

# Essential English (Stage 1)

Subject Outline

# Subject outline changes — history

Below are the current changes to the subject outline. Teachers are encouraged to explore the changes in detail and make relevant adjustments to their teaching, learning, and assessment programs.

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| From 2024 | To 2025 onwards | page |
| Stage 1 | | |
| *Evidence of Learning*  For a 10-credit subject, students should provide evidence of their learning through four assessments, with at least one assessment from each assessment type.  For a 20-credit subject, students should provide evidence of their learning through eight assessments, with at least two assessments from each assessment type. | *Evidence of Learning*  For a 10-credit subject, students should provide evidence of their learning through **three or four** assessments, with at least one assessment from each assessment type.  For a 20-credit subject, students should provide evidence of their learning through **six or seven** assessments, with at least two assessments from each assessment type. | [6](#page6)  [6](#page6) |

# Subject description

Essential English is a 10-credit subject or a 20-credit subject at Stage 1, and a 20-credit subject at  
Stage 2.

In this subject students respond to and create texts in and for a range of personal, social, cultural, community, and/or workplace contexts.

Students understand and interpret information, ideas, and perspectives in texts and consider ways in which language choices are used to create meaning.

# Capabilities

The capabilities connect student learning within and across subjects in a range of contexts.

The SACE identifies seven capabilities.

Literacy

Literacy is critical in the development of the skills and strategies needed to express, interpret, and communicate information, ideas, and perspectives. In Essential English literacy skills are developed through a focus on comprehending and creating written, spoken, visual, and digital texts, and using and modifying language for different purposes in a range of social and cultural contexts, including study, work, and community life. Essential English develops an awareness of the sociocultural aspects of language in social, community, workplace, and/or imagined contexts.

Numeracy

Students develop their numeracy skills in this subject as they practise and apply the skills of interpreting and analysing, comparing and contrasting, making connections, posing and proving arguments, making inferences, and problem-solving as they create and respond to a range of texts. They draw conclusions from statistical information, interpret graphic representations of data, use quantitative data as evidence in persuasive texts, and evaluate the use of statistics in media, business, research, and other reports.

Information and communication technology (ICT) capability

There is a focus in Essential English on ICT through the use of digital texts (including social media communication), in personal and professional contexts, and on understanding and creating multimodal texts. Students use digital technologies when they access, manage, and use information, and when creating their own texts. They develop skills in reading, viewing, and responding to digital and multimodal texts, and create texts, using different modes and mediums to practise and consolidate their language skills. Students recognise that global communication is enhanced through the use of e-literacy skills and context-appropriate etiquette and expectations.

Critical and creative thinking

Critical and creative thinking is integral to the study and creation of texts in Essential English. Students consider information, ideas, and perspectives presented in texts. In thinking about and creating their own texts, they recognise and develop arguments, use evidence, and draw reasoned conclusions. Students apply critical thinking when they use their knowledge of language to consider the purpose, audience, context, and language features of a range of texts. They recognise ways in which language is used to present individuals and social and cultural groups. Students experiment with text structures and language features as they transform and adapt texts for different purposes, audiences, and contexts. Creative thinking enables students to apply imaginative and inventive strategies in the creation of their own original works.

Personal and social capability

Students develop their sense of self, and understand their role and place in communities, through the development of their language skills. They develop their personal and social capability in this subject by extending their communication skills, teamwork, and understanding of verbal and non-verbal modes of interaction.

The study of Essential English helps students to understand different personal and social experiences, perspectives, and challenges. Students identify and express their own opinions, information, ideas, and responses by interacting with a range of texts and situations. Students learn through working and researching independently and collaboratively.

Essential English assists students in the development of communication skills needed for conversation, research, presentations, and the expression of viewpoints and arguments. They develop empathy with and appreciation of the perspectives of others.

Ethical understanding

Ethical understanding is explored in Essential English through the selection of texts for study, for example, when students engage with ethical dilemmas presented in texts and consider reasons for actions and implications of decisions. They explore and question information, ideas, and perspectives in texts, examining how they are presented, their impact on audiences, and how they are reflected in their own responses. Through the study of Essential English, students come to appreciate and develop greater empathy with the rights and opinions of others. They develop increasingly advanced communication, research, and presentation skills to express viewpoints.   
Students develop an understanding of the importance of acknowledging the opinions, ideas, and perspectives of others through appropriate referencing.

Intercultural understanding

Intercultural understanding in Essential English develops an intercultural capability that includes an understanding of diversity and difference, and openness to different perspectives and experiences which, in turn, develop world-mindedness, respect for the rights of others, and a sense of global citizenship.

Through the study of contemporary and past texts, and texts from diverse cultures, students explore these connections. Students understand and can express the interdependence of language, culture, and identity and are able to appreciate and empathise with the cultural perspectives and values of others. They study how cultural concepts, beliefs, practices, and perspectives are represented in a range of textual forms and for a variety of purposes and audiences. Intercultural understanding is enhanced by developing intercultural communication skills and an understanding of international etiquette.

# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, cultures, and perspectives

In partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and schools and school sectors, the SACE Board of South Australia supports the development of high-quality learning and assessment design that respects the diverse knowledge, cultures, and perspectives of Indigenous Australians.

The SACE Board encourages teachers to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and perspectives in the design, delivery, and assessment of teaching and learning programs by:

* providing opportunities in SACE subjects for students to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, and contemporary experiences
* recognising and respecting the significant contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Australian society
* drawing students’ attention to the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and perspectives from the past and the present
* promoting the use of culturally appropriate protocols when engaging with and learning from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

# SACE literacy requirement

Students who complete 20 credits of Stage 1 Essential English with a C grade or better, or any Stage 2 English subject with a C– grade or better, will meet the literacy requirement of the SACE. Credits gained from any of the subjects can be combined with credits gained from other subjects in the English Learning Area.

# Learning requirements

The learning requirements summarise the knowledge, skills, and understanding that students are expected to develop and demonstrate through learning in Stage 1 Essential English.

In this subject, students are expected to:

1. develop communication skills through reading, viewing, writing, listening, and speaking
2. comprehend information, ideas, and perspectives in texts selected from social, cultural, community, workplace, and/or imagined contexts
3. identify and analyse how the structure and language of texts vary for different purposes, audiences, and contexts
4. express information, ideas, and perspectives, using a range of textual conventions
5. create oral, written, and/or multimodal texts appropriate for purpose and audience in real and/or imagined contexts.

# Content

Stage 1 Essential English is a 10-credit or a 20-credit subject.

The content includes:

* responding to texts
* creating texts.

Decisions about the content of the teaching and learning program should centre on ways in which students use language to establish and maintain connections with people in different contexts. The program may focus on a single context or a range of contexts for different parts of the program.

The specific contexts chosen for study may be social, cultural, community, workplace, and/or imagined. In planning a teaching and learning program, teachers work with students to support the achievement of their goals.

A suggested text list is available on the subject minisite.

Responding to texts

Students consider a variety of ways in which texts communicate information, ideas, and perspectives. They explore the relationship between structures and features and the purpose, audience, and context of texts.

The reading of a wide range of texts enables students to comprehend and interpret information, ideas, and perspectives in texts. They locate and extract information and ideas by, for example, skim-reading to support comprehension of key information. They also develop strategies for collecting and processing information by, for example, the use of graphic organisers.

Students examine and respond to how language is used in social, cultural, community, workplace, and/or imagined contexts. They identify and develop an understanding of ways in which:

* language is used and composed for different purposes, audiences, and contexts
* structural and language features are used to create meaning.

Students review texts in one or more contexts to discover how these texts achieve a specific purpose. Students may, for example, examine:

* image selection in websites
* emotive language in speeches or films
* structures of community texts (e.g. newsletters from sporting teams)
* stereotypes in advertisements
* vocabulary choices in workplace documents
* graphical representation of key information or ideas in a magazine article
* the use of textual conventions (e.g. perspectives in film, fiction, or video games).

Students question texts and/or purposes of texts, and develop a fuller understanding of the texts by predicting meaning, using their understanding of conventions and language features. Students use visual and aural cues, and summarise information, ideas, and perspectives in texts. They identify the main ideas, make inferences, and draw conclusions. In examining texts, students develop an understanding of how authors communicate, reflecting critically and responding to explicit and implied messages within the text.

Students have opportunities to develop understanding and appreciation of the diversity of cultures, including Indigenous cultures, that make up Australian society.

Creating texts

By examining the links between language and the context in which texts are produced, students are supported to create their own texts.

Students develop their skills in using appropriate vocabulary, accurate spelling, punctuation, and grammar to enable effective communication. They create a range of texts, using appropriate language features, content, and mediums for different purposes, audiences, and contexts.

Students recognise and use textual conventions and language features to communicate information and ideas that convey simple and complex thoughts in a range of mediums and digital technologies.

Students create written, oral, visual, digital, and multimodal texts. For example, they might produce:

* an advocacy website
* discussions of community issues
* a workplace text
* a report on a work placement
* a written narrative
* an interactive narrative
* a monologue
* writing that incorporates visual elements
* a digital slide display to inform a target group about a community issue.

The form and medium chosen for a text should be appropriate to the purpose, the audience, and the context.

Students develop strategies for planning, drafting, revising, proofreading, and, where necessary, appropriate referencing.

# Evidence of learning

Assessment at Stage 1 is school based.

The following assessment types enable students to demonstrate their learning in Stage 1 Essential English:

* Assessment Type 1: Responding to Texts
* Assessment Type 2: Creating Texts.

For a 10-credit subject, students should provide evidence of their learning through three or four assessments, with at least one assessment from each assessment type. At least one assessment should be an oral or multimodal presentation, and at least one should be in written form. Each assessment type should have a weighting of at least 20%.

For a 20-credit subject, students should provide evidence of their learning through six or seven assessments, with at least two assessments from each assessment type. At least two assessments should be oral or multimodal presentations, and at least two should be in written form. Each assessment type should have a weighting of at least 20%.

# Assessment design criteria

The assessment design criteria are based on the learning requirements and are used by teachers to:

* clarify for the student what they need to learn
* design opportunities for the student to provide evidence of their learning at the highest possible level of achievement.

The assessment design criteria consist of specific features that:

* students should demonstrate in their learning
* teachers look for as evidence that students have met the learning requirements.

For this subject the assessment design criteria are:

* communication
* comprehension
* analysis
* application.

The specific features of these criteria are described below.

The set of assessments, as a whole, must give students opportunities to demonstrate each of the specific features by the completion of study of the subject.

## Communication

The specific features are as follows:

C1 Clarity and coherence of written and spoken expression, using appropriate vocabulary.

C2 Demonstration of grammatical control.

## Comprehension

The specific features are as follows:

Cp1 Comprehension of information, ideas, and perspectives in texts.

Cp2 Understanding of the purpose, structure, and language features in texts.

## Analysis

The specific features are as follows:

An1 Analysis of ways in which creators of texts convey information, ideas, and perspectives.

An2 Identification and analysis of ways in which language features are used to create meaning in texts.

## Application

The specific features are as follows:

Ap1 Creation of texts for different purposes, using appropriate textual conventions, in real or imagined contexts.

# School assessment

The school assessment component for Stage 1 Essential English consists of 2 assessment types:

* Assessment Type 1: Responding to Texts
* Assessment Type 2: Creating Texts.

## Assessment Type 1: Responding to Texts

Students produce written, oral, and/or multimodal responses to a text or texts.

For a 10-credit subject, students complete at least one response to text. For a 20-credit subject, students complete at least two responses to texts.

They may respond to texts in a variety of forms, including a series of short answers and/or extended responses. The length of responses to texts can vary. Some responses may be short, others may be longer; however, no response should be more than 800 words or 5 minutes, or the equivalent in multimodal form.

Responses to texts could include, for example:

* a commentary on a workplace text
* an oral presentation with visual images
* an email in response to a text
* a series of brief responses to a film text
* a discussion of a film, television program, or game
* a review or comment on a set of instructions (e.g. a manual)
* a blog in response to a news item or sports report
* a set of annotations on a community information text
* a director’s commentary on a section of a visual or dramatic text
* exploration of the use of language in a campaign (e.g. advertising, political, advocacy).

For this assessment type, students provide evidence of their learning primarily in relation to the following assessment design criteria:

* communication
* comprehension
* analysis.

## Assessment Type 2: Creating Texts

Students create written, oral, and/or multimodal texts.

For a 10-credit subject, students create at least one text. For a 20-credit subject, students create at least two texts.

The texts may be functional, informational, analytical, imaginative, interpretive, and/or persuasive in purpose.

Students may create texts in a variety of forms. The length of the texts can vary. Some texts may be short, others may be longer; however, no text should be more than 800 words or 5 minutes, or the equivalent in multimodal form.

The texts created could include, but are not limited to:

* a role play in a community or workplace context
* instructions describing a process in either a written, oral, or multimodal form
* a workplace report (e.g. on an accident or recommendation to change a process)
* a series of social media entries advocating for an issue
* an email or vodcast complaining about a product or problem
* a ‘how to’ guide explaining how to use sporting equipment
* a thank-you (e.g. birthday, wedding, or awards night speech)
* a section of a graphic novel
* an advocacy website
* an article on a topic or theme of interest
* an interactive story
* a multimodal presentation creatively presenting a topic, issue, or theme
* a short film trailer
* a creative written narrative
* transformation of a traditional children’s story into a modern setting
* a report incorporating visual elements on a topic of interest
* a multimedia display to inform a target group about a community issue.

For this assessment type, students provide evidence of their learning primarily in relation to the following assessment design criteria:

* communication
* application.

# Performance standards

The performance standards describe five levels of achievement, A to E.

Each level of achievement describes the knowledge, skills, and understanding that teachers refer to in deciding how well students have demonstrated their learning on the basis of the evidence provided.

During the teaching and learning program the teacher gives students feedback on their learning, with reference to the performance standards.

At the student’s completion of study of a subject, the teacher makes a decision about the quality of the student’s learning by:

* referring to the performance standards
* taking into account the weighting of each assessment type
* assigning a subject grade between A and E.

Performance standards for Stage 1 Essential English

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| - | Communication | Comprehension | Analysis | Application |
| A | Consistently clear and coherent writing and speaking, using an appropriate vocabulary.  Thorough demonstration of grammatical control. | Detailed comprehension and interpretation of complex information, ideas, and perspectives in a range of texts.  Thorough understanding of the purpose, structure, and language features in texts. | Thorough analysis of ways in which creators of a range of texts convey information, ideas, and perspectives.  Identification and clear analysis of ways in which language features are used to create meaning in a range in texts. | Creation of complex texts for different purposes, using appropriate textual conventions. |
| B | Mostly clear and coherent writing and speaking, using a varied vocabulary.  Effective and usually accurate grammatical control. | Detailed comprehension and interpretation of some complex information, ideas, and perspectives in texts.  Appropriate understanding of the purpose, structure, and language features in texts. | Analysis of ways in which creators of a range of texts convey information, ideas, and perspectives.  Identification and analysis of ways in which language features are used to create meaning in a range of texts. | Creation of effective texts for different purposes, using appropriate textual conventions. |
| C | Generally clear writing and speaking, using a mostly appropriate vocabulary.  Appropriate grammatical control; some errors, but these do not impede meaning. | Comprehension of some information and ideas in texts.  Recognition and understanding of the purpose, structure, and language features in some texts. | Identification, with some basic analysis, of ways in which creators of a narrow range of texts convey simple information and ideas.  Identification, with some basic analysis, of ways in which language features are used to create meaning in a narrow range of texts. | Creation of texts for some purposes, using appropriate textual conventions. |
| D | Occasionally clear writing and speaking, with a restricted vocabulary.  Partial grammatical control; some errors impede meaning. | Identification of information and ideas in texts.  Some recognition and awareness of the purpose, structure, and/or language features in some texts. | Reference to one or more ways in which creators of a narrow range of texts convey simple information and ideas.  Reference to some ways in which language features are used to create meaning in a narrow range of texts. | Creation of texts for a narrow range of purposes, using some textual conventions. |
| E | Limited clarity in writing and speaking, with a limited vocabulary.  Limited grammatical control; errors impede meaning. | Identification of some information or ideas in a text.  Limited recognition and awareness of the purpose, structure, and language features in a text. | Recognition of the way in which a creator of a text conveys a simple piece of information or idea.  Reference to a way in which language features are used to create meaning in a simple text. | Creation of a partial text for a purpose, attempting to use appropriate textual conventions. |