

English

Broad General Education

In English, pupils in S1 – S3 follow a structured course which ensures coverage of all the experiences and outcomes up to level 4. The course embeds the principles for curriculum design as it provides a range of contexts for learning and sets out a clear route for progression, ensuring that pupils deepen their skills.

It focuses on building fundamental literacy, communication, and analytical skills in Reading, Writing, Talking, and Listening to prepare students for National qualifications.

- Reading: Students analyze a wide variety of texts (novels, plays, poetry, and media) to develop comprehension, critical thinking, and textual analysis (RUAE) skills.
- Writing: The curriculum covers creative, reflective, imaginative, and analytical writing (such as critical essays) to strengthen vocabulary, grammar, and structure.
- Talking & Listening: Group discussions, debates, and solo presentations build confidence, team-learning, and active listening capabilities

Personalisation and choice are built into the course through personal reading, where pupils are encouraged to access a range of genres and explore their own interests, as well as within each of the contexts for learning which can be adapted to suit learners' needs and preferences.

The S3 course is designed to provide continuity of learning that has taken place in S1 and S2, in addition to preparing pupils for the demands of National Qualifications in the Senior Phase and as such there is a different structure to the teaching and learning. It is also designed to enable accurate presentation for pupils in the Senior Phase and so adopts the approach recommended by Education Scotland of 'blending' outcomes from the Broad General Education and outcomes from National Qualifications, leading to pupils embarking on a National 3, 4 or 5 course as appropriate in the latter half of S3.

National 4

The National 4 course continues to develop the skills of Reading, Writing, Talking and Listening. This is done through literary contexts as well as non-text-based study.

The course is broken down into four mandatory units and one final assignment: [\[1, 2\]](#)

1. Analysis and Evaluation

- Skills developed: Reading and listening.
- What you do: You will study various texts (literature, language, or media) and learn to identify the writer's main ideas, purpose, and language techniques (e.g., word choice, sentence structure, and tone). [\[1, 2, 3\]](#)

2. Creation and Production

- Skills developed: Writing and talking.
- What you do: You will create your own texts, such as stories, poems, plays, and discursive essays. You will also practice communicating your ideas clearly in formal and informal conversations or presentations.

3. Literacy

- Skills developed: Functional reading, writing, listening, and talking.

- What you do: Focuses on real-world communication and everyday language, ensuring you can read/listen to straightforward texts and communicate information accurately.

4. Added Value Unit (Assignment)

- What you do: An independent investigation where you explore a chosen text, topic, or media format. You will present your findings in the form of a critical essay of 600 words.

National 5

This course provides candidates with the opportunity to develop skills in reading, writing, talking and listening. Consequently, candidates should be able to understand, analyse, evaluate, and use, detailed language for a range of purposes in practical and relevant contexts. This course will allow candidates to encounter and engage with a wide range of texts across literature, language, and the media.

Assessment for this course consists of an external exam (worth 70% of the final grade) and an externally assessed portfolio of writing (worth 30%).

External Exam

Consists of:

- (i) Reading for Understanding, Analysis and Evaluation (30 marks).

Questions on a short non-fiction passage which require candidates to demonstrate understanding, analysis of language and evaluation of features used by the writer.

- (ii) Critical Reading (20 marks each)

Section 1: Critical response to extract from set Scottish text previously studied in class (Prose/ poetry/ drama). Includes one extended response linking extract to other texts/ parts of the text.

Section 2: Critical essay on prose/ poetry/ drama/ media/ language text.

- (i) Portfolio

One piece of writing in the broadly creative/broadly discursive genre, worth 30% of overall mark (15 marks).

Higher

The Higher English Course is a challenging course which provides learners with the opportunity to develop listening, talking, reading and writing skills that will enable them to understand and use language. Building on literacy skills, Learners will develop their understanding of the complexities of language by studying a wide range of texts and building on their literacy skills. The course also develops high levels of analytical thinking and understanding of the impact of language.

External Exam

Consists of: (i) Reading for Understanding, Analysis and Evaluation (30 marks)

Questions on two short non-fiction passages which require candidates to demonstrate understanding, analysis of language and evaluation of features used by the writer, as well as make a commentary on the comparative ideas of each passage.

(ii) Critical Reading (20 marks each)

Section 1: Critical response to extract from set Scottish text previously studied in class (Prose/ poetry/ drama). Includes one extended response linking extract to other texts/ parts of the text.

Section 2: Critical essay on prose/ poetry/ drama/ media/ language text previously studied in class.

Coursework

(i) Portfolio

One piece of writing in the broadly creative/broadly discursive genre, worth 30% of overall mark (15 marks).

Advanced Higher English

This course focuses on the critical and creative study of complex and sophisticated literature and language. It gives learners opportunities to add specialism, depth and independence to their English and study skills. There is opportunity for personalisation and choice, and freedom within the course, taking account of individual interests and motivations. Learners extend prior learning in English, and apply their skills, knowledge and understanding in increasingly specialised contexts. In both guided and independent study, they develop their skills of literary analysis to analyse, evaluate and make connections between texts. Learners develop the confidence to make informed critical responses to texts, from the literary genres of poetry, prose fiction, prose non-fiction and drama, and express these responses in a variety of forms. Candidates correspondingly develop their skills in both creative and critical writing.

Learners undertaking Advanced Higher English must be able to work with growing independence and use their own initiative under minimal supervision.

The course assessment is weighted heavily towards coursework – 60% in total – with the remaining 40% being assessed through an external exam as detailed below:

External Exam:

(i) Literary Study (20 marks)

This question paper assesses candidates' application of their critical reading skills and their knowledge and understanding of previously studied literary texts. Candidates apply their understanding, analysis and evaluation skills to previously studied texts from one of the following genres: poetry, prose fiction, prose non-fiction, or drama. This takes the form of one appropriately structured critical essay.

(ii) Textual Analysis (20 marks)

This question paper assesses candidates' application of critical reading skills to an unseen literary text. Candidates apply their understanding, analysis and evaluation skills to one unseen text. Candidates select one text from the genres of poetry, prose fiction, prose non-fiction or drama and produce a critical analysis which is appropriately structured to meet the demands of the question

Coursework:

(i) Portfolio–writing (30 marks)

The portfolio–writing provides evidence of candidates' skills in writing in one genre. Candidates produce one written text. They can choose this text from their writing done throughout the course.

(ii) Project–dissertation (30 marks)

The project–dissertation assesses candidates' independent reading of complex and sophisticated literature. It provides evidence of candidates' skills in critical analysis, evaluation, investigation and writing. Candidates' chosen texts for the dissertation must be literacy and must be untaught.

[Link to Qualifications Scotland information on English national qualifications](#)