

IGCSE First Language English

The IGCSE English as a First Language programme provides students with the opportunity to develop the full range of language skills over the course of two years. They will read a range of materials and analyse and evaluate the language that has been used by the author. They will look at how writers achieve effects, selecting examples to support their arguments. Candidates will also be assessed on their own written skills in a variety of forms and styles. They will learn how to articulate their experiences and express clearly what is thought, felt and imagined. They will also learn to present more factual material using appropriate language and linguistic techniques. In their writing, candidates will be assessed on their accurate and effective use of grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Subject Content

Reading

Candidates will read a range of texts and learn how to analyse and evaluate this material. They will be required to select evidence in support of their answers and to compare texts on a similar topic.

Writing

Candidates will learn to write in a range of styles, presenting facts, opinions and arguments as well as articulating more descriptive or personal experiences. In particular, they will learn to use the appropriate language for a given task. Close attention will be paid to the correct use of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

Speaking & Listening

Throughout the course students will be expected to develop their ability to communicate verbally as an individual and as a member of a small group, assuming specific roles and responsibilities within class discussion and debate.

Resources and Texts

Students will consider a variety of materials and be encouraged to explore language in a range of form and style. IGCSE English by Ian Barr and John Reynolds will be utilised as a class textbook in order to develop this awareness of language, its potential and usage.

Assessment

Students will be confronted with a range of projects and assignments throughout the course in order to prepare them for the rigours of the exam room. This will necessarily include test essays as well as responses to past papers under timed conditions.

The final assessment will take the form of two externally assessed exams at the end of Year 11:

- Component 2: Reading Passages 2 hours
- Component 3: Directed Writing & Composition 2 hours

The first paper will be based on two passages linked by a common theme and will consist of three questions. The paper will test the candidate's ability to respond to one of the passages and then to summarise the key points in both passages. The second paper will present the candidate with two tasks; the first being to write a speech, letter or report whilst the second will allow them the opportunity to write their own composition, be it a narrative, argument or description.

Many schools and universities require a respectable grade in English as a First Language. This is not only a prerequisite for continued study in this subject but for advanced study in a whole range of disciplines and institutions. An A or B grade is often stipulated although a C will sometimes be accepted. It is important that students realise the significance of these requirements at the start of the course and set their goals accordingly. The achievement of high grades will require consistent and determined effort from the outset.