

SEC SYLLABUS (2024)

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

SEC 11

SYLLABUS

**English Language SEC 11
Syllabus**

Available in September (Paper I and Paper IIB only)

Paper I: Oral / Aural (45 minutes) + Written (1 hour 15 minutes); Paper II: 2 hours

AIMS

The aims of this syllabus are to:

1. promote competence in the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing; competence in this context should be interpreted as referring to the ability of using the language fluently, accurately and appropriately
2. ensure that candidates achieve a level of competence which reflects the position English occupies in the Maltese educational system
3. foster the development of English in the national and wider context
4. foster the development of language skills needed for further study, work and leisure
5. encourage methods of learning and teaching which help learners build up the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to become more independent in thought and action.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

Speaking and Listening

Candidates will be expected to:

1. communicate clearly, structuring and organising their talk and adapting it to different situations
2. listen to and understand spoken English
3. interact in discussions and play a number of roles.

Candidates will be required to:

1. explain, describe, narrate
 2. explore, imagine and possibly analyse
 3. discuss, argue and/or persuade
- in a variety of formal and/or informal contexts.

Reading

Candidates will be expected to:

1. read and understand different text types
2. evaluate information presented textually, visually or graphically, and select what is relevant
3. follow an argument or trend of thought, identifying implications
4. analyse the writer's intentions and attitudes through the use of language.

Writing

Candidates will be expected to:

1. select, order and present information, ideas and opinions
2. express what is thought, felt or imagined
3. write with a sense of audience and purpose showing an awareness of style in a variety of situations.

SUBJECT CONTENT

Candidates will be assessed on their communicative language competence:

Lexical Competence

Candidates will be expected to use and understand vocabulary related to the following thematic areas:

1. personal identification
2. house and home, environment
3. daily life
4. free time, entertainment
5. travel
6. relations with other people
7. health and body care
8. education
9. shopping
10. food and drink
11. services
12. places
13. language
14. weather.

(Common European Framework of Reference for Languages – Cambridge University Press)

Grammatical Competence

Candidates will be expected to:

1. be able to spell correctly words of an appropriate level
2. be able to use punctuation correctly, in particular capital letter, comma, full stop, question mark, inverted commas, exclamation marks, semi-colon, colon, parenthesis, dash
3. know the labels for the following parts of speech: noun, pronoun, verb and adjective, conjunction, adverb, preposition, interjection
4. be able to use:
 - a. nouns
 - i. used only in the singular (e.g. *news, athletics, physics*)
 - ii. used only in the plural (e.g. *jeans, trousers*)
 - iii. countable
 - iv. uncountable
 - b. pronouns: personal, possessive, demonstrative, reflexive, relative
 - c. adjectives
5. be able to turn adjectives into positive, comparative and superlative
6. be able to use the infinitive
7. be able to use the definite and indefinite article: *the, a, an* and the zero article to distinguish between specific and generic meaning: geographical names, names of streets and buildings etc.
8. be able to use the determiners: *some, any*
9. know the following tenses: simple present, simple past, present continuous, past continuous, present perfect simple, past perfect simple, present perfect continuous, past perfect continuous, future continuous, future perfect simple, future perfect continuous
10. be aware of the difference between regular and irregular verbs
11. know future time reference using: *going to, will, shall* + infinitive, simple present, present continuous, *be to* + infinitive, *be about to* + infinitive, future time in the past.
12. be able to use the primary auxiliary verbs (*be, have, do*)
13. be able to use the modal auxiliaries: *can, could, must, shall, should, will, would, may, might, ought to* and the semi-modals: *dare, need, used to* in the affirmative, negative and interrogative forms
14. be able to use the conditional (first, second and third)
15. be able to use the present and past participle
16. be able to use the gerund
17. be able to write the affirmative and negative form of the imperative
18. be able to form the interrogative with:

- a. verbs: *to be, to have, to do*
 - b. *wh-* questions: *who, what, where, when, which, where, why, how*
 - c. question tags
19. be able to write statements in the affirmative and negative (including contractions)
 20. be able to use and identify link words: *and, but, because, or, when, while, for, before, after, also, furthermore, not only...but also, for example, for instance, such as, however, on the other hand, yet, either...or, whether...or, one or the other, namely, supposing, listing and adding (e.g. first, next), summing up (e.g. therefore, so, to conclude), comparing (e.g. the same as, even more important)*
 21. be able to use prepositions:
 - a. of time (e.g. *until, since, for, during, after, before, while*)
 - b. of place (e.g. *in, at, to, on, under, behind*)
 - c. of direction (e.g. *across, over*)
 22. be able to use adverbials (adverbs, adverb phrases or prepositional phrases) of time, place and manner frequency and probability
 23. be able to use quantifiers (e.g. *much, many, a lot of, plenty, a few, little, a little, several*)
 24. be able to use the active and passive
 25. be able to use *-ing* and *-ed* clauses (e.g. *The girls talking to Tom... The man injured in the accident...*)
 26. be able to change from direct to indirect speech
 27. know word order (e.g. verb + object, adverbs with the verb, etc.)
 28. be able to recognise and produce simple, compound and complex sentences
 29. be able to use prepositional and phrasal verbs
 30. be able to use affixes:
 - a. adjective suffixes: *-y, -ly, -ish, -like, -some, -worthy, -able, -ible, -ive, -ful, -al, -ous*
 - b. negative suffixes: *-less*
 - c. negative prefixes: *il-, im-, in-, ir-, dis-, mis-, un-*
 31. do word building using affixes to change grammatical class; e.g.:
 - a. noun to adjective (e.g. *help + ful, context, contextual*)
 - b. verb to noun (e.g. *sing + er, demolish, demolition*)
 - c. adjective to adverb (e.g. *quiet + ly, vague, vaguely*)
 - d. noun to verb (e.g. *haste + n, vision, visualise*)

Socio-Linguistic Competence

Candidates will be expected to possess the knowledge and skills required to deal with the social dimension of language i.e. display a sensitivity to the language used in particular social contexts.

Receptive and Productive Skills

1. Receptive Skills:
Candidates will be expected to demonstrate the ability to use effectively listening and reading skills.
2. Productive Skills:
Candidates will be expected to demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively using speaking and writing skills.

SCHEME OF ASSESSMENT

Components of the Examination

Candidates will be required to take two papers of two hours each.

PAPER I (2 hours) (100 marks: 50% of global mark) is to be taken by all candidates. It consists of two parts.

Part 1: Listening and Speaking (45 minutes) (50 marks) is designed to test:

1. ability to understand and speak English in a given situation. It will consist of:

- a. **Listening Comprehension** (30 marks)
Two or more texts (up to a maximum of four) – specifically meant for listening – of varying difficulty, will be read out in accordance with instructions given to the examiner. In total, the set texts should not be less than 700 words and should not exceed 800 words. Candidates are to answer a number of questions on each text. Answers may comprise any of the following: multiple-choice, true/false/no information given, grid-filling, sentence completion, matching and information transfer.
- b. **Conversation – Visual Prompt** (10 marks)
Candidates will be given a visual prompt to examine and talk about it. This prompt may include one of the following: a picture, a picture sequence, a set of pictures, maps or diagrams. Examiners may prompt the candidate to supply more information.
- c. **Conversation – Role-play** (10 marks)
This will comprise a role play task based on a situation with which a candidate may reasonably be expected to identify.

Part 2: Language Use (1 hour 15 minutes) (50 marks) is designed to test active control of the patterns and usage of English. A number of exercise types will be set to test both accuracy and appropriateness. Candidates are expected to be familiar with the structures of English and to be able to use them correctly as required by different contexts. Exercises set may include, for example: multiple choice, gapped-text completion, sentence transformation, word sets, word formation/transformation, matching, punctuation, pairing.

PAPER II (2 hours) (100 marks: 50% of global mark). There will be two versions of this paper: Paper IIA and Paper IIB. Paper IIA will contain tasks which are more demanding than those in Paper IIB. Candidates will be required to indicate which Paper II they wish to sit for on the registration form. No change in the choice of paper will be allowed after the registration period. The paper is designed to test:

1. ability to write appropriately in English with a sense of audience and purpose
2. ability to read a variety of texts with attention to detail; show understanding; and carry out a writing task prompted by the comprehension text/s.

Paper IIA (2 hours) (100 marks)

Question 1 (40 marks) will require the candidates to perform **one writing task** which tests among other skills the candidates' ability to argue, narrate, describe, analyse and reflect. This writing task may include the following: letter, email, report, biography, short story, dialogue, article, film/book/computer game/public performance/album (music) review, diary entries. The length of this writing task will be between 320 and 350 words.

Question 2 (60 marks) will consist of a series of questions based on a number of texts which differ in style. In total the set texts should not be less 1300 words and should not exceed 1400 words. The aim of the questions will be to test the candidates' ability to read, understand, evaluate and interpret.

- a. **Reading Comprehension**
The type of questions set may include: multiple choice, True/False/No Information Given, short answer questions, identifying facts and information, quoting from text, deducing meaning from context, distinguishing facts from opinion, inferring writer's attitude and intentions.
- b. **Summary**
Students will be required to write a summary of part of the information contained in the text/s.

Reading Comprehension and Summary: 50 marks
- c. **Writing Task** (10 marks)
Students will be required to respond to the comprehension text/s by carrying out a writing task of between 60 to 80 words.

Paper IIB (2 hours) (100 marks)

Question 1 (40 marks) will be in the form of **one writing task** of a free or guided type which tests among other skills the candidates' ability to argue, narrate, describe, analyse and reflect. This writing task may include the following: letter, email, report, biography, short story, dialogue, article, film/book/computer game/public

performance/album (music review, diary entries. The writing prompt could be visual. The length expected will be between 180 and 200 words.

Question 2 (60 marks) will consist of a series of questions based on a number of texts differing in style. In total the set texts should not be less 900 words and should not exceed 1000 words. The aim of the questions will be to test the candidates' ability to read, understand, evaluate and interpret.

a. **Reading Comprehension**

The type of questions set may include: multiple choice, True/False/No Information Given, short answer questions, identifying facts and information, quoting from text, deducing meaning from context, distinguishing facts from opinion, inferring writer's attitude and intentions.

b. **Summary**

Students will be required to write a summary or give the gist, possibly in point form, of part of the information contained in the text/s.

Reading Comprehension and Summary: 50 marks

c. **Writing Task** (10 marks)

Students will be required to respond to the comprehension text/s by carrying out a writing task of between 50 to 60 words.

Results

1. Candidates sitting for Paper I and Paper IIA may qualify for a grade within the range 1 to 5 (i.e. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5); the results of candidates who do not obtain a Grade 5 shall remain Unclassified (U).
2. Candidates sitting for Paper I and Paper IIB may qualify for a grade not higher than 4 (i.e. grades 4, 5, 6, 7); the results of candidates who do not obtain at least a Grade 7 shall remain Unclassified (U).
3. In order to obtain a Grade 5, candidates must reach the expected standards overall and satisfy the examiners in at least 3 out of the 5 components, Listening, Speaking, Language Use, Reading and Writing.
4. In order to obtain a Grade 3 or higher, candidates must also satisfy the examiners in the Writing component in Paper 2.

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

Candidates sitting for Paper I and Paper IIA may qualify for a grade within the range 1 to 5 (i.e. grades 1, 2, 3, 4, 5), the results of candidates who do not obtain a grade 5 shall remain Unclassified (U).

Candidates sitting for Paper I and Paper IIB may qualify for a grade not higher than 4 (i.e. grades 4, 5, 6, 7), the results of candidates who do not obtain at least a grade 7 shall remain Unclassified (U).

A **Grade 1** candidate will have demonstrated expertise in:

1. understanding and communicating information at both a straightforward and a complex level
2. understanding facts, ideas and opinions, and ordering and presenting them with clarity and accuracy
3. evaluating material from texts and selecting and presenting in detail what is relevant for specific purposes
4. describing and reflecting upon experience and detailing and analysing effectively what is felt and what is imagined
5. showing a clear sense of audience and an understanding of appropriate uses of language
6. writing in well constructed paragraphs using a variety of appropriate sentences showing accuracy in grammar, spelling and punctuation
7. speaking clearly, fluently and accurately in response to another speaker and occasionally taking the initiative.

A **Grade 5** candidate will have demonstrated competence in:

1. understanding and conveying information both at a straightforward level and at a less straightforward level
2. understanding basic facts, ideas and opinions and presenting them with a degree of clarity and accuracy
3. evaluating material from texts and selecting what is relevant for comprehension purposes
4. describing and reflecting upon experience and expressing effectively what is felt and what is imagined
5. recognising the more obvious implicit meanings and attitudes of a writer
6. showing a sense of audience and an awareness of appropriate uses of language
7. writing in paragraphs, using sentences of varied kinds and exercising care over spelling and punctuation
8. speaking clearly with some confidence, mostly in response to another speaker.

A **Grade 7** candidate will have demonstrated competence in:

1. understanding and conveying information at a straightforward level
2. understanding basic facts, ideas and opinions, and presenting them with a limited degree of coherence
3. describing experience in concrete terms and expressing intelligibly what is felt and what is imagined;
4. showing awareness that language is used in different ways in different circumstances
5. writing at least in single sentences – weaknesses in spelling and punctuation and the construction of complex sentences will be apparent, but will not seriously impair communication
6. speaking intelligibly in response to another speaker.