



Higher English

Portfolio–writing and Performance–spoken language assessment tasks

This document provides information for teachers and lecturers about the coursework component of this course in terms of the skills, knowledge and understanding that are assessed. It **must** be read in conjunction with the course specification.

Valid from session 2024–25 and until further notice.

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Introduction

This document contains instructions for candidates for the Higher English portfolio–writing and performance–spoken language, and recording documentation for the performance–spoken language. It must be read in conjunction with the course specification.

The portfolio–writing is worth 30 marks. It consists of one piece, which is marked out of 15. This is then doubled to give a mark out of 30. This is 30% of the overall marks for the course assessment.

The performance–spoken language is set by centres within SQA guidelines and conducted under some supervision and control. The performance–spoken language is assessed on an achieved/not achieved basis. It is a compulsory requirement for a course award in Higher English.

These are two of four course assessment components. The other components are a Reading for Understanding, Analysis and Evaluation question paper and a Critical Reading question paper.

The instructions for candidates can be printed and edited, as appropriate, to suit the task set by centres.

This document also contains a checklist for teachers and lecturers which can be used to record the results awarded for the performance–spoken language.

Marking instructions

The marking instructions for the Higher English portfolio–writing and performance–spoken language are in the course specification.

Instructions for candidates: portfolio–writing

This assessment applies to the portfolio–writing for Higher English.

This portfolio–writing is worth 30 marks. This is 30% of the overall marks for the course assessment.

It assesses the following skills, knowledge and understanding.

Write, with consistent technical accuracy, in one of two forms:

- ◆ broadly creative
- ◆ broadly discursive

Your teacher or lecturer will let you know if there are any specific conditions for doing this assessment.

In this assessment, you have to:

Produce one piece of writing of no more than 1,300 words. Your piece of writing must be broadly creative or broadly discursive. Your writing must have consistent technical accuracy. This means few errors will be present: paragraphs, sentences and punctuation will be mostly accurate and organised so that the writing can be clearly and readily understood; and spelling errors (particularly of high frequency words) will be infrequent.

You are expected to do most of the work on your own but your teacher or lecturer can help you to choose the focus and type of writing that suits you best. The first draft of your writing must be done in class under the supervision of your teacher or lecturer.

Portfolio–writing process

You must follow this process for this assessment:

- ◆ choose the focus and type of writing (with support of teacher or lecturer)
- ◆ explore and develop your idea (this can involve research and note-taking, as appropriate)
- ◆ plan the writing (outline and structure)
- ◆ complete the first draft in class under supervision (with notes, outline plan, research and/or ICT, as appropriate)
- ◆ think about the feedback from your teacher or lecturer
- ◆ complete the final piece under some supervision and control

You can gain up to 15 marks for the piece of writing. Your mark will be doubled to achieve the 30% weighting.

Creative writing may include:

- ◆ a personal or reflective essay
- ◆ a piece of prose fiction (for example short story, episode from a novel)
- ◆ a poem or set of thematically linked poems
- ◆ a dramatic script (for example scene, monologue, sketch)

Discursive writing may include:

- ◆ an argumentative essay
- ◆ a persuasive essay
- ◆ a report
- ◆ a piece of transactional or informative writing

The following are descriptions of different types of writing, which may help you in selecting your pieces of writing.

Creative writing

Personal

Personal writing focuses on, for example, a specific event, experience, situation and your reactions to it or them.

Reflective

Reflective writing demonstrates your thinking on, and reactions to, an idea, concept, or experience.

Prose fiction

Prose fiction might be a complete short story or an extract from a longer piece (for example an opening section). It is likely to include, for example, the establishment of a setting, some characterisation, narrative, conflict, resolution.

Poetry

If you choose poetry, only one poem is required; however, you can submit a series of thematically linked poems. If you submit a collection of poems, they will be assessed as one piece. You should not submit an introduction, or commentary on your poem(s). There is no minimum length for poetry.

Dramatic script

A dramatic script can be a complete scene or extract, intended for the stage, or for film or television. It can involve a small number of characters or can be a monologue. You can include dramatic techniques such as stage directions, use of lighting, sound.

Discursive writing

Persuasive

The aim of persuasive writing is to persuade the reader towards the writer's point of view or purpose. It usually focuses on a single topic or issue and carries a sense of conviction, commitment or belief through the use of language to create an appropriate tone.

Argumentative

Argumentative writing presents an issue or topic in such a way that a line of thought is developed which deals with two or more points of view.

Report

Report writing contains information which is relevant to a chosen topic or issue. It has an appropriate sequence and structure. The material drawn from sources must be recast and paraphrased in your own words. You may also use headings, and a lettering, numbering, or bullet-point system to indicate sections.

Transactional or informative

The aim with this type of writing is to convey information on a chosen topic, for example a film or concert review, a biography.

General guidance

There is no time limit for the portfolio-writing assessment. However, the first draft must be completed in class under supervision. Your teacher or lecturer will tell you how long you have to do this. You must have completed the first draft in class to allow submission of your final piece.

There are no restrictions on the resources you can access. You are allowed to take notes and a plan with you when you complete your first draft in class.

Your submitted piece of writing must not carry any comments, marks or grades from your teacher or lecturer.

Your teacher or lecturer may provide reasonable assistance, which could include supporting you in choosing a focus and type of writing, and advice and guidance on a first draft.

Once you have submitted your final piece of writing, this must not be changed or altered.

Before you begin work on your portfolio-writing, it is important that you read SQA's booklet *Your Coursework* which provides you with information about the rules around coursework, including authenticity and plagiarism.

Taking an essay from an internet site or submitting work that is not your own (this could be another person's work or work taken from a generative artificial intelligence source) is plagiarism. The following are also examples of plagiarism:

- ◆ copying and pasting from the internet without citing the source
- ◆ copying directly from a textbook without citing the source
- ◆ omitting quotation marks from quotations
- ◆ using software such as generative artificial intelligence

Your portfolio–writing must be written in your own words unless you are quoting from a referenced source.

You must acknowledge all sources consulted for discursive writing in footnotes or in a reference list at the end of the piece of writing. You must give specific details of the sources consulted.

Where there is doubt over the authenticity of a piece of writing, it will not be accepted for portfolio submission.

You must complete and sign the portfolio–writing declaration on the flyleaf to confirm that the writing is completely your own work.

Instructions for candidates: performance–spoken language

This assessment applies to the performance-spoken language for Higher English.

The performance-spoken language is assessed on an achieved/not achieved basis. It is a compulsory requirement for a course award in Higher English.

It assesses the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

- ◆ talking, showing the ability to include detailed and complex content and language, to structure spoken language in a clear way, and to use some appropriate non-verbal communication
- ◆ listening, showing, through contributions to discussion, or by answering questions, that effective listening to detailed and complex language has taken place

Your teacher or lecturer will let you know if there are any specific conditions for doing this assessment.

In this assessment, you have to do at least **one** of the following spoken language activities:

- ◆ Take part in a group discussion, or discussion-based activity, to which you contribute relevant ideas, opinions, or information, using detailed and complex language. You must take account of what others say and stay focused on the topic or task.

A discussion might involve talking in a pair, or a small group, about a topic chosen by you or by your teacher or lecturer. It is likely that the topic will be linked to other aspects of the course, for example the exploration of Scottish texts or other literature, research carried out for a portfolio–writing piece, discussion of current affairs or other issues of relevance.

Or

- ◆ Prepare and present a spoken presentation. The presentation must be detailed and complex in content and must be structured in a clear and relevant way. You must answer questions from the audience at some point in the presentation.

A presentation might involve an individual or a small group preparing and delivering a presentation on an agreed topic to an audience. The audience might be a class or a small group. As above, it is likely that the topic will be linked to other aspects of the course.

General guidance

There are no restrictions on the resources you can access. You may undertake, for example research activities, reading and annotating texts and/or preparing notes.

Your teacher or lecturer may provide reasonable assistance, which could include choosing or advising on topics for discussion, prompting, and asking questions at some point in your presentation.

If you are taking part in a group discussion, you should remember to:

- ◆ prepare for the discussion in order that you can make detailed and complex contributions
- ◆ contribute detailed and complex ideas and/or information
- ◆ demonstrate, through your responses, that you have listened to the ideas and/or information contributed by others in the group
- ◆ take account of, allow, and be respectful of, the contributions of others
- ◆ develop your own views and opinions in light of the contributions of others
- ◆ take turns and acknowledge the role of the chair (if appropriate) using aspects of non-verbal communication

If you are delivering a presentation, you should remember to:

- ◆ prepare detailed and complex content for the presentation (including visual aids where appropriate)
- ◆ structure the presentation in a clear way
- ◆ employ detailed and complex language throughout the presentation
- ◆ use aspects of non-verbal communication
- ◆ be prepared to answer questions

Note: aspects of non-verbal communication might include facial expression, emphasis, gesture and/or eye contact.

Recording documentation

The following recording document for the performance–spoken language should be used by teachers and lecturers to record the result awarded to candidates.

In the case of assessment by observation or oral questioning, evidence should include teachers or lecturers' comments and other relevant supporting evidence that shows clearly the basis on which assessment judgements have been made.

Note: details of the evidence required for this assessment can be found in the 'Course assessment structure: performance–spoken language' section of the course specification.

Higher English: performance–spoken language assessment checklist

Candidate name:		Activity:	
Higher English: performance–spoken language			
Aspect of performance		Achieved/ not achieved	Comments
Employs relevant detailed and complex ideas and/or information using a structure appropriate to purpose and audience	Content Can contribute a range of relevant detailed and complex ideas, views, opinions and/or information.		
	Structure Spoken language is structured effectively, and, where appropriate, takes account of the contributions of others.		
	Relevance Attention to task, purpose and audience is sustained.		
Communicates meaning effectively through the selection and use of detailed and complex spoken language	Choice and use of language Can select and use detailed and complex spoken language that is appropriate to purpose and audience.		
	Clarity and accuracy Can employ appropriate spoken language with sufficient clarity and accuracy to ensure that effective communication is achieved.		

Aspect of performance		Achieved/ not achieved	Comments
Uses aspects of non-verbal communication	Can employ appropriate non-verbal features to assist communication and/or meaning, for example facial expression, emphasis, gesture and/or eye contact.		
Demonstrates listening skills by responding to detailed and complex spoken language	Can give relevant responses to the contributions of others in group discussions or in a series of discussion-based activities. Or Can respond relevantly to questions which follow, for example, a presentation.		

Additional comments:

Assessor name:	Assessor signature:	Date:
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Administrative information

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History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date
2.0	Updated to reflect portfolio-writing requirement reduced to one piece of writing.	May 2023
3.0	Updated to reflect changes to conditions of assessment for the portfolio-writing.	May 2024

Note: you are advised to check SQA's website to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of this document.

Security and confidentiality

This document can be used by SQA approved centres for the assessment of National Courses and not for any other purpose.