belonging	Being Creative
	Working with others

Literacy and Numeracy are embodied in the Primary Curriculum and this is echoed through an emphasis on both Literacy and Numeracy as Key Skills in the Framework for Junior Cycle.

Examining the Primary Curriculum highlights many similarities:

Strands

As in the Primary Language Curriculum, Junior Cycle English is divided into three strands: Oral Language, Reading and Writing. The Primary Curriculum is divided into **strand units**, similar to the **elements** in Junior Cycle English. This underlines the integrated nature of the strands. In designing a programme, the integration of these strands is essential.

Oral Language

The Primary Curriculum emphasises the development of oral language skills in the teaching of English. Junior Cycle English places a renewed emphasis on Oral Language skills, with thirteen Learning Outcomes related to Oral Language.

Language

There are many similarities between the language used in the Primary Language Curriculum and Junior Cycle English Learning Outcomes.

Some common areas from the Primary Curriculum include:

- read for pleasure and information
- enrich their language experience and imaginative powers
- develop the higher order comprehension skills
- have opportunities to write for a variety of purposes, for different audiences and in a range of genres
- develop the ability to self-correct their own writing, through a consistent experience of drafting, editing and redrafting

Assessment

There are many common threads in terms of assessment also. The Primary Curriculum places great emphasis on formative assessment, and refers to modes of assessment such as recordings of oral presentations, project and portfolio work showing samples of children's writing and opportunities for self-assessment. This is echoed in Junior Cycle English through the significant opportunities offered for formative assessment throughout the course. In addition, the summative Assessment Tasks also support opportunities for the use of such approaches.

A subset of Learning Outcomes for First Year has been developed. This subset of twenty-two outcomes is referred to in the Junior Cycle English Specification as follows:

“To provide continuity with language learning in primary education a sub-set of 22 learning outcomes for first year is indicated by the symbol O in the tables of outcomes. The outcomes chosen for this purpose articulate well with content objectives for language in the Primary Curriculum and focusing on them in first year will support the transition from English in primary school. The specification stresses that the learning outcomes are for three years. Therefore, the learning outcomes being focused on in first year will not have been ‘completed’ at the end of that year but will continue to support the student’s language development up to the end of junior cycle (p11).”

Transcript of Comments from a Primary Teacher

Can you briefly outline the 6th class curriculum for the teaching and learning of English?

“In the 6th class English curriculum we have **three strands: reading, writing & oral** work.

In the reading strand we do a lot about the different **comprehension strategies & reading for pleasure** as well.

In the writing strand there is a big emphasis now on **writing being a process** & working through the writing process. When you sit down to write a piece you have **a draft stage, a writing stage & an editing stage**. That's a collaborative thing between the pupils & the teacher. The writing process is tried out through a variety of writing genres - personal narratives, poetry, writing persuasively, fact pieces.

The oral outcomes are achieved through having pupils **express opinions, backing up with evidence, speaking confidently to the group and reading fluently**.

These are the main areas of the English curriculum for 6th class.”

Student Profile - English (Part 1)

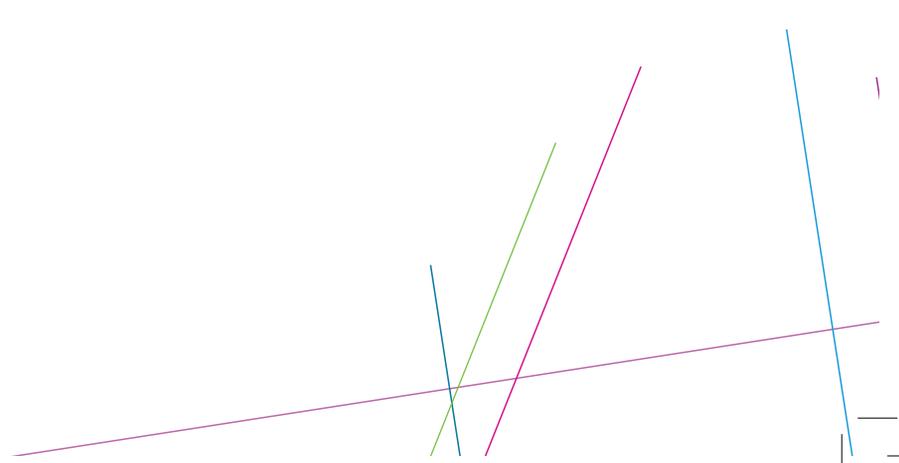
- 1** Name
Class
Age

- 2** Three words that describe me are:

- 3** Hobbies I have, clubs, groups, teams I belong to are:

- 4** I like to be with friends or people who:

- 5** Someday I would like to:



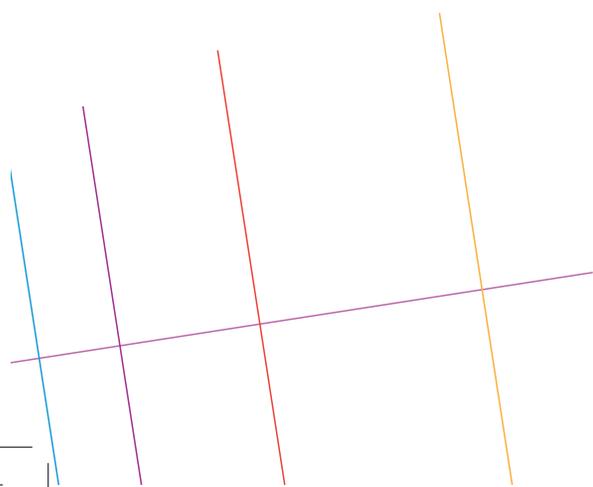
Student Profile - English (Part 2)

6 Three things which I like about school are:

7 Three things which I don't like about school are:

8 The parts of English which I like best are:

9 The parts of English which I find hard are:



Student Profile - English (Part 3)

10 My favourite book from Primary School was:

11 My favourite poem from Primary School was:

12 My best hope for English class this year is:

