

English Course Outline - N5

Criteria and Expectations

All pupils are given the opportunity to attempt work of a National 5 level, but this is carefully monitored and at the beginning of the year all pupils will undertake National 4 Literacy assessments in order to gauge their confidence and skill level. Pupils are also able to study National 3, 4 in S4 and then to progress to N5 in S5.

Our presentation policy for National 5 is made on an individual pupil basis and decisions concerning final levels are made at various points in the year depending on specific circumstances. Due to recent SQA changes, this will now mean we will be asked to submit a decision towards the end of November as well as reviewing progress and suitability following the Estimate Exams in February.

Pupils are all given the opportunity to sit the SQA Literacy qualifications at N3 & N4 and many pupils successfully undertake the National 5 Literacy Unit in S4 if they do not sit the final N5 exam.

We take into account – work ethic, homework submission, ability to meet deadlines, quality of work produced, attendance and evidence of independent study and revision. These elements are used along with assessment results to determine suitability for progression to the Higher course in S5.

English Faculty Results and Ethos:

The English Faculty at Mackie Academy prides itself not only in its highly successful results but also in its approach to attainment. We are aspirational in our desire that all pupils should be given the opportunity to attain their potential and we spend a lot of time personalising the learning paths of pupils to best meet their needs. As such for the last two years we have had a 98% pass rate at N5 with over 56% of the students gaining an A grade. This has been possible through the knowledge and experience of staff but also due to pupils following our advice and recommendations as to which particular level they should be presented for.

Literacy

Pupils are all given the opportunity to sit the SQA Literacy qualifications at N3 & N4 and many pupils successfully undertake the National 5 Literacy Unit in S4 if they do not sit the final N5 exam. These assessments test their reading, writing, talking and listening skills without the pressure of a final exam. Many pupils who struggle with the literature based parts of the course find these accessible and it allows them to successfully achieve part of a N5 qualification.

Assessments

Internal: Reading, writing, talking and listening skills are assessed in a variety of contexts. These are used to determine suitability for the N5 course as well as identifying strengths and areas for improvement. The RUAE paper (1 hour) tests understanding and analysis skills and is closely linked in format to the paper in the final exam. Writing is usually assessed through Folio drafts – pupils MUST submit examples of work which pass N5 level before the SQA deadline date.

External:

Paper 1: RUAE (Reading paper) – One unseen non-fiction passage and a selection of questions testing understanding, analysis and evaluation skills – 1 hour (30 marks)

Paper 2: i) Textual Analysis – Scottish Texts which will have been studied in class. Series of questions which test language skills and understanding of the text. (20 marks)

ii) Critical Reading – To write one critical essay based on literature studied over the year. This tests not just their ability to remember their text in depth but their writing style and ability. (20 marks - 1½ hours to complete both sections)

Portfolio: Two writing pieces are sent to the SQA to be externally assessed. This tests the ability to plan, develop and edit work as well as being able to meet set deadlines. (up to 1000 words each - 30 marks in total)

- i) Creative/reflective
- ii) Persuasive/discursive

Pupils can work on these independently throughout the year but evidence must be retained to determine authenticity. Teachers are limited in the amount of support they are allowed to offer due to strict SQA guidelines. Pupils are not allowed to work on these pieces with Tutors or be given extensive parental support.

Assessment and submission dates for the Portfolio will be shared with pupils and parents via Show My Homework, the English Faculty website and the school assessment calendar.

Skills

To work independently and organise an effective schedule for study and revision.

To gain an appreciation of techniques used by writers to achieve particular effects and to transfer these skills into their own writing.

To take responsibility for their own learning.

To develop key communication and literacy skills in reading, writing, talking and listening.

To show understanding, analysis and evaluation of detailed texts in the contexts of literature, language and media, including Scottish literature.

Further information can be found at: https://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/EnglishCourseSpecN5.pdf