



Integrate
Ireland
Language &
Training

**A resource
book for
language
support
in
post-
primary
schools**

2007

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Terminology

The term **SECOND LANGUAGE** refers to the language which becomes critical for a child or adult for significant day-to-day purposes such as education or work. In effect it replaces the mother tongue, or first language, for these purposes. It does not suggest that the speaker knows only two languages. As this term is used internationally, it is a useful search term for internet purposes.

The term **NEWCOMER** has been used to refer to those parents and students whose mother tongue is not English. The term newcomer reflects the challenge facing parents and children from different language and cultural backgrounds in accessing and entering formal education in a new country.

Photocopying

Principals or teachers working in post-primary schools throughout Ireland are authorized to photocopy the contents of this book as necessary. Others should apply for permission to Integrate Ireland Language and Training

Frequently asked questions

Does the legal status of the student have any relevance?

Children of **EU nationals** have all the rights of Irish students. In general they are in Ireland because parents are working here. It is important to remember that they may intend returning to their own country of origin in the future.

Children of **non-EU migrant** workers. The parents of these students are in Ireland on a Work Permit or Work Visa. This is generally for a specified length of time. Typical of this group is the many students whose parents are working in the hospital/medical sector. These students will possibly spend five years in Ireland and may continue or conclude their education elsewhere.

The student whose family has **refugee status** has all the rights of the Irish student. The parents are entitled to training, education and work. The family will live in rented or purchased accommodation. If the family complies with residence requirements, the student will be entitled to free third level education (should this system continue). Residence requirements are the same as for Irish families.

A student may come from a family of **asylum seekers**. In this case the family is in an uncertain situation while waiting for the decision on their application for asylum. Parents are not entitled to work. The family may be living in direct provision (e.g. hostel, hotel etc.) and there may not be good facilities for studying or doing homework. Students living in such accommodation have more problems socializing with Irish peers because it is difficult to invite other students home with the freedom that is generally associated with teenagers.

Separated minors (unaccompanied children) are those teenagers who arrive in Ireland without their families. They are in the care of local Health Boards and are generally housed in hostels. At present, separated minors are located in the Dublin area only. Their way of life is entirely different to students who are living with their family unit. They must be largely self-sufficient and require considerable motivation to apply themselves to studying.

How can we support the early steps into integration in the school?

Both mainstream and language support teachers can help the student achieve **social integration** in the classroom and social areas of the school as quickly as possible by:

- Ensuring that the newly arrived student can understand and use the basic language of the classroom (e.g. toilet, be quiet, take this down etc.)
- Equipping the student with knowledge of the rules and procedures of the school so that he or she does not unwittingly infringe these rules (it may be necessary to demonstrate these by miming, or providing visuals etc.)
- Helping the student to understand different norms of behaviour that may exist in the new culture/society (in classroom, school, playground etc.)
- Helping to build the confidence and self-esteem of the student who may feel different, excluded and less able than those around him or her.

It is important that teachers throughout the school are aware that newcomer students may be in a totally alien environment and that the normal 'culture' of the school is unknown and incomprehensible to them. In many cases they will not be able to depend on parents for explanation and preparation.

Clearly there is a good case for the provision of a **short induction programme** for newcomer students to support them in gaining confidence in 'being' in a new school environment before they even begin to acquire proficiency in English. It is particularly important to remember to do this when a student joins the school during the school year.

How can we assess a student's English language proficiency on arrival in the school?

Trying to achieve accurate assessment of a new student on arrival is both difficult and unwise. An initial interview assessment (**page 25**) helps to define broadly the level of the student's English language proficiency, in listening and speaking only, on first meeting. However, real ability and particular subject interest will only emerge over time as confidence grows.

An **on-going assessment** period should be used (for example a four-week period). During this time the language support teacher should observe the student's communicative ability, level of literacy, and coping skills in the classroom. The combination of information from the language support teacher, and any other subject teachers with whom the student is in contact, will allow an accurate profile to be identified and will highlight the potential strengths and weaknesses of the student.

It should be noted that many students are overwhelmed by the new environment in which they find themselves and their anxiety and uncertainty can initially mask their real abilities and interests.

What is the role of the language support teacher?

The **primary responsibility** of the language support teacher is to support the student's development of **English language proficiency** so that he or she can gradually **gain access to the curriculum**, ultimately achieving the same educational opportunities as English-speaking peers by:

- Working in collaboration with the mainstream subject teacher to set relevant and achievable learning targets for each student
- Preparing the student, on an on-going basis, to access mainstream learning, initially in part and later more fully
- Helping the student to develop appropriate strategies and skills to support future formal education in general.

The responsibility of the language support teacher is to deliver a programme of English language tuition which is **based on the post-primary curriculum** (see *Language Proficiency Benchmarks IILT*) and which prepares and supports the student in:

- Accessing classroom learning
- Socializing with peers.

Evidence from other parts of the world clearly indicates that the development of the language essential for school learning and socialization provides a sound basis for the student's **ongoing acquisition** of language outside the classroom. It is essential, therefore, that language support in the school is firmly focused on the linguistic demands of life in the school and curriculum learning.

The language support teacher, however, **cannot teach the curriculum** and this remains the rôle and responsibility of the various subject teachers. Students spend the greater part of their week in mainstream classes and attend language support for a small proportion of specialized class time. The benefit of this time, which is focused on English language learning, can be maximized through **liaison and a flow of information** between the mainstream subject teachers and the language support teacher.

Whether the student begins school in September or at a later point of the year, he/she is currently entitled to **two full school years of support**. It is critically important that **the student does not lose language support time** during these two years as this will inevitably have a negative effect on his or her progress and ultimate potential.

What are the basic resources and procedures needed for effective language support?

Because effective language learning requires constant reinforcement and the revisiting of previously learnt information, it is important that **a room is dedicated** to language support. This allows for posters to be kept on the walls to support on-going learning and for the collection of a wide range of suitable resources such as books, posters, students' work, real-life objects, tape recorder, computer etc.

How can the subject teacher be supported?

Where possible, liaison between **language support** and **learning support** teachers has proved to be very valuable as much material used for learning support is suitable for different stages of language learning. Learning support teachers have been very helpful in providing this support in schools throughout the country.

For the subject teacher, the introduction of non-English speaking students into the class is a challenge. Drawing the newcomer student into classroom activities can require time, planning and thought, all of which are difficult to allocate in a busy classroom. However, close **cooperation with the language support teacher** can result in the student being prepared for classroom activities so that he or she is able to work on the same things as peers, perhaps in a reduced or slower way.

If a subject teacher informs the language support teacher about **forthcoming themes, chapters** etc. then it will be possible for the student to gain some access, even in part, to what is planned for the class. If the subject teacher can also **keep the language support teacher informed** about how the student is reacting in class, coping with classroom language, interaction etc. then these matters can also be addressed in language support sessions.

It should be noted, however, that in the limited contact time that the language support teacher has with each student it is not possible, or appropriate, for the entire curriculum to be visited, even in an introductory way. It is rather a case of opening the doors to learning so that the student can gradually begin to gain more and more benefit from mainstream classes.

How can we help students to access the mainstream curriculum?

The language support programme, based on the *English Language Proficiency Benchmarks for post-primary learners*, reflects the thematic demands of the post-primary curriculum. The development of the Benchmarks was informed by a focus group of post-primary teachers working with non-English speaking students.

The sole purpose of language support is to allow the student to gain access to mainstream learning and to understand and socialize within the community of the school. Language proficiency in other areas will develop naturally as the student interacts with peers.

Students with very low levels of English language proficiency

Those students with very low levels of English on entry, below A1 level, will **require proportionately more language support time** if they are to make any progress in accessing mainstream subjects.

It is possible that their formal learning abilities may be further reduced due to interruptions in their schooling or little previous formal education. In this case, concentration on developing English language skills and integration with the mainstream through subjects such as Art, P.E. and Music should be the first option. As language and learning skills develop the student should attend carefully-selected subject classes (see outline of Immersion Programme, **page 31**, for further ideas).

Low levels of literacy

The problem is magnified if the student is **not literate in the Roman alphabet**; or has **never gained literacy in any language**. Students have presented with this additional complication throughout the educational system. In this case the language support teacher will first have to address the question of literacy and the student may also attend the learning support teacher. It is entirely appropriate, therefore, that the student should be assigned **exercises to do in the mainstream classroom** to support language and literacy development. These activities may not relate to what is happening otherwise in the classroom.

It should be noted that students who are already literate in another alphabet will make the transition to the Roman alphabet relatively easily because they understand the concept of sound symbol relationships.

Students with higher levels of English language proficiency

For those students whose English language proficiency levels are at A2 or B1 on the language proficiency benchmarks, their principal language support needs will relate to the **demands of different subject areas**, the **development of strategies to deal with text** and the **development/improvement of writing skills**. See *Working with subject texts in language support* page 110.

Why record a student's progress in language support?

It is vitally important that a record is kept of every student's English language development. This development is key to all future educational achievement which is a critical issue at post-primary level. Language support teachers should record achievement in checklists which are related to the Language Proficiency Benchmarks and which provide an **instant overview** of what the student 'can do' through English. Additional information from observations by subject teachers is also important to the development of this profile.

Informing subject choice

The **combined view of language support and subject teachers** should be used to help inform appropriate subject choices for a student in order to give him/her the best opportunity of achieving success. Subjects at second level may be divided into three categories of challenge for non-English speaking students.

- Those subjects which have broadly **universal application** and these include Mathematics and the Sciences. They may also include subjects with an applied element such as Home Economics and Woodwork.
- The subjects which have a **heavy cultural load** which includes History and English literature
- The subjects which are well supported in text books with pictures, graphs etc. but which have **specialized terminology** such as Geography

Engagement with **practical subjects** may be undertaken at an early stage but not until the student has a clear understanding of the **safety issues** inherent in the practical component. Liaison between the subject teacher and the language support teacher can be used as an effective means of communicating safety matters. This information can be dealt with in language support until the student can clearly understand what is involved.

When should language support be brought to an end?

The stage of English language proficiency reached by the student will determine the amount of language support that will be necessary. This will allow the decision to be made to reduce or terminate language support. It is important that the student engages fully with carefully-selected mainstream subject learning as soon as possible.

Information about an individual student's proficiency in the four skills of language may be gained from the Individual Student Profile. The overall objective of language support is for the student to achieve proficiency at the B1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe).

However, even after language support has ended, there are occasions when the non-English speaking student may need reassurance or some particular support. Many full-time language support teachers have introduced an **'open' period** each week when students can come to discuss a particular language difficulty or can be referred by the subject teacher for some extra support. This system has worked well.

What about public examinations?

Language examinations

Examinations are available in the Leaving Certificate in **Arabic, Japanese** and **Russian** in addition to the curriculum languages, Irish, French, German, Italian and Spanish.

Language examinations can also be provided in the Leaving Certificate for students with the following mother tongues – Dutch, Portuguese, Swedish, Finnish, Modern Greek and Danish. It is necessary to make application to the DES in advance so that an examination paper may be set. These examinations test **mother tongue** knowledge, not the level of knowledge of a foreign language learner.

Marking scripts

Inevitably newcomer students in post-primary schools will face the challenge of the Junior and Leaving Certificate examinations. At present, the only concession is the permission for non-English speaking students to bring a translating dictionary into the examination. In addition, however, examiners when marking scripts can consult with their supervisor in all cases when they feel that another view is necessary in the interest of fairness.

It should be noted, however, that if students have not developed skills in using dictionaries effectively, there is considerable danger that they will overuse the dictionary during an examination and impact negatively on their production of exam answers. See section on *Developing dictionary skills* (**page 82**)

What are the entitlements and entry requirements for third level?

Entitlement to entry to third level education depends, in the first place, on the legal status of the student. Length of residency in Ireland is also taken into account with regard to the payment of fees and this condition applies to Irish students as well.

Trinity College Dublin

No concessions are made for students seeking entry to TCD. They must fulfil the matriculation requirements of six Leaving Certificate subjects, appropriate points for the course they wish to take and a second language.

National University of Ireland

The NUI (UCD, UCC, UCG and Maynooth) accepts exemption from Irish on the basis of 1) the age of the student and the stage at which he/she came to school in Ireland (birth certificate necessary) or 2) the provision of a Certificate of Exemption from Irish which has been obtained by the school.

Prospective students must fulfil the six subject Leaving Certificate requirement and relevant points for the course they wish to enter. A foreign language is required and this may be certified by the provision of examination certificates from the student's country of origin.

In the absence of relevant documentation a student may seek an exemption and such applications will be considered by the Admissions Officers on a case-by-case basis. It is important to address this issue at an early stage by making contact with the National University of Ireland.

Note: Internal regulations may be subject to change so it is important to make contact with the relevant institutions.

What about creating an intercultural school community?

With the introduction of students from different cultural backgrounds to the community of the school, issues can arise that were not evident before. The failure of newcomer students to integrate into the school may be due to ethnic or religious constraints that preclude involvement in many activities or may be due to racist attitudes on the part of other students.

In recent years material has been developed to support the integration of students from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Cross-curriculum guidelines may be obtained from the NCCA.

The language support teacher is an invaluable resource for mediating activities to contribute to intercultural understanding. He/she gains many insights into the lives, traditions, beliefs and values of newcomer students through close contact in small language support groups. Regular or sporadic involvement of the language support teacher in mainstream class and whole-school activities has proved to be very effective in many schools.

How do we deal with apparent psychological problems?

It is important not to assume that **language learning difficulties** are manifestations of psychological or learning problems. A particular example of this is the 'Silent Period' that young students may pass through when immersed in an unknown language. During this time they fail to communicate while absorbing and coming to terms with a new language. While the Silent Period is more closely associated with younger children, there is evidence that **teenagers may also become uncommunicative** during the early stages of entry to post-primary schools.

If there is evidence of real **psychological or behavioural problems**, the same procedure should be followed as for an Irish student. In any event, parental permission must be sought in the first instance and **seeking parental permission for assessment can be problematic**. In some societies there is a considerable stigma attached to psychological assessment and treatment, and this may also be an obstacle to gaining parental permission.

How can we communicate effectively with parents?

Achieving satisfactory communication with parents can present some difficulty, particularly if parents have little English themselves. A Parent-Teacher meeting report form (**pages 18 to 20**) has been produced to provide some support when communication seems impossible.

Parent-teacher days

Parent-teacher days can be confusing to parents who don't understand the systems used in different schools and, as a result, cannot find which 'queues' to join in order to meet the appropriate teachers. It is suggested that a reception procedure for newcomer parents on these days would help them to find their way around so that both teachers and parents can gain from the meeting. It is important that the Language Support teacher should also meet parents during these sessions.

SCHOOL REVIEW

Looking at existing procedures

Ensuring equality of opportunity for non-English speaking students in post-primary schools

Introduction

The integration of students into the community of any school and, by implication, supporting their engagement with the curriculum and with education in general, frequently implies an examination of the procedures and structures already present in the school to ensure that they provide an appropriately inclusive environment.

Checklists

This set of checklists has been derived from practice in a number of countries where experience of newcomers is extensive. It is likely that many of the points on the checklists are already in place in Irish schools, or can be implemented with relative ease. Some, however, may be more difficult to plan, organise or implement.

The checklists are intended to provide a quick and easy means for school principals to identify the extent to which a school is supporting newcomers and, at the same time, supporting teaching staff in the challenge of working with students whose cultural and linguistic backgrounds can place constraints on integration and learning.

The checklists are categorised under the headings, *environment at a whole-school level*, *assessment and placement*, *inclusivity in the subject classroom*, and *provision of language support*.

Future directions

Inevitably, as experience with a multicultural environment grows, principals, teachers and students themselves will be able to contribute to a more extensive view of how to address this situation effectively and with the best results for all concerned. However, the path to good practice must begin at some point with the ultimate objective of identifying what is 'best practice' for the Irish context.

Using the checklists

The checklists, on the following pages, may prove helpful both in examining existing school policy and procedures and in identifying directions for development or change.

**CHECKLIST 1:
ENVIRONMENT AT A WHOLE-SCHOOL LEVEL**

		YES	NOT YET	NOT APPLICABLE
1	Notices, display material etc. acknowledge and provide positive images of different ethnic groups			
2	The reception area has multilingual welcome notices, a world map indicating where students come from (including different parts of Ireland), photographs showing the diversity of the school population, a list or graph indicating the range of mother tongues represented in the school etc.			
3	There is a clear and sympathetic reception process in place			
4	Parents of new students receive a 'welcome' booklet from the school			
5	New students receive a 'starter kit'			
6	Classroom and library material reflects positive images of ethnic and cultural diversity			
7	Artwork reflects the cultural profile of the school			
8	Games and hobby activities in the school can adjust flexibly to support inclusion.			
9	A fund is available to support extra activities (trips, equipment etc.)			
10	Food served in the school cafeteria includes items that meet the cultural and dietary needs of students			
11	Special events are scheduled throughout the year to mark all cultures and heritages represented in the school			
12	A planned peer mediation programme is in place*			
13	Students who are already bilingual are given training to act as assistants*			
14	Anti-racism education is included as a natural part of the curriculum			

****some excellent models exist and can be adjusted to meet the needs of Irish schools***

**CHECKLIST 2:
ASSESSMENT AND PLACEMENT**

		YES	NOT YET	NOT APPLICABLE
1	There is a planned procedure for assessment of each new student			
2	The student's English language proficiency is assessed in relation to the Language Proficiency Benchmarks (IILT)			
3	On-going assessment in different subject areas is used to determine educational background (when this is unclear)			
4	Opportunity to learn (e.g. language/cultural constraints in different subjects) is considered when subject choices are made			
5	Subject choices are kept under observation for an initial period			
6	An assessment portfolio is maintained for each student from the day of arrival which focuses on, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • psychosocial adjustment, • language learning • continuity of academic learning 			

**CHECKLIST 3:
INCLUSIVITY IN THE SUBJECT CLASSROOM**

		YES	NOT YET	NOT APPLICABLE
1	There is a protocol for introduction of new students into different subject classes			
2	All students and teachers are aware of the importance of pronouncing the names of new students correctly			
3	Newcomers are introduced to other students who speak the same language where possible			
4	The teacher makes personal contact with a newcomer at least once during each class			
5	Teachers use team-building activities as a natural part of the class programme			
6	Students often work in collaborative groups			
7	Classroom routines are predictable and explicit			
8	Classroom displays are inclusive			

**CHECKLIST 4:
PROVISION OF LANGUAGE SUPPORT**

		YES	NOT YET	NOT APPLICABLE
1	Language support is provided in relation to the <i>Language Proficiency Benchmarks for Post-primary Schools</i>			
2	The amount of support to be provided is calculated with reference to the guidelines produced by IILT			
3	The development of English language proficiency is monitored in relation to performance in subject areas (see checklists provided by IILT)			
4	Liaison between subject teachers and language support teachers is used to focus the programme of support			
5	Feedback is provided to subject teachers			

MEETING THE INTERCULTURAL CHALLENGE

The following activities have all been carried out successfully in schools throughout Ireland. They have been categorised into:

- * **The physical environment**
- * **Activities to bring students together**
- * **Activities to bring parents together**
- * **Activities to support school—home communication**

Creating an inclusive physical environment

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Maps or posters showing the countries or flags represented by the school population. Frequently a large map is hung in the entrance area of the school. Ribbons or threads connect the countries of origin of students to the location of the school.* A display of flags from different countries, sometimes with a photograph of the student on the flag* The word 'welcome' is written on a poster, coloured paper etc. in the languages known by students in the school (including of course English and Irish). This may have the title 'We speak many languages here'.* Notices throughout the school are representative of the languages spoken by the students* Students make a map of their own country to hang in their classroom and give a short talk about that country* Information about national days, holy days and holidays put on posters – e.g. Chinese New Year* Photographs and displays of events that are important to the school are presented in a way that newcomers can understand – school tours, feast days, Halloween etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">* For the main Irish festivals (Christmas, Easter, St. Patrick's Day, Halloween etc.) signs and information are put along the corridors in the different languages represented in the school* Charts to show the numbers of students of different nationalities in the school* Intercultural day with displays of work about other countries* Posters about events for adults, parents etc. presented so that they can be understood by all* Collection of postcards and holiday photographs from different places* Photographs and recipes for foods from different countries* Books available on different cultural festivals, celebrations etc.* Photographic records* Art work and crafts of different ethnic origins displayed |
|---|---|

In general the posters, displays, artwork, books etc. are used to show **the richness of difference but the basic 'sameness' of students** from different cultures.

Bringing students together

The following activities, many of which are a **natural part of the school day**, are consciously used to bring students together.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Choir and singing* Plays and drama* School tours* Group art sessions* Projects on a range of mainstream topics (e.g. environment, global warming)* Games and PE* Cooking* World dance day* A buddy system for a particular subject* Concerts* Introduction of newcomer students with a discussion about where they come from* Study of different festivals with class groups* Inviting newcomer students to bring an English-speaking friend to the language support class from time to time (using the buddy system)* Language support teacher takes the mainstream class at regular intervals (e.g. once a week) and works on materials that will be followed up in language support in the following days. Subjects may be civics, racism, geography etc.* Language support teacher takes a session in the mainstream class every few weeks and deals specifically with an issue of culture, difference, what it is to feel different etc.* Project World – native students finding out about the countries that newcomers are from | <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Language support teacher joins in art or IT class looking at art and websites from around the world* Story writing* School band* Hurling and football matches* Sponsored walks* Participation in local festivals, parades etc.* Discussing school in different countries* Creative movement sessions dealing with issues like exclusion/assimilation etc.* Irish students helping teachers and newcomers with preparation for multicultural day* International language day with words, songs, poems etc.* Ecumenical prayer week used to include students from all religious backgrounds* Inviting speakers from different countries to talk about different, relevant topics – e.g. landmines in Africa, racism in South Africa etc.* Seating newcomer students with native students* Using assembly for presentations, songs, language, costumes, drama, stories from other countries* Getting students playing together in school breaks, using board games for indoor breaks* Swimming and Irish dancing* Presentations about students' interests, hobbies, families etc. (all students) |
|---|---|

Bringing parents together

It is important to make invitations, notices of events etc. as clear as possible to those parents who have little English. If parents expect that they will not be able to understand, then they are unlikely to make the effort to attend.

Possible means of making invitations understandable are:

'Visual' invitations

Getting another student to explain

Getting another parent who speaks that language to explain

When parents have 'broken the ice' they will be more willing to involve themselves in school events.

- * Explaining invitations to school events to encourage parents to attend
- * Newcomer parents encouraged to attend coffee mornings
- * Introducing parents of newcomers to one another to encourage communication
- * Meetings with principal, subject teacher(s), and language support teacher
- * Encouraging interaction between parents waiting to collect children
- * Home school liaison teacher arranges language classes for parents
- * Home school liaison teacher runs short courses on different topics throughout the year for parents
- * Home school liaison teacher organises a project which is done by newcomer mothers and students on their own country, food, families etc. This is presented in the school at the end of the year
- * Night courses for parents – IT, cookery, art and craft, aromatherapy – attended by parents from all cultural groups (good attendance by parents of newcomers)
- * One World Day – food, clothes, paintings, drama etc. from different countries
- * World Book Day

- * Students write play and parents of students from school and other nearby schools are invited to the performance
- * Language support teacher and home school liaison teacher have a regular time each week when they meet parents in the language support room for one hour
- * Language classes for parents provided free of charge for 1.5 hours per week
- * English classes for newcomer parents
- * Ethos committee made up of parents from different cultural groups/nationalities
- * Parents invited to talk in different classes
- * Parent Association meetings
- * Party, e.g. at Christmas, for parents and students together
- * Cookery classes for all parents takes place once per week
- * Home school liaison arranges speakers each week specifically for parents to attend (e.g. speech therapist talking about speech problems)
- * Supervision of activities by parents
- * Cookery demonstrations
- * Availability of parents' room as a meeting point
- * Open day
- * Cake sales

School—home communication

The importance of clear procedures, letters, forms etc. must not be underestimated. Some time and thought should be given to find the best means of achieving satisfactory communication. The use of visuals—pictures, clipart etc. is an effective means of overcoming a communication barrier.

- * Clear enrolment procedures and forms
- * Parent teacher meetings
- * Pictorial report forms (see IILT Teachers' Manual)
- * All school events – carol service, plays etc.
- * Invitations to parents to work in the classroom
- * Meeting arranged with representative group from Muslim community and new Muslim parents
- * Visit to Mosque arranged by school followed by lunch at Mosque
- * Picture-based booklet with school times, schedules and routines
- * Parents invited to send/bring in information about their culture and country
- * Regular meetings for newcomer parents with subject teachers and language support teachers together
- * Language support teacher shows European Language Portfolios to parents and comments on student's work
- * Bulletins for parents at regular intervals on all aspects of school activity
- * Language support room is often the first and main point of contact with the school
- * School newsletter is used in language support class as a resource and explained to students so that they can tell their parents
- * Regular informal meetings are valuable to inform parents gradually about education, their child's progress and what is expected by the school

- * Flavours of the World' event organized by parents who cook their traditional dishes, and teachers and parents enjoy an evening together
- * Home school liaison teacher
- * Teachers making enough time to speak to parents who cannot communicate rapidly
- * Presence of language support teacher at school occasions
- * Principal and teachers have been invited to visit students' homes
- * Meetings to get parents involved in their children's work
- * Open afternoon once a month for parents to view their children's work and discuss progress with language support teacher
- * Local librarian requested to provide information session on how to use the library
- * Information booklets about the school translated into the parents' language
- * Availability of language support teacher to meet parents informally – open door
- * School notes explained by language support teacher or with supplementary notes
- * Notes sent home outlining the work being done with the student
- * Newspaper/novels for parents in different languages available from language support teacher
- * Sometimes interpreters are necessary to support communication

Parent – Teacher Meeting Report

Name of student: _____ Year / Class: _____

Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Punctuality and attendance:



Time school starts: _____



1 2 3 4 5 6



Interaction with other students:



1 2 3 4 5 6



Interaction/answering in classroom activities:



1 2 3 4 5 6



Reading:



1 2 3 4 5 6



Writing:



1 2 3 4 5 6



Speaking:



1 2 3 4 5 6



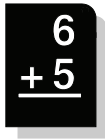
Listening:



1 2 3 4 5 6



Mathematics:



Physical education:



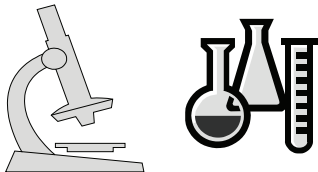
Geography:



History:



Science:



Information technology (IT):



Home Economics:



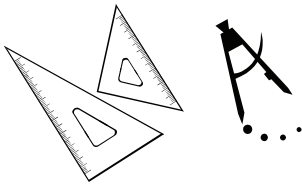
Art:



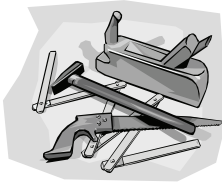
Music:



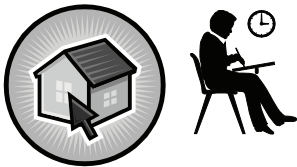
Technical drawing:



Woodwork:



Homework:



SIGNED: _____

*Setting up the
Language Support
Programme*

LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Acquiring a FIRST LANGUAGE (mother tongue)

Children first produce single words

1. Then they learn to combine words into phrases
2. In due course they learn to combine phrases into sentences.

This process is driven by the urge to communicate, which is part of each child's biological inheritance.

Developmental orders in acquiring a FIRST LANGUAGE

The acquisition of a first language is marked by regular developmental orders. These are familiar to parents and teachers. In the case of English, for example, acquiring wh-question forms goes through the following stages:

What Mama singing?

wh-WORD + NOUN (PHRASE) + MAIN VERB

What Mama is singing?

wh-WORD + NOUN (PHRASE) + AUXILIARY + MAIN VERB

What is Mama singing?

wh-WORD + AUXILIARY + NOUN (PHRASE) + MAIN VERB

Success and failure in FIRST LANGUAGE acquisition

- **All** normally endowed children learn to speak the language of their environment.
- Depending on the environment in which they live, **children will differ** in their early experience, and this will be reflected, in particular, in the words they know.
- There are **no failures** in first language acquisition as the acquisition of speech: all normally endowed children become native speakers of their mother language.
- Learning to **read and write** is a conscious and intentional process. For most children it is part of schooling, and is subject to all the factors that determine success or failure in education generally.

What about a SECOND LANGUAGE?

There are many differences between second and first language acquisition, including the following:

- Unless it begins in early childhood, second language acquisition is **not part of the learner's primary cognitive development.**
- The later second language acquisition begins, the more it is influenced by **motivational factors.**

Clearly these facts have implications for second language students in post-primary education.

The types of developmental stages that we see in a child's acquisition of the mother tongue, also appear in second language learning.

All normally-endowed children learn their mother tongues successfully. Motivation can affect second language learning. This is not generally a feature of very young children but could be evident in students in post-primary education

Some important facts about acquiring a **SECOND LANGUAGE**

- All learners of second languages subconsciously transfer grammatical properties of their first language to the second language
- Second language acquisition proceeds by stages just like first language acquisition. Therefore you will find much evidence of developmental orders.
- The learner's knowledge of the second language develops systematically, which means that errors are not random.

The challenge facing language support teachers

- On its own, language support can never be enough because teachers, inevitably have **limited time** with their language support students.
- On the other hand, the students are integrated into mainstream school activities and have **constant exposure** to the target language.
- For this reason, language support must **focus principally on the curriculum** and on the language necessary for a student's socialization in the school.
- We can **maximize the effectiveness of language support** by always giving priority to language that will allow students to participate as much as possible in mainstream classes (see the Language Proficiency Benchmarks and European Language Portfolio).
- **Collaboration with mainstream subject teachers** will allow you to devise activities that create a positive bridge into the mainstream class.
- A positive **whole-school policy** will also ensure the social integration of students whose home language is not English.

Points to remember!

- ✓ **Slowing down speech, using fewer and simpler words, repeating key words, using mime, gesture, visual supports and restating with gesture all help learners to match words to meaning.**
- ✓ **Provide contextual clues—always work from the concrete with very low level learners**
- ✓ **Involve other students in the group in helping a newly-arrived learner to understand what is happening. Teenagers understand teenagers!**

It can be helpful to have some knowledge about a learner's first language but it is not essential for effective teaching.

It is, however, very good for a learner's self-esteem if the teacher learns a few words or phrases in his/her language.

Language support should encourage a cyclical process so that what happens in the language support class facilitates the acquisition of more language in mainstream classes and this, in turn, helps students to become fully integrated members of the school community.

AT THE BEGINNING

At the beginning

When new students are assigned to classes at any stage of the school year, take time to:

1. Find out exactly where the students are located in classes in the school
2. If possible get feedback from as many subject teachers as possible with his/her first impressions (see **page 26**) for the type of initial information that is useful). Further information (see **page 27**) is useful at intervals during the year, for example every six weeks or half term .
3. Carry out initial basic assessment of the student(s) – see *Initial Assessment* (**page 25**) and also take the age, year and English language proficiency of the student into account when planning the course
4. Wait for a period of weeks before carrying out a more intensive assessment.

Points to remember!

- Achieving accurate assessment of a student shortly after arrival may not prove helpful. It is to everybody's advantage to allow a 'settling down' period before attempting this.**
- Language proficiency will not be consistent at the same level across all 4 skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) and across different thematic areas. Some students may appear very fluent orally but have difficulty with reading and writing. On occasion this situation may be reversed.**
- The ability of any student to perform in the classroom must always be viewed in relation to the performance of the native-speaking peer group.**

A regular flow of communication between the subject teacher and the language support teacher is critical for the successful development of the student in language learning, access to curriculum learning and socialization in the school.

Taking time to observe how a student is performing in different situations in the school— mainstream class, playground, sports etc.— will help the language support teacher to identify an individual student's particular learning needs.

Initial interview assessment for new students

✓ appropriate box as interview proceeds

* response may not be accurate but indicates a reasonable level of comprehension

		No response	Some comprehension but unsure response	Response indicating comprehension*
1	What is your name?			
2	What is your age?			
3	What language do you speak at home?			
4	Where do you live?			
5	Have you got brothers and sisters?			
6	What hobbies or sports do you like?			
Only proceed to 7 if the student has answered some or all of questions 1-6.				
7	How did you come to school today?			
8	Did you go to school in another place? (if appropriate)			
9	Tell me about your last school			
10	What was your best subject?			
11	What did you not like in school?			
12	What will you do after school today?			
13	What would you like to be when you finish school?			

Performance	Interpretation	Action
Questions 1-6 No real response	Has little or no English language proficiency	First learning target is A1 in the Language Proficiency Benchmarks
	May be overwhelmed/shy etc.	Observe the student over the following weeks.
Questions 1-6 Responses to some or all questions	Some level of proficiency at least to A1 level. More rigorous assessment after 'settling down' will clarify this.	Work at A1 level and observe student's performance in different skills—speaking, listening, reading and writing
Questions 7-13 Student understands the question but responds inaccurately	Some proficiency at A2 level. More rigorous assessment later.	Work at A1/A2 level and observe student's performance in different skills.
Questions 7-13 Student understands the questions and responds with general accuracy	Proficiency in spoken interaction in the A2/B1 range. Further assessment required later.	Work at A2/B1 level and observe the student's performance in different skills.

First feedback from subject teacher or year head shortly after arrival of new language support student

Name of teacher: _____

Name of student: _____

Year: _____

Subject: _____

Date: _____

	YES	NO	SOMETIMES
Is there evidence of this student mixing/ working with other students?			
Has this student ever volunteered information in class?			
Has this student asked for clarification or help in class?			
Can you see evidence of this student making progress in class generally?			
In your estimation is this student familiar with this subject?			
Have you got insights into what this student already knows in this subject?			
What is creating the most difficulty for this student at this time?	<p align="center">Please tick \checkmark</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Listening comprehension <input type="checkbox"/> Reading comprehension <input type="checkbox"/> Specific vocabulary <input type="checkbox"/> Writing <input type="checkbox"/> Interacting with peers <input type="checkbox"/> Homework		
Please indicate any particular areas that would benefit from language support in the next 6 – 8 weeks (If appropriate, name of textbook and chapter would be helpful)			

The answers to the questions in this form will help the language support teacher to identify teaching priorities for this student. It is **not necessary** to complete the form as the information may easily be exchanged informally. The form is merely to provide guidance.

Feedback from subject teacher on progress of language support student in the mainstream

Name of teacher: _____

Name of student: _____

Year: _____

Subject: _____

Date: _____

	YES	NO	SOMETIMES
Is there increased evidence of this student mixing with other students?			
Is this student responding appropriately in class?			
Does this student ask for explanation or clarification either in class or individually after class?			
Can you see evidence of this student making progress in classes generally?			
Is this student doing homework and any other work that is assigned?			
In which areas is this student performing well or at a satisfactory level?			
What areas are creating the most difficulty for this student?	<p style="text-align: center;">Please tick ✓</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Listening comprehension <input type="checkbox"/> Reading comprehension <input type="checkbox"/> Specific vocabulary <input type="checkbox"/> Writing <input type="checkbox"/> Interacting with peers <input type="checkbox"/> Homework <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)		
Please indicate any particular areas that would benefit from language support in the next 6 – 8 weeks (If appropriate, name of textbook and chapter would be helpful)			

The answers to the questions in this form will help the language support teacher to identify on-going areas of priority for this student. This information would be useful at intervals throughout the school year.
 It is **not necessary** to complete the form as the information may easily be exchanged informally. The form is merely to provide guidance.

The points listed in this form help a language support teacher to focus on the critical parts of classroom interaction when observing a language support student in a mainstream class.

Name: _____ Subject: _____

Teacher: _____ Date: _____

(The number of times that the student carries out the following responses/initiations etc. can be indicated with a series of ✓ or marks.)

Activity	No. of examples (✓)	No response	Poor response	Good/average response
Evidence of social relationships in the classroom				
Use of English with peers				
Engagement with others in group work				
Following teacher's instructions				
Answering teacher's questions				
Asking for clarification				
Taking cues from other students				
Evidence of personal strategies for dealing with classroom learning				
Completing tasks assigned during class				
Evidence of previous learning retained and used				
Comment: 				

ORGANIZING THE TIMETABLE FOR LANGUAGE SUPPORT

Language support is best delivered

1. **In groups**—small groups of 3-5 students, or a larger class which can be divided into pairs or small groups
2. **On a daily basis**—little and often is much more effective than a longer session less frequently

It is useful to **keep some sessions per week** for particular purposes such as:

- * Focused session on **pronunciation** for students who need this
- * Additional session for students whose **literacy** level is low
- * Referrals from subject teachers to help students with work for **mainstream classroom(s)**
- * Extra contact with students who arrive **during the school year**
- * Extra help for students approaching **public examinations**

In the **absence of a full immersion programme**, it can be very effective to assign newly arrived students (particularly those arriving during the school year) to the language support teacher(s) for the major part of their school day in the first three to four weeks following arrival. This period allows the student to become familiar with the routines of the school and to develop confidence in the school environment and so facilitates entry to subject classes.

Points to remember!

- Avoid one-to-one teaching unless this is absolutely essential for a particular reason.**
- Generally form groups on the basis of age and/or year in the school.**
- Organising students in pairs or small groups within a larger group allows for differences in language proficiency to be accommodated.**
- Use the 'open period' each day to focus exclusively on a particular problem area. This session should not be treated in the same way as the regular language support classes.**

CREATING AN EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

When students cannot understand the language that surrounds them it is necessary to create an environment in which their confidence may grow. As confidence and security develop, the student begins to engage fully with the new situation.

Four essentials for successfully language learning in an immersion situation:

1. **An 'acquisition rich' physical environment** - a room in which visual and other support is immediately available and familiar to the student, for example:
 - * Relevant **word lists** on posters
 - * **Pictorial representations / posters** of themes— weather (geography), environment, history etc.
 - * Pictures representing typical **classroom instructions** (sit down, for your homework tonight ... etc.)
 - * Availability of a **picture/photo dictionary** to help a student make him/herself understood (a photo dictionary is generally more age appropriate for teenage or adult learners)
 - * A **book** collection for borrowing
 - * **Learner's dictionaries** for expanding language learning
2. **Familiar patterns of activity**
 - * Start each session with an **oral activity**—reviewing previous learning, quick quiz, brainstorming new theme, talking about school events etc.
 - * Organise students to work in **pairs or small groups**
 - * Do an activity based on **writing, reading, labelling diagrams etc.**
 - * Finish on a whole group basis giving general feedback on problems or errors that have arisen
3. **Always give plenty of encouraging feedback both to class and individuals**
4. **Make activities obviously relevant to the students' needs in the school environment** - subject class, talking to teachers, P.E, sports, school visit, lunch room etc.

IMMERSION PROGRAMME

Introduction

The following pages provide a detailed outline of an English language immersion programme for students in the weeks/months following arrival in the school.

The programme is based on the concept of providing an intensive introduction to the range of English language necessary for:

1. Understanding the school, its routines, norms of behaviour, expectations etc.
2. Establishing social contact with peers
3. Engaging on a gradual basis with mainstream learning
4. Arriving at a high level of access to mainstream subject classes

It is recognised that it may not be possible to implement this programme in full in every school context. However, elements may be extracted from the programme which will accommodate local needs and constraints.

1 ASSUMPTIONS:

This proposal is based on the assumption that:

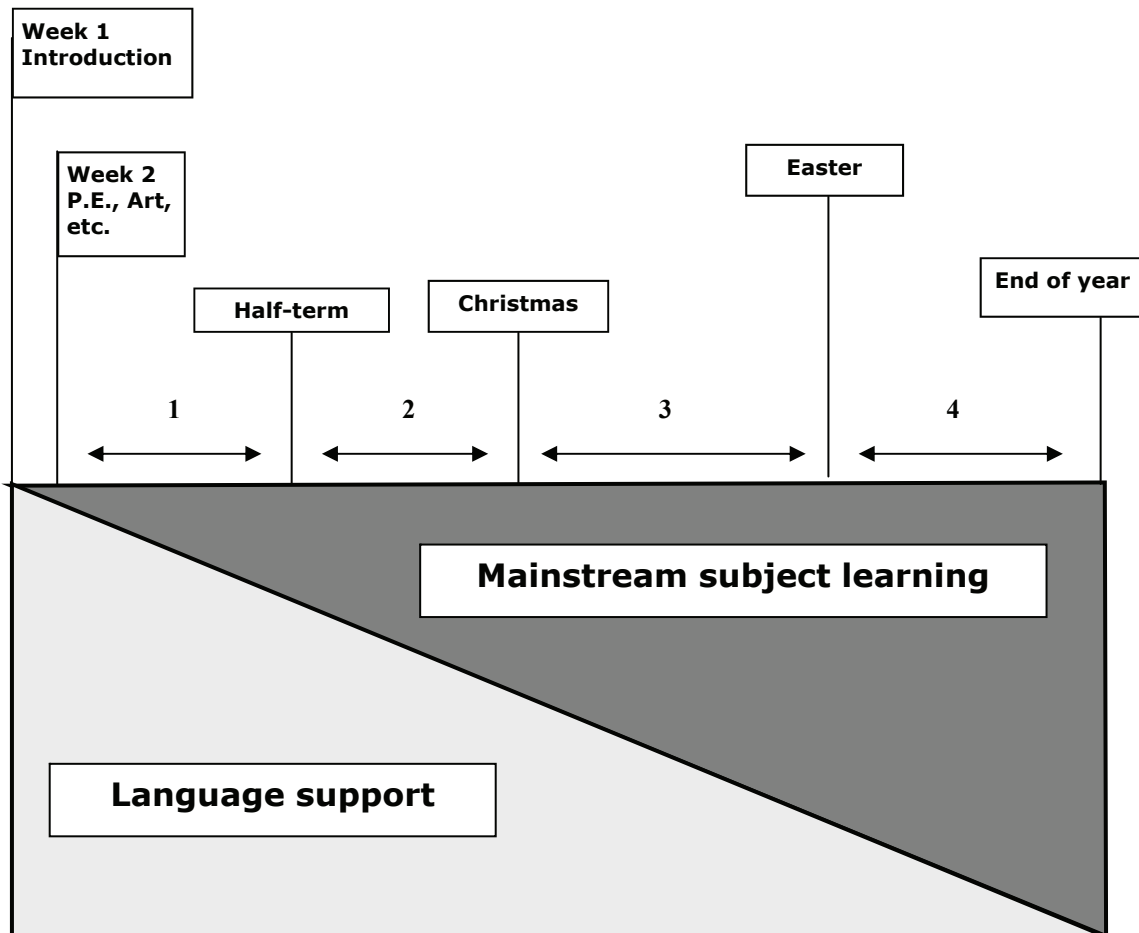
- A dedicated room is made available for English language support
- A teacher is assigned full-time to providing language support
- On-going interaction with IILT to access support as necessary. Support may take the form of materials etc. but can also provide a forum for discussion and exploration of issues and outcomes.

2 OBJECTIVES OF PROGRAMME:

To prepare newly arrived students for phased engagement with subject classes. Initial **intensive language support** will be withdrawn gradually and students, when their English-language proficiency has been adequately developed, will revert to the present provision of focused language support on a withdrawal basis.

Consideration should be given to the inclusion in the immersion programme of those students who entered the school during the previous school year and for whom English language remains a major area of difficulty.

3 MODEL:



4 TIMING AND SEQUENCING OF PROGRESSION:

Week 1

The first week of term (or in the case of students who enter the school during the year, the first week following their arrival) is used for the following purposes:

1. To begin to establish confidence in the new environment through relevant activities – tour, explanation of signs, rules etc.
2. The establishment of the language support room as the 'home base' for the time being
3. Initial observation and assessment of the student's existing abilities
4. Initial discovery (where possible) of the student's areas of particular interest or those subjects in which he/she performed well in the past (this will continue for the first term).

Introduction to the English language that is necessary for basic survival in the school

Week 2

When the student has established a base and a regular routine of attendance he/she should be introduced into those classes or activities, at the relevant year level, that have a low language load. These would typically include P.E., Art, Music etc.. This should promote integration into the community of the school.

Language support class should introduce and reinforce the **basic** range of vocabulary necessary for these classes – instructions in the gym or on playing field etc.

Week 3 – mid-term break (Period 1 on chart)

The particular focus during this period is on:

1. Further exploration of number 4 above
 2. The language required for **some** subject areas¹ ,
 3. Cross-curricular language and learning needs (*Language Proficiency Benchmarks*)
- The development of academic competences such as reading, writing etc. (*Language Proficiency Benchmarks*)

¹ The subject choices made by the student at this stage will have a direct influence on the ultimate success or otherwise of his/her formal second-level education. For a student entering Senior Cycle, subject choice should take examination requirements into account. This will require a matching of the student's interest with his/her language proficiency and examination demands. It should be possible to develop a scale to help determine the appropriacy of subject choice.

Gradual integration into subject classes could occur on the basis, for example, of attendance initially at **one to three** subject classes per week rising over the half term period to **two subject classes per subject** per week.

For example, weeks 3 – 8, possible subject classes in addition to art, P.E. etc.:

3	4	5	6	7	8
Weeks					
1 X maths 1 X geography [1 X French*]	1 X maths 1 X geography 1 X physics [1 X French*]	1 X maths 1 X geography 1 X physics [1 X French*]	2 X maths 1 X geography 1 X physics [2 X French*]	2 X maths 2 X geography 2 X physics [2 X French*]	

* Only if French is the student's mother tongue

Note: The guideline above is only a suggestion. A student with very low language proficiency on entry may not be capable of taking any subject classes for the first eight weeks (other than P.E. etc.). However, it is also important to take into consideration the student's general integration into the school. On the other hand, if a student has already a good basis of knowledge in any subject, and this information will emerge during early language class activities, then he/she will be motivated to attend more classes in that subject.

5 IDENTIFYING APPROPRIATE SUBJECTS FOR INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS

The importance of subject choice must not be under-estimated. Success for the non-native English speaker will depend largely on how difficult it is for the student to access subjects. Access will depend on a number of factors:

The universal application of a subject

There are '**universal**' facts inherent in some subjects (e.g. maths, the sciences). There are **general universals** with some more **localised facts** in subjects like geography, home economics, woodwork etc.

The cultural load inherent in a subject

Subjects such as **history** and **English literature** are heavily based on pre-existing cultural knowledge which has developed in the native student through previous education, the home, the social environment, current affairs etc. For newcomer students some of the most basic cultural information is absent. This is exemplified by the student who asked, 'Who is this person the Pope?'

Studying culturally laden subjects will inevitably require large amounts of explanation if real understanding is to develop. It must be questioned whether the student can achieve that level of understanding in the time available.

The language burden

All subjects have their own specific vocabulary. It will inevitably be necessary for the student to learn and use the relevant vocabulary. However, when the vocabulary can be related to **concrete** objects, processes etc. (e.g. chemistry, home economics, woodwork etc.) the student can take advantage of the visual and real nature of the subject to support understanding and learning.

Where teaching materials are highly **visual**, for example geography textbooks, there is also considerable support for learning.

Where subjects are more 'abstract' and involve accessing concepts that are unfamiliar then they become increasingly difficult. This difficulty is compounded when the subject is highly **text-based** and demands a high level of reading skill in order to access the information. This is typical of history, business organisation, classical studies etc.

Students' own areas of interest and previous education

As indicated above, 8-week plan, when a student has a real interest in a subject, or has studied the subject previously to some level, then there is a strong argument for facilitating and supporting engagement with that subject.

Helping students make these decisions

It is critically important that **time** is taken to help students make those choices at the beginning of their post-primary education in Ireland. This can be done in a variety of ways, and can begin with the lowest-level student (see activity *At school I like ... below*).

It is necessary to find out :

1. What the student has studied before (using pictures, icons, books etc.)
2. Whether he/she liked that subject
3. How far the student went in previous study (this can be done by looking at the text books for that year)

What the student can identify or access in subject course material (by looking through text books in the environment of the language support room, even if English level is low)

The next stage is to arrange for the student to attend a class in that subject and see how he/she reacts.

If possible, the language support teacher should accompany the student to the class and observe how he/she appears to follow, respond, cope in the classroom etc.

Progressing from this point

Full access to any subject is dependent on the student developing all those cross-curricular and school-learning skills that are essential in order to carry out effective learning and to produce classroom work, homework and tests/examinations that reflect his/her real ability.

This important learning development will depend largely on the effective delivery of language support.

Begin the process of exploring a student's subject interest despite very low level language proficiency.

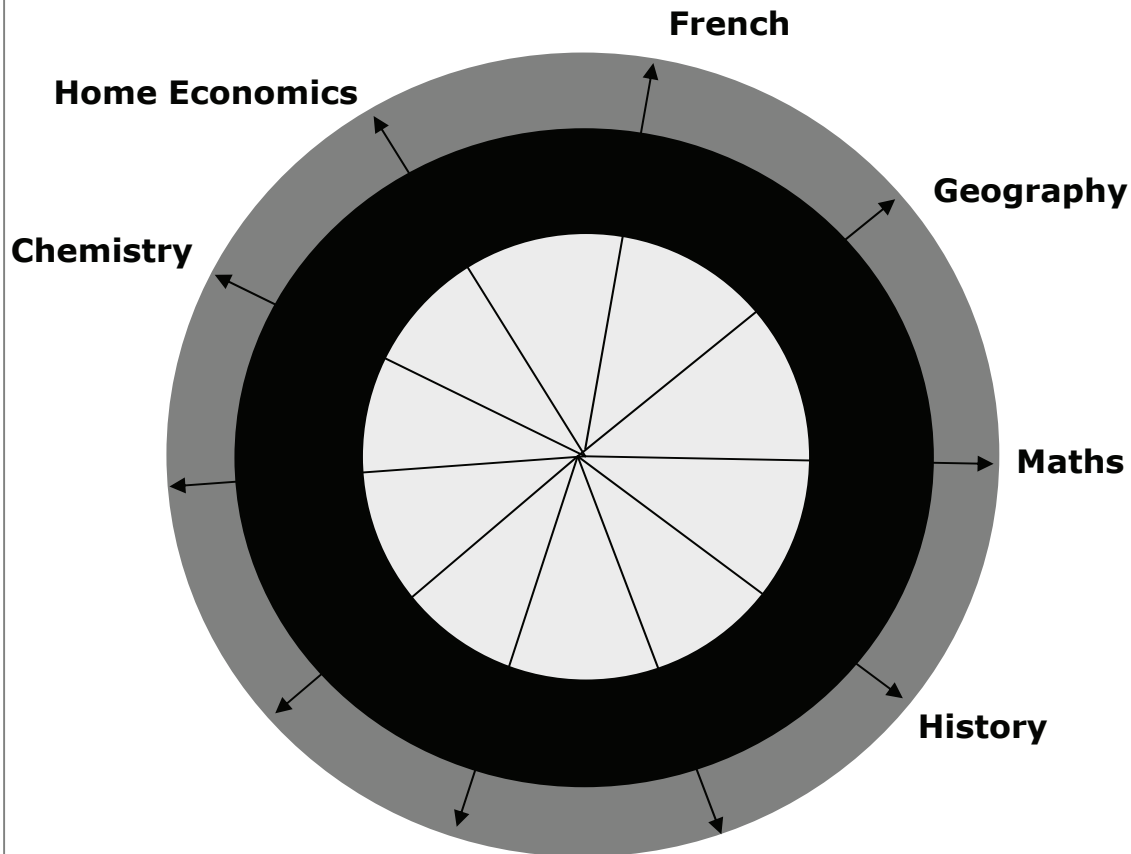
At school

Mark the picture in the box below and write the names of the subjects

At school, I like

At school, I do not like





This is the 'core' of language development for school learning. It begins with the activities described in the **Language Proficiency Benchmarks** in the modules *Personal Identification*, *Classroom Interaction*, and *Cross-curricular learning*. It progresses to include *Cultural Awareness*. This phase of learning must precede all others.

(Cultural awareness is also highly significant for some subject learning.)

This section represents the development and practice of **school learning skills**, after the basic linguistic needs have been met. This section will depend heavily on the development of reading and writing skills using the types of tasks that are typical of subject learning. It is reflected, in particular, in the module *Developing writing skills*. Inevitably this includes developing **strategies for accessing text**, **grammatical accuracy**, **use of learning supports (e.g. dictionaries)**. Classroom work in this phase may enter into specific subject areas and will overlap with the next phase.

This represents the **specific vocabulary, routines, instructions, learning and assessment activities** relating to specific subject areas. These are exemplified in the subject-specific modules in *Benchmarks*. In order for a student to succeed in subject learning it is necessary to introduce/reinforce the linguistic demands of particular subjects in the language support class. This does not mean 'teaching the curriculum'.

PHASE 1: THE LEARNING CORE

Before real integration into the classroom and the school can occur, there are basic linguistic requirements. This is represented by the CORE language learning.

The *Initial Interview Assessment* (**page 25**) should be used to determine broad level of proficiency in terms of Benchmarks (A1, A2, B1).

Low level learner

The basic language proficiency necessary for a new student with a very low level of English on entry is reflected in the *Language Proficiency Benchmarks* in the Modules *Personal Identification, Classroom Interaction, and Cross-curricular learning*.

If the student falls below A1 level, that that level is the first objective. See ice-breaking and low level activities **page 96**.

For a student starting at the level of literacy development it is likely that he/she will spend much time in the first eight weeks in language support class.

Learner with some existing proficiency

For the student entering school with evidence of some proficiency in English it is necessary to identify the extent of that knowledge and to ascertain that he/she can cope with the above Modules.

Activities should be set up during the first two weeks of language support to assess language comprehension and production proficiency. Assessment should be carried out by observing the student during a task, activity, or interaction. Several observations should be made over the time allocated.

The following statements suggest classroom activities which may be used for observational assessment:

<p>Oral and written: In oral assessment pay attention to the accuracy of pronunciation, intonation patterns, use of tenses, and range of vocabulary.</p> <p>In written assessment take into account spelling, clarity of writing, organisation and sequencing of text, in addition to vocabulary range and grammatical accuracy. (see suggested assessment grid below).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Ability to describe him/herself in terms of country of origin, age, previous education, present address, family etc. in simple but clear and reasonably accurate language * Ability to talk/write about ethnic or religious routines or issues that are important to the student * Ability to compare previous life experiences (home, school, travel etc.) with current * Ability to describe subjects learnt in school before and preferences * Ability to describe his/her daily routine with reasonably clarity and accuracy
<p>Oral:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Ability to make and respond to standard greetings, apologies, compliments etc. * Ability to ask teacher to explain, clarify, give example etc. * Ability to ask another student for information, directions etc.
<p>Listening comprehension:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Ability to understand and respond to typical classroom instructions or information * Ability to understand, for example, the rules of the school * Ability to understand directions given to another part of the school, town etc.
<p>Reading:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Obvious strategies for approaching text (e.g. using pictures, diagrams, heading etc.) * Ability to identify key words in a general text * Ability to identify key information in a general text (when, what, where, who) * Ability to understand key concepts in a subject-based text (subject chosen by student)

**Suggested grids for recording early assessment of a student with
some English language proficiency on entry**

Allocating 5 points for each element.

- 1 = very low level (**below A1** on the Language Proficiency Benchmarks)
- 2 = **in the A1 band** on the Language Proficiency Benchmarks
- 3 = **in the A2 band** on the Language Proficiency Benchmarks
- 4 = **entering B1** on the Language Proficiency Benchmarks
- 5 = **in the B1 band or above** on the Language Proficiency Benchmarks

NAME OF STUDENT: _____

YEAR IN SCHOOL: _____

YEAR HEAD _____

Oral proficiency:

Date	Pronunciation 1-5	Intonation 1-5	Vocabulary 1-5	Accuracy 1-5

Written proficiency:

Date	Spelling 1-5	Penmanship 1-5	Organisation / Sequencing 1-5	Vocabulary 1-5	Accuracy 1-5

Classroom and interactive proficiency:

Date	Response to instructions 1-5	Asking questions of teacher 1-5	Sustaining a clear con- versation 1-5

Reading proficiency:

Date	Evidence of strategies for approaching text 1-5	Identifying key words (general text) 1-5	Identifying key information (general text) 1-5	Understanding key concepts (subject text) 1-5



PROCEEDING AFTER INITIAL INTERVIEW AND OBSERVATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Managing the classroom

Ice-breaking activities and activities that raise the student's self-esteem provide a sound foundation for the learning to follow. It is most important that learners are organised in **small groups or pairs** in order to maximise the opportunities for language acquisition. This classroom management may have implications for the timetabling of the immersion course to ensure that no students are left alone in the language support room.

There is a general assumption that one-to-one teaching is the most effective approach. While this may be the case for more 'fact-based' subjects (e.g. maths) it is not the case for language learning and in fact will affect negatively both the rate and the type of language acquisition that occurs.

It is appropriate to group or pair students in accordance with **age and level of proficiency** in English. Where this is not possible, for example in the case of an older student with no English language proficiency, then level of proficiency should be used to set up the working groups.

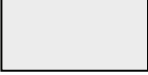
Clear weekly routines

Remembering that many language support students will have difficulty understanding the most basic information and procedures, it is important to use the classroom as an additional resource.

Students with teacher should make wall charts to support learning, and the first should be a **plan of the working week** with breaks, half-days etc. This chart should indicate clearly, through use of colour etc. when the students will be in that classroom.

This helps build confidence in the new environment as students know what is happening and when.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
9.00 start class 11.00 break 11.20 P.E. (Hussein) 12.00 Art (Ali & Ushi) 12.45 lunch	9.00 start class etc.	



Tips for teachers

- **Sessions** should follow the same order until students have developed both English language proficiency and confidence. This may take many months. Typical routine:

Whole class activity

- Teacher teaches/uses typical classroom language – instructions, explanation etc.
 - Students are encouraged to ask for clarification if necessary
 - Students work on activity in **pairs/groups**
 - Have an extension activity ready to allow the faster learners to continue
 - Session ends with a **whole class feedback**, students present work, identification of problem areas, explanation, making wall chart etc.
- Gradually **build up resources** in the room for students to access during activities – dictionaries (at least one per group), grammar reference, any word lists that they have developed, flash cards, charts from previous activity that are relevant etc.
- **Make students active participants** in the class. Get them to move around, take different roles, give feedback to one another, produce charts and diagrams, help teacher etc.

CONTENT OF THE 'CORE'

The following themes/activities constitute the basis of school-based language learning and provide a foundation for all further, more specialized school learning. These are not listed in teaching order. Themes may be taken from the chart at any point that seems most relevant. (see also descriptors in *Language Proficiency Benchmarks*).

A student may carry out the core activities at any of the levels indicated in the *Benchmarks*. For those students entering school with no English, A1 level can be achieved through the following activities.

Higher-level students will carry out the activities at a correspondingly higher level. This will occur naturally as they interact with one another in the classroom.

There are several good resource books that will offer activities to meet more general learning needs. School-related learning is rarely included, however.

Themes	Activities	Language development in context
Personal identification	<p>Pages 3 & 4 of <i>ELP</i></p> <p>Myself</p> <p>Interviews</p> <p>Families</p> <p>Name game</p> <p>Expressing likes and dislikes</p> <p>Previous education</p> <p>Language learning (<i>ELP p 4</i>)</p> <p>Daily routine (<i>ELP p. 11</i>)</p> <p>My home</p>	<p>Vocabulary</p> <p>Asking questions</p> <p>Answering questions</p> <p>Noting answers</p> <p>Expressing personal choices</p> <p>Introducing/using the past tense</p> <p>Describing regular activities orally and in written text</p> <p>Using present simple tense</p>
Classroom interaction	<p>Communicating with peers in working groups</p> <p>Game for classroom instructions, including finding particular pages in a text book</p> <p>Students work in pairs to formulate questions for the teacher about the work they are doing.</p> <p>Greeting, asking politely, thanking, asking permission, asking for help</p>	<p>Spoken interaction</p> <p>Pronunciation</p> <p>Listening comprehension</p> <p>Finding numbers quickly</p> <p>Asking questions</p> <p>Seeking clarification</p> <p>Formulaic language for greetings and politeness</p>
Cross-curricular learning	<p>Making choices about preferred school subjects</p> <p>Setting language learning objectives (<i>ELP p 5</i>)</p> <p>Using pictures to predict content of text</p> <p>Labelling diagram of the school</p> <p>Finding parts of a diagram called out by teacher (e.g. plan of a building)</p>	<p>Talking about school subjects</p> <p>Expressing and explaining likes and dislikes</p> <p>Identifying and writing about language learning</p> <p>Developing strategies for working with text – using pictures and diagram</p> <p>Listening comprehension</p>



Themes	Activities	Language development in context
Cross-curricular learning	Identifying words called out by teacher Writing short piece of text dictated by teacher Using text as a reference to fill missing words in a gapped version Creating a mind map or writing frame in preparation for writing text Writing a piece of text on a specific topic collaboratively	Listening Sound discrimination Relating sound to written symbol Identifying key vocabulary in text with support Planning written text Organising text Writing text Using appropriate tenses, prepositions etc. in written text Spoken interaction during collaborative activities
Subject learning	Instructions in the P.E. or Games class Instructions and basic vocabulary for Art class	Subject-specific instructions Subject-specific vocabulary

Achievements at the end of the CORE phase

At the end of this phase the student:

- Can identify him/herself with appropriate descriptions
- Knows the basic language of the school/home/travelling/daily routines
- Has engaged with textbooks
- Has written text
- Has read text
- Has interacted with peers and teacher
- Has asked and responded to questions
- Has learnt formulaic and polite expressions
- Has experienced the use of strategies for engaging with text
- Has thought about and expressed preferences for school subjects
- Has integrated with ease into some subject classes with a relatively low language burden

Inevitably there will be a steady growth in the student's confidence in the school environment as learning progresses in this way.

PHASE 2: DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL LEARNING SKILLS

School learning skills are all those abilities that develop naturally as a student progresses from early education into the post-primary cycles. For students who have experienced a different educational system, or whose education has been interrupted, it is necessary to revisit the basic learning approaches necessary for formal learning and, simultaneously, to develop the language that is attached to such processes.

Typical of school learning demands are:

- Working with texts of different types (from advertisements to high level descriptive texts, from instructions to examination-type questions etc.)
- Creating texts of different types (including organising text, selecting and finding vocabulary, paying attention to grammatical accuracy, adopting an appropriate tone etc.)
- Analysing and understanding what is required in homework/examination questions
- Planning and structuring answers
- Learning new vocabulary related to different subjects/topics
- Categorising, labelling, defining information
- Making connections between different tasks so that previous learning influences new challenges

Each of the above may be incorporated into language learning activities at gradually increasing levels of difficulty.

As the student's

- 1 language proficiency develops** (can be assessed as generally in A2 level *Benchmarks*, possibly with some competence still in A1)
- 2 knowledge about and interest in subject areas** emerges

it is appropriate to introduce the **basic information** and **learning practices** of the subjects.

Information about a subject area may include teaching activities based on the following:

- Rules for safety in the class/work room. This is particularly important for subjects that have a practical element, such as Home Economics, Chemistry and other sciences, Woodwork etc.
- Demands made on the student with regard to different subjects – homework, projects, out-of-school assignments etc.
- Familiarisation with the topics that will be undertaken in that subject during the coming term/months/year.
- Examining the index and content (without close reading) of the textbook to identify the specific topics that are being studied in the mainstream class.



Tips for teachers

- The best way to approach the 'information' aspect of subject learning is through liaison and collaboration with the subject teacher(s) in question. Subject teachers can provide a brief outline of the safety issues that they must address and can also indicate the set of chapters or units that will be under study when the student joins the main-stream subject class.
- There is an added benefit in this approach for the subject teacher. If he/she is aware of what the student has already been taught in preparation for joining the main-stream, then he/she has some idea of that student's baseline on entry. In the absence of such collaboration, the subject teacher is completely at a loss when the new student joins the class.

Learning practices can vary from subject to subject.

For example, a subject such as chemistry may depend on a formulaic approach to recording the stages taken in carrying out an experiment. There may also be some defining and labelling of equipment etc.

Geography can be accessed by a student with relatively low levels of English through labelling maps, diagrams etc. This approach is very evident in textbooks and can be practised with ease in the language classroom.

Home Economics depends, for the practical element, on describing processes or writing instructions. Again this is a logical type of text production and can be developed in the language classroom through a range of writing activities.

Subjects that are heavily text-based require the development of skills and strategies to engage with text by using all possible clues (e.g. titles, pictures, definitions, numbers, proper names etc.). This approach would be relevant, in particular, for **History and English** and any other text-based subject that the student must/chooses to take.

For all subjects, the development of a repertoire of **relevant vocabulary** is critical. This aspect of subject-based language learning may begin in Phase 2 but is particularly important in Phase 3.

Insights into accessing subject-based materials through school learning approaches may be found on **page 110**.

Teaching/learning approaches include the following:

Working with vocabulary

- Brainstorming concepts and existing knowledge using a graphic organizer (e.g. spidergram)
- Defining (using learner dictionary)
- Categorising words into recognisable 'families'
- Creating wall charts to support learning, memorizing and using new vocabulary
- Developing and organizing personal dictionaries



Working with text

- Finding and copying labels etc. from textbook
- Locating key vocabulary in text
- Dividing text into easily-managed sections
- Focused reading of a short piece of text
- Using page layout to divide text into manageable sections
- Using pictures, diagrams etc. to access text
- Predicting text content from obvious clues
- Comparing information with that already known to student
- True/false information
- Comprehension questions (1) to focus reading and (2) to check understanding

Creating text

- Labelling diagrams
- Writing definitions of key words
- Completing sentences using text
- Collaborative writing activities
- Basic text writing (e.g. instructions)
- Summarizing key information in note form (for later revision etc.)

Grammatical information such as prepositions, word order, use of tenses etc. should be addressed in context so that it will have immediate relevance to the student.

Materials

Many of the above activities can be done as general group sessions without using subject specific material. Suitable authentic materials would include:

- Short simple stories
- Pieces of newspaper or magazine text
- Pictures for labelling
- Advertisement text from newspapers/magazines etc.
- Instructions
- Any text that is locally available (town newsletter, school notices etc.)

In addition to the use of authentic materials, which are generally of more interest to students, there are some excellent skills-based materials available for young adult learners of English. The use of both in combination would make a large teaching/learning resource available without much difficulty or expense

Useful resources that can be created by the teacher include:

- Picture cards (as a basis for descriptive writing)
- Word cards (categorisation, word recognition etc.)
- Phrase cards (for constructing sentences, word order etc.)
- Grids of different sizes for categorising vocabulary
- Banks of pictures cut from magazines, catalogues etc. as a stimulus to constructing text based on description, sequencing events, describing location etc.



Achievements at the end of the SCHOOL LEARNING phase

At the end of this phase the student can:

- Approach text with confidence
- Apply strategies to accessing and analysing text
- Organise important vocabulary so that it can be used as a personal learning resource in the future
- Read and analyse instructions and questions in the school context
- Label diagrams, maps, charts etc. in an appropriate way
- Make brief notes from text
- Write basic text such as instructions
- Write and organise more complex text such as descriptions of an event or process
- Understand the tone or attitude in some different types of text
- Manipulate (basic) grammatical functions so that created text is clear and comprehensible

PHASE 3: SUBJECT-SPECIFIC LEARNING

In general, students who entered the school at the beginning of the school year should be engaged with **50%-60% of mainstream learning** by the middle of Period 3 (by some point between Christmas and Easter on timeline page 2). This rule of thumb applies to those students who have had previous formal education, are literate on entry to post-primary school, and have normal learning ability.

If additional learning constraints are present, which slow down the rate of English language acquisition, attendance at mainstream subject classes may be more limited. It may be decided, for example, that it is appropriate for the student to engage with three carefully-selected subjects in addition to those that support integration such as games, P.E., art, music etc.

Moving from Phase 2 to Phase 3

There is obvious potential for considerable overlap between Phase 2 and Phase 3 in the language support class. However, the introduction of text from subject textbooks should occur gradually and only when the student demonstrates ability to work with text.

While it is always possible to break text into easily-managed activities so that students are not deterred by the apparent difficulty that they perceive, it is important not to over-challenge lower level learners at too early a stage of learning. If this happens they may tend to reject the activities and, by implication, the textbook and the subject it represents.

Tips for teacher

When subject learning is introduced into the language support class, it is vitally important that neither the subject teacher nor the student expect the language support teacher to 'deliver the curriculum'. There must always be a line drawn between **supporting the language learning necessary for subject learning** (through use of strategies, approaches and techniques that the student can build upon) and **teaching** the subject material.

MAKING LEARNING RELEVANT

The most motivating use of text is the selection of that topic/theme/unit/chapter that the student will encounter in the mainstream class. If it is planned that the student will be attending some period(s) of Home Economics or Geography, for example, contact with the subject teacher in advance will allow for focused preparation.

- The student then enters the mainstream with
- Advance knowledge of what to expect,
- Some basic level of understanding of the topic,
- Identification of the key words or concepts that he/she will encounter,
- Understanding of what the teacher will ask the students to do in that class or for homework.



Management of the language support class at this stage

It is rarely possible for one teacher to deal with a number of different learning needs at the same time. Therefore, if there are students in the language support class who are placed in two or three different years in the school and are preparing to attend three different subject classes, then the teacher must have a means of engaging the individual students with their particular learning needs.

The development of the skills and strategies outlined for the previous Phase of language learning, means that the individual students know **how** to go about those learning activities. Inevitably group work is the preferred option for all language learning tasks, but this may not be possible at this stage if students are in different years and entering different subject classes.

For example:

The student(s) who will enter the Geography class could be provided with a grid and assigned the task of identifying key vocabulary in the first page of the chapter and organising it into a grid.

The student(s) who will be going to Home Economics practical sessions will read through the instructions for what they will prepare in class, use the dictionary to look up unknown words, organise the new vocabulary in their grid or personal dictionary, and write their own summary instructions.

This approach will allow for several different learning tasks to take place in the room simultaneously with the teacher circulating and providing advice and assistance to students/groups in turn.

Teaching students how to carry out these activities at this stage is not an option. These essential skills must be developed in Phase 2 and students must be capable of doing the different activities listed at the end of Phase 2.

CLASSROOM APPROACHES IN PHASE 3

The appropriate classroom approaches for this phase have been outlined to a considerable extent in the descriptions of Phase 2 activities.

CONCLUSIONS

As students become increasingly independent of language support, they will be attending more and more mainstream subject sessions. However, the backup provided by the language support teacher and the resources available in the language support classroom will remain an important part of the development of their learning.

Again, close cooperation between the language support teacher and the relevant subject teachers will allow for a flow of information about the student's progress in mainstream and will direct those areas of **English language proficiency** that may require additional attention.

As students depend less on the language support class, it is appropriate to assign 'open periods' when they know they can return to the classroom for advice, support or particular practice as necessary. In the meantime, of course, it is likely that new students will have arrived and will currently be passing through the same phases as the earlier students did.

WHAT HAS THE LANGUAGE SUPPORT CLASS ACHIEVED?

The language support class, therefore, fulfils the following purposes:

- To provide an **induction and familiarisation** period for newly arrived students
- To provide an **immersion course in English language learning** which is designed and delivered to support curriculum learning
- To discover **individual student's strengths and weakness** in English language and also in different subject areas (including their areas of particular interest)
- To **liaise with** and **support subject teachers**
- To provide **on-going support** to students in order to address specific language problems that become evident after the student has moved into the mainstream.

PLEASE NOTE!

Every student is different. This plan is intended to provide an overall framework in which the average non-English speaking student can develop the language and skills necessary for successful school learning over the period of one school year.

Students from academic backgrounds where there is a high level of parental interest in their educational achievement may move with greater speed and ease into mainstream learning. Clearly it would be inappropriate to hold such students back.

Students starting from an average baseline of existing knowledge of the demands of formal education combined with reasonable ease of acquiring English should, more or less, follow the plan and timeframe indicated above.

Students with literacy difficulties and little previous formal education, or seriously interrupted education, will have more to learn, both in terms of English language and in terms of general learning skills, if they are to achieve a positive outcome from their years in post-primary school. Inevitably their timeframe will be longer.

The curriculum

The curriculum framework for language support

The curriculum framework for language support is entirely based on the language needs of the post-primary curriculum. These are specified as the **English Language Proficiency Benchmarks for non-English speaking students at post-primary level**.

They consist of nine **themes** which represent the demands of engagement with the activities of school and the post-primary curriculum.

The starting point for language support is the following:

1. **Personal Identification**
2. **Classroom Interaction**

The next two themes contribute to the student's general toolkit for education:

3. **Learning to learn**
4. **Developing cultural awareness**

Five subject-specific themes follow which cover the varieties of language use and communication necessary to meet curriculum demands:

5. **Physical education and sports**
6. **Mathematics**
7. **Science subjects**
8. **History and Geography**
9. **English**

Each theme is described at **three levels**:

A1 Lowest level	A2	B1 Also known as 'Threshold Level'
For students entering with no English, this shows the first learning targets	Students progress into this level	When students are able to carry out the activities described in this level, without any help, they are capable of full integration in the main-stream subject classroom.

The levels correspond to the first three levels of a six-point scale known as the **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)**.

For each level, a student's expected learning is divided into the **five skills** used by the CEFR:

The RECEPTIVE skills	The PRODUCTIVE skills
Listening	Spoken interaction (speaking with prompts, feedback etc. from another person)
Reading	Spoken production (speaking alone, such as giving a talk, talking about 'what I did at the weekend' etc.)
	Writing

The European Language Portfolio



This version of the **European Language Portfolio** (ELP) was designed by Integrate Ireland Language and Training for use in English language support in post-primary schools throughout Ireland. The original ELP version was validated by the Council of Europe in 2001. Following a revision of the language proficiency benchmarks on which this ELP is based, and the collection of feedback from language support teachers throughout Ireland, the ELP was revised and was re-validated in 2004.

The purpose of this European Language Portfolio is to support students whose mother tongue is not English as they meet the challenge of learning English in order to participate fully in mainstream education. The ELP demonstrates and highlights individual achievement

and success and, as a result, helps promote self-confident and self-directed learners.

Using this ELP with students in post-primary education provides a positive and motivating means of ensuring that the student learns the language that is critical for integration into the mainstream classroom. At the same time, use of the ELP promotes the growth of self-confidence and self-esteem as the student's active participation in learning provides constant confirmation of the realities of success.

The **English language proficiency benchmarks** provide the basis for the content and delivery of English language support for students whose mother tongue is neither English nor Irish. The benchmarks specify the minimum proficiency required for full participation in mainstream post-primary education.

Students do not all learn in the same way and at the same rate. The European Language Portfolio is designed to provide a means for the teacher and individual student together to identify an appropriate pathway for learning. In this way, the apparently less able student may be helped to progress along a path and in a way that meets his/her particular language learning needs. The progress through the benchmarks by any individual student will rarely be entirely predictable and consistent; some skills may develop more quickly than others, and at any particular level some of the tasks described in the thematic grids may prove to be more difficult than others.

What is the European Language Portfolio?

Every European Language Portfolio has three parts:

- * **A Language Passport**
- * **A Language Biography**
- * **A Dossier**

Language Passport

The Language Passport is where the student expresses his or her linguistic identity. This process is most important for the students using this particular ELP. While the English language will dominate in the context of their education, it is important to acknowledge the identity that language support students express through their mother tongues.

Language Biography

The Language Biography is the focus for all the learning that takes place in language support classes. This section supports an exploration of cultural similarities and differences; encourages the student to think about his/her use of the English language outside school; helps the student to identify how he/she learns best; introduces routines of setting learning targets and monitoring learning; and also contains themed checklists (pages 22 – 28). These checklists are simplified versions of the descriptors in the English language proficiency benchmarks. Each statement suggests a task or activity that the student should carry out so that he or she, with the support of the teacher, can then review learning and record that this has been achieved. This helps the student take responsibility for the progression of his or her learning.

Dossier

The Dossier is an unrestricted part of the ELP in which students can file and keep their work. The contents of the Dossier are developed throughout language support so that each student has a substantial file of his or her work which may also be used to support mainstream subject learning.

Validation

When a European Language Portfolio contains all the above elements and complies with the principles set down by the Council of Europe, it may be validated. The validation number for this ELP is 11.2001 (rev. 2004).

Using the European Language Portfolio

Using the ELP in general ...

Every statement in the ELP suggests a **learning activity**. It is **not** a book of forms and should not be used in this way.

For the teacher, the topics or activities suggested in the ELP checklists can be used to help **plan lessons**.

All of the themes in the ELP represent the learning demands of the **post-primary curriculum**. There is a wealth of good and appropriate published material available for post-primary curriculum learning.

When students can carry out the activities suggested at B1 level, they are capable of integrating into mainstream learning. The time necessary for a student to achieve this level will differ considerably. The ELP is designed to support learning over a two-year period of language support, so there is **no need to hurry**.

The order of use ...

The ELP is typically used at the **end of a cycle of learning**. Cycles will usually be theme-based and may take one class session or several weeks to complete. In general, teachers recommend that the ELP should be revisited every two to four weeks.

The ELP will never be used page by page. The teacher has complete **freedom** to move backwards and forwards through the pages to use the themes, statements and activities that fit in best with the rhythm and focus of teaching.

Language learning is **cyclical**. Students will revisit the same theme several times as language proficiency develops and learning tasks become more challenging.

The content ...

The ELP does not restrict the **scope** of teaching. Teachers are free to add new activities, worksheets or other learning or published resources to the Dossier as appropriate.

The ELP can be integrated with **any classroom activities**, topics or teaching objectives. There are many interconnections between themes so that students may be able to **re-record progress** across several areas at the same time.

For example, when introducing a topic from a Geography text book based on the identification of key words in the relevant chapter, followed by a simple writing activity, it may be appropriate to record the following achievements:

A2 (Classroom Interaction p. 23)

I can understand instructions and information from the teacher

A2 (History and Geography p.27)

I can follow simple explanations if I know the main words and ideas

A2 (History and Geography p.27)

I can write short notes and information about important topics in history and geography

Using the ELP with individual students ...

Because each student individually owns his/her ELP, it is possible to include a student's **home culture** and **previous learning experience** in activities – for example by writing descriptions, making comparisons etc.

Proving ability and progress

'Portfolio Day', or an ELP session, is a good opportunity to **give praise and feedback** individually.

Sample procedure:

1. Student is directed to relevant page for theme that has been covered in recent classroom activities
2. Student reads the statement indicated by the teacher
3. Student and teacher discuss the statement and confirm that the student 'can do' it – student may demonstrate or answer questions to provide evidence of ability
4. Student colours icon and is given praise for this achievement

The **particular needs** of an individual student may be the focus of his/her portfolio.

For example:

If a student has already developed proficiency to B1 level in the skills of speaking and listening, but needs to develop more proficiency in reading and writing, then the focus in the portfolio should be on all the statements that suggest reading or writing activities.

A1 (Mathematics)

I can recognise numbers and symbols in simple problems in my text book
I can use numbers and symbols to do simple examples in my text book

A2 (English)

I can recognise different types of text and can read a short story with the help of word lists or pictures

I can write a simple letter or dialogue

B1 (Science Subjects)

I can follow written instructions for new experiments

I can write a clear description for a science project and record new scientific words

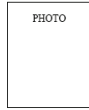
Developing the learning skills of students ...

Students can take part, with their teacher, in **making decisions** about what needs to be learnt or reviewed. This is done by looking through the themed checklists and identifying new learning targets.

Pages and statements in the ELP support teachers in exploring with their students **how language learning happens** and how it can be improved (see pages 18-21)

The checklists (pages 22– 28) contribute to a process of combined teacher/student assessment in which the student 'proves' his/her achievement. This process develops students' awareness of their own abilities and teaches them how to **assess themselves**.

Language Passport



Name: _____

Address: _____

Country of origin: _____

First language: _____

Date of birth: _____

School: _____

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Page 3

- * This page may take **several weeks** to complete.
- * The **dotted red line** is for the student to write the labels in his/her mother tongue
- * Concept of '**date of birth**' may be used to introduce the idea of celebration, days of the week, months, seasons etc.
- * See **activity 'At the beginning'** on next page

Pages 4 & 5

- * These pages acknowledge **all the languages** known and used by the student. Page 4 is a simplified version of page 5 (see page 61 for activity)
- * Filling in the details can result from activities such as '**Daily routine**' (see page 62) and '**The English language I use outside school** (ELP page 14).

My languages

My first language is _____

I use this language to (describe):

Other languages I can use:

Language				
Describe what you can do in these languages				

On the next page I can indicate my precise levels of proficiency in different languages in relation to the self-assessment grid on page 6 ⇒

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My proficiency in languages other than English

		Self-assessment of proficiency					
		A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Language:	Listening						
	Reading						
Date:	Spoken interaction						
	Spoken production						
	Writing						
Language:	Listening						
	Reading						
Date:	Spoken interaction						
	Spoken production						
	Writing						
Language:	Listening						
	Reading						
Date:	Spoken interaction						
	Spoken production						
	Writing						
Language:	Listening						
	Reading						
Date:	Spoken interaction						
	Spoken production						
	Writing						

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Classroom activities Level A1

ELP Page 3 At the beginning

Resources

One copy of the ELP per student. Soft ball

Method

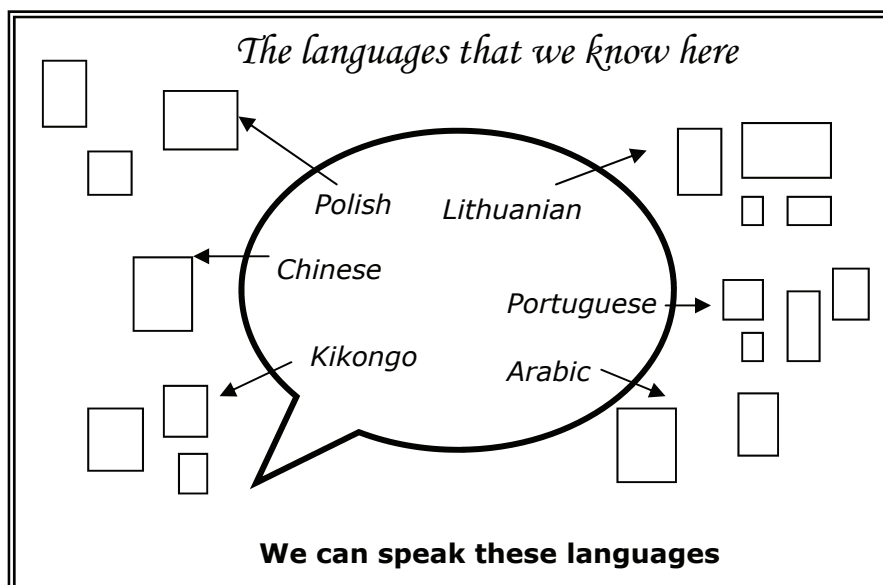
At the first language support class, arrange students in a small circle and throw ball to each one in turn. When the student gets the ball, he/she must say 'My name is ...' Teacher may have to model this. If students have obvious proficiency in English, they may be required to provide more information, e.g. about the family, where they live etc.

Open at page 3 and get students to write in their names (with help as necessary) and the name of the school.

The other details may come later as students learn the relevant language.

ELP Pages 4/5 My languages Making a class poster to supplement individual work in ELP

On Page 4/5 the student records the languages known to him or her. As a means of including these in the classroom display, a class poster could be made to illustrate the range of languages represented by all language support students, with photos or names of the students. New photos and languages could be added if students join language support during the school year.



Resources

Poster paper, markers, photos of students/names

Method

1. Add the student's name or photo to the wall chart
2. Get the student to turn to Page 4/5 of the ELP
3. Ask 'What languages do you speak at home?'
4. 'What other language do you speak?'
5. If appropriate, stop at this point and return to the other questions in the ELP at a later stage when the subject is revisited
6. Help the student to fill in the answers

Classroom activity level A1

Daily Routines

Ask 3 students in your class the following questions.
Write short answers.

Questions	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3
What time do you wake up?			
What language do you speak in your home?			
What do you eat for breakfast?			
What do you drink for breakfast?			
What time do you leave your house?			
Who do you usually sit beside in class?			
What do you do in the evenings?			
What time do you go to bed?			

Write a summary of the information:

Global benchmarks of communicative proficiency – Listening and Reading (for details see Language Proficiency Benchmarks)

		A1 BREAKTHROUGH	A2 WAYSTAGE	B1 THRESHOLD
U N D E R S T A N D I N G	Listening	I can understand words and phrases about myself, my family and school and simple questions and instructions.	I can understand most instructions given inside and outside school, and can follow topics covered in the different subject classes.	I can understand detailed instructions given in school, the main points of topics presented in different classes, and short films about things I am familiar with. I can follow most conversations between other students without difficulty.
	Reading	I can recognize the letters of the alphabet and can understand signs and simple notices in the school and on the way to school. I can understand words on labels or posters in the classroom and some of the words and phrases in a new piece of text.	I can understand short texts on familiar subjects and can use the alphabet to find items in lists (e.g., a name in a telephone book).	I can understand descriptions of events, feelings and wishes and can use comprehension questions to find specific answers in a piece of text. I can also use key words, diagrams and illustrations to help me understand texts I am reading. I can follow written instructions for carrying out school activities.

Example:

	A1			A2			B1		
	*	**	***	*	**	***	*	**	***
Listening	15/9/2004	17/10/2004	14/11/2004	18/12/2004	15/2/2005	20/4/2005	17/5/2005	20/9/2005	19/10/2005

	A1			A2			B1		
	*	**	***	*	**	***	*	**	***
Listening									
Reading									

* with a lot of help ** with a little help *** with no help

Global benchmarks of communicative proficiency – Speaking and Writing (for details see Language Proficiency Benchmarks)

	A1 BREAKTHROUGH	A2 WAYSTAGE	B1 THRESHOLD	
S P E A K I N G	Spoken Interaction	I can say <i>hello</i> and <i>goodbye</i> , <i>please</i> and <i>thank you</i> , can ask for directions in the school, and can ask and answer simple questions.	I can answer questions about my family, friends, school work, hobbies and holidays. I can keep up a conversation with my classmates when we are working together, and can express my feelings.	I can talk fluently about school, my family, my daily routine and my likes and dislikes. I can take part in classroom discussions and can hold conversations with other students about things I am interested in. I can repeat what has been said and pass the information on to another person.
	Spoken Production	I can give a simple description of where I live and people I know, especially members of my family.	I can describe my family, my daily routines and activities, and my plans for the immediate or more distant future.	I can retell what has been studied in class or the plot of a film I have seen or a book I have read. I can describe a special family event (religious festival, birthday etc.) and can explain my opinions and plans.
W R I T I N G	Writing	I can write my name and address and the name of the school. I can write labels on charts and diagrams and copy short sentences from the board.	I can write new words in my European Language Portfolio and can write short texts on familiar topics. I can write a short message (e.g., a postcard or e-mail) to a friend.	I can write a short letter, a summary of a book, poem or film, an account of my opinions or feelings about an event or situation, and a short dialogue.

	A1			A2			B1		
	*	**	***	*	**	***	*	**	***
Spoken Interaction									
Spoken Production									
Writing									

Pages 7 & 8

These pages provide an overview of the student’s progress in relation to the three levels used in the language proficiency benchmarks. They refer to **language proficiency in general** and are not related to any particular thematic area.

Student with teacher should decide on appropriate reflection of progress.

Dates should be entered in the relevant columns:

- * can do this with **a lot of help**
- ** can do this with **a little help**
- *** can do this with **no help**

My language and intercultural experiences
The new and interesting things I noticed when travelling or staying in other countries.

Country:	Date From:	Staying with friends or family (✓)	Travel (✓)	Study (✓)
Language:	To:			

Cultural differences I noticed:

Cultural similarities with my own country:

Country:	Date From:	Staying with friends or family (✓)	Travel (✓)	Study (✓)
Language:	To:			

Cultural differences I noticed:

Cultural similarities with my own country:

Country:	Date From:	Staying with friends or family (✓)	Travel (✓)	Study (✓)
Language:	To:			

Cultural differences I noticed:

Cultural similarities with my own country:

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My cultural awareness now

In my classes

Cultural attitudes and behaviour I have noticed and can now understand	Date	Other cultural attitudes and behaviour that I do NOT fully understand	Date

With my friends

Cultural attitudes and behaviour I have noticed and can now understand	Date	Other cultural attitudes and behaviour that I do NOT fully understand	Date

In my daily life outside school

Cultural attitudes and behaviour I have noticed and can now understand	Date	Other cultural attitudes and behaviour that I do NOT fully understand	Date

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ELP Pages 11, 12 & 13

- * These pages may take **one or two years** to complete fully
- * They raise the **students' awareness** of the cultural challenges they meet on a day-to-day basis and support exploration and understanding of cultural difference and similarity.
- * They may be used as a result of **classroom activities** or **in response** to student queries, uncertainties or obvious misunderstanding of the norms of behaviour or attitude
- * See next page for **sample activity**

Classroom activity Level A2

Why do the Irish....?

When we live in another culture we notice that people may have different ways of thinking (attitudes) and acting (behaviour).

This can make us ask some questions, for example:

'Why do the Irish not stand in a proper queue?'

**Write other questions you may have about Irish attitudes and behaviour:
(leave a space for an answer)**

Q 1. _____

A _____

Q 2. _____

A _____

Q 3. _____

A _____

Q 4. _____

A _____

Q 5. _____

A _____


Q 6. _____


A _____


Now talk to a partner about your questions and make notes of the answers, then check with your teacher!


ELP Pages 16–21 Learning about learning


How I learn best now _____ (date)

 When I want to remember new words

 When I have to write something

 When I can't understand what somebody is saying

 When I'm reading a text book

 When I'm speaking and have difficulty finding words

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ELP Pages 17 & 18

- Each statement on page 17 should be explored **in context** (e.g. after a relevant classroom activity)
- The student should reflect on his/her **personal learning style**
- There will be many different 'answers'
- Students should be encouraged to use their preferred techniques to **support subject learning**
- Understanding the learning preferences of different students will provide **insights for the teacher** when planning lessons
- Inevitably the learning awareness of students will **develop over time**, for this reason a second page is provided—pages should be dated.

Classroom activity Level A1 →

Method

When students have carried out a learning activity, teacher prompts them to think about their own learning.

For example, when a new topic has been introduced and key vocabulary has been elicited and taught, teacher uses questions of this sort to prompt reflection:

- * **How are you going to remember those new words?**
- * **Do you think it would be a good idea to write them down?**
- * **Would it be a good idea to have a little quiz tomorrow to see if you have remembered them?**
- * **What about the spelling – how will you remember that?**
- * **Do you do that each time we have new vocabulary in class?**

Individual students note their learning strategies in the box **When I want to remember new words**

Monitoring my learning

In order to monitor learning and to use the checklists in this European Language Portfolio it is important to understand these words:

Example:

to understand	comprendre
---------------	------------

A1

to understand		to name	
to follow		to recognise	
to show		to find	
to copy		to label	
instructions		information	
key words		labels	
diagrams		equipment	
map		time line	

A2

to ask about		to solve	
to read about		to explain	
to pass on		to note	
to describe		to list	
explanation		experiment	
topic		word list	
event		dialogue	
give a short summary		main ideas	

B1

to discuss		to review	
to organise		to edit	
to give views		to record	
experience		beliefs	
interest		purpose	
discussion		conversation	
different styles		useful expressions	

General terms

short		important	
simple		familiar	
clear		most	

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ELP Page 21

This page provides a list of the vocabulary necessary for monitoring learning. It includes, therefore, many typical examples of classroom and textbook language.

The vocabulary has been categorised in accordance with the three levels A1, A2 and B1. However, it should be noted that language learners who are studying the same materials as native speakers may require to learn language that would appear to be of a higher level of proficiency than their general proficiency in the target language.

This is one of the significant differences between English as a **Foreign Language** and English as a **Second Language**.

It is appropriate, therefore, for students **to learn the language that is relevant to their needs**, even though it may seem to be of a higher level of proficiency.

ELP Pages 22 & 23

EXAMPLE:

Level	Skill	*	**	***
		Date	Date	Date
A1	I can understand short questions about myself	7/9/04	28/9/04	4/10/04
	I can use the alphabet to find names on a list and words in a dictionary	7/9/04	15/9/04	21/9/04

PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION

Level	Skill	*	**	***
		Date	Date	Date
A1	I can understand short questions about myself			
	I can use the alphabet to find names on a list and words in a dictionary			
	I can answer short questions about myself			
	I can say a short sentence about myself			
	I can write some important information about myself			
A2	I can understand when my friends talk about everyday things			
	I can read short texts about everyday life			
	I can ask and answer questions about everyday life and say how I feel			
	I can talk about things I did today and things I want to do			
	I can write short descriptions about everyday life I can keep a record of my language learning			
B1	I can understand most things my teachers and friends say to me			
	I can read about other people's lives and cultures			
	I can talk about my experiences, interests or problems			
	I can discuss my language learning I can give a short talk about the country I come from and explain about my culture and beliefs			
	I can write a short comparison of my life now and in the past			

* with a lot of help ** with a little help *** with no help

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These checklists itemise the information and language proficiency necessary for a student to understand and integrate with the activities of the school.

Personal Identification is the first requirement when a student enters a school, class or informal school activity. It is critical that a student can introduce him/herself and can answer typical questions.

The theme *Classroom Interaction* covers important aspects of school life and routines, such as rules, basic classroom activities and responses, and basic communication. This theme ensures the gradual growth in understanding of the school environment.

CLASSROOM INTERACTION

Level	Skill	*	**	***
		Date	Date	Date
A1	I can understand important school rules			
	I can read the names of rooms in the school			
	I can say hello and goodbye and ask for help			
	I can give a simple description of a game I play with my friends			
	I can copy words and sentences for my school subjects			
A2	I can understand instructions and information from the teacher			
	I can read simple texts about school			
	I can talk with a friend in group work and can pass on a simple message			
	I can describe a school routine or event I can write a short description of my classroom and note useful words and sentence patterns			
B1	I can understand talks given by my friends			
	I can read texts from my school textbooks			
	I can talk with my school friends in a natural way and explain what I do and learn at school			
	I can give a talk about school life in Ireland and in another country			
	I can organise my language learning for each school subject and write clearly about my school activities and friends			

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ELP Page 22 Personal Identification

ELP Page 23 Classroom Interaction

Level A1:

Making a class poster containing information about individual students Resources

Poster paper, markers, photos or other images if available

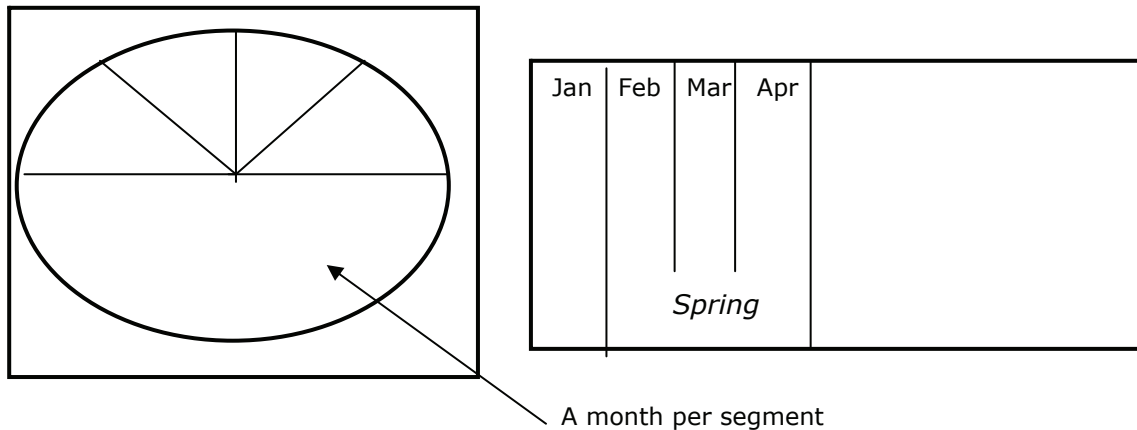
Method

Make a large blank poster divided into months and seasons.

Examples:

1. **Write in** the months and seasons
2. **Colour** or mark the times of the year when students attend school and the main school events
3. Put in **pictures and/or key words** to represent the main festivals of the year (e.g. school, local and national)
4. Write the **students' names** in the months of their birthdays
5. **Get students to talk** about particular events that they celebrate and write this information into the relevant months

Note: Students should be involved in writing information on poster/board.



Level A2 or B1:

Giving a presentation

Method

1. Each student prepares notes about his/her personal identification including: country of origin, family, previous school experience, favourite subjects, other interests, impressions of new school etc.
2. Each student is given an acetate to prepare a presentation (this may also be done as a PowerPoint presentation). Students should be advised to put any necessary key words on the acetate to support their presentations.
3. Each student is scheduled in the classes that follow to give a two-minute presentation followed by questions and answers.

ELP Page 24 Physical Education
ELP Page 25 Mathematics
ELP Page 26 Science Subjects
ELP Page 27 History and Geography
ELP Page 28 English

Level A1 →

At this level, it is critical that students begin to learn the essential vocabulary for the subject. As vocabulary inevitably builds fast and may become unmanageable, it is important that students develop methods of managing their vocabulary collections so that they are useful resources in the subject classroom.

ELP Page 31 provides ideas for the organisation of vocabulary banks.

Ways of recording vocabulary and information

Example 1: A vocabulary tree

```

graph TD
    A[History topic] --> B[Places]
    A --> C[People]
    A --> D[Date]
    A --> E[Events]
    B --> B1[Place 1]
    B --> B2[Place 2]
    B1 --> B1a[More information]
  
```

Example 2: An information grid

Topic	Main points	Important vocabulary	Page(s) in text book
Rivers	3 stages etc.	valley ox-bow meander etc.	15-20

Example 3: Definitions and examples

meander	to meander: A river meanders when it is old a meander: a bend in a road or river
---------	---

Example 4: Categorising information and vocabulary

```

graph TD
    R[river] --- HU[human use  
• washing  
• cooking  
• travelling]
    R --- TSU[transportation  
• crops  
• minerals]
    R --- LSW[large scale uses of water  
• settlement  
• domestic  
• industrial]
    R --- F[farming  
• irrigation  
• pollution]
  
```

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These techniques may be used with school texts as a means of breaking the information into its key parts. The vocabulary tree and grid provide a summary of the information contained in text and become a useful support for later subject study.

Creating personal dictionary with words put into sample sentences. Personal dictionaries should be organised by subject and theme, otherwise they can become unusable

Activity for brainstorming new vocabulary in class. Spidergram allows for contributions by students using previous knowledge. Very good technique for classifying:

1. Different types of vocabulary (e.g. nouns, adjectives, verbs etc.)
2. Different but related topics (as in example).

Dossier

The Dossier section of the *European Language Portfolio* is intended as a space for collecting this type of information as well as a place for the collection of students' work in language support class.

Students should be encouraged to organise their Dossiers, and to use the Contents page (p.30) so that they become a real and useful resource for all school learning.

*Planning course
content*

This example of planning content of language support classes is based on a three-week period:

- It includes a session during which **one or more new students arrive** in the class and are integrated into the existing group
- Most of the activities are at **A1 or A2 level**
- The design of the activities allows for **two separate groups** working at these two levels in the same classroom. This approach will allow the language support teacher to timetable maximum contact with the language support students in the school.
- All activities are based on **collaborative group activity** to maximize communication and exploration of new concepts.
- It is assumed that the classroom is equipped with a number of good **learners' dictionaries** so that students refer to them as they carry out the tasks. (e.g. Collins Cobuild, Oxford Learners' Dictionary)
- The approach is **broadly subject-based** but includes, at regular intervals, activities to develop student's learning skills (Learning to Learn) and cultural awareness. Other general modules e.g. Classroom Interaction, Cross-curricular learning and Developing Writing Skills are consciously included in the learning activities.
- It is assumed that following the three-week period there is **a week of observation** and assessment during which teachers and students examine what has been learnt effectively and what needs to be revisited in the next cycle.
- When group-based activities are taking place, the **teacher is moving from group to group**, observing the activities that are taking place and, when appropriate, providing suggestions, pointers etc.
- These suggestions are based on the **inclusion of subject-based activities** in the course (see sample set of subject-based materials)

Possible range of activities for 3 week programme

General points	<p>Every day use a greeting formula and encourage students to respond in the same way. Don't forget to teach students how to ask to go to the toilet and show them where to go. Write and say the date at the start of every class. This task can be given over to students as they become more confident. Use body language and words together when giving instructions e.g. let's put that on the wall, get into pairs, get into groups, sit down etc. Emphasize key words, if possible have them at the end of sentences. e.g. Is this Mahmoud's PEN? You will find that many resources already exist in the school which will meet different teaching needs. Classroom and school rules should be introduced in context as the situation arises.</p>	<p>Have blank charts ready that can be made up in class to highlight particular points – e.g. themes, items of vocabulary etc.</p> <p>Leave chart on wall until no longer necessary.</p>
Warm-up/ review activity 5 minutes	<p>Throw a soft ball from one member of the class to another. Each student calls the name of the person that he/she is throwing to. Each person has to provide a word beginning with the 'next' letter of the alphabet. When a student cannot find a word others help. Start with A, then stop after everybody has had a turn and start at that point in the alphabet the next time. Tell students to think about more vocabulary for the next day. Teacher can pick up on vocabulary items as appropriate afterwards. This activity could also be based on a particular theme, e.g. the words we know about geography, science etc.</p>	<p>A ball</p>

Module	Activity at A1 level	Additional activity at A2 level	Resources required
Personal Identification	<p>Working in groups students tell:</p> <p>Name, country of origin, family details, where he/she is living in Ireland, what he/she likes and dislikes e.g. cold, food in Ireland etc.</p> <p>Students repeat the basic information to whole class.</p> <p>Writing exercise: Students work together to make up a 'form' in which they can fill in the information above. Teacher provides example of simple form Name: Address: Age: Name of school: etc.</p>	<p>Instead of telling, students interview one another. They move around and make notes on the information they receive. Each member of group interviews each other member. Students report to class on the information that they have discovered about one another. Note: This activity can be adjusted if students are given a form with a set of questions. They must find out, for example: How many other students watch TV in English; like particular fruits, vegetables, go to activities outside school, can swim, etc.</p> <p>Writing exercise: Students work together to write a report on their findings when interviewing one another.</p>	<p>List of items for eliciting information at A1 level e.g. name, age, sisters and brothers,</p> <p>A2 level – grid with questions for interview</p>
Subject-based learning- Geography, English, History etc. Learning to Learn	<p>Teacher distributes a piece of text that is short, simple and contains obviously specific information – dates, numbers, place names etc. Text of this type may be found in newspapers, reporting an incident, for example.</p> <p>Students work in pairs or groups of three. They go through the text and underline or highlight the words etc. that are known to any or the entire group. If all students don't understand the vocabulary item, the other(s) explain. Vocabulary is categorized and listed in student's Dossier for future use.</p> <p>A monolingual learner's dictionary is used to define the vocabulary accurately. Students find examples of further use of the term or expression.</p>	<p>The activity proceeds in a similar way for A2 level students with text that may be either longer or slightly more complex.</p>	<p>Copies of pre-selected text – from a subject textbook if possible.</p> <p>Highlighting pens</p> <p>Enough learners' dictionaries so that there is one per group.</p>

<p>Integrating newly-arrived students (10 minutes)</p>	<p>All members of class sit in a circle, teacher should also take part. The 'talking stick' is passed around. Students only speak when they have the stick.</p> <p>Teacher can model the activity by taking the stick and saying, for example, 'My name is ****. When I was in school (with gesture to indicate the past), I liked History and P.E. now I like to read books, play tennis etc.' Then passes the stick to a student with the instruction 'Tell us about what you do/like etc.' Any topics can be used for this activity. New students may pass the stick on if they don't feel confident about speaking.</p> <p>Teacher makes notes about vocabulary, grammatical problems that arise, for example the use of different tenses, and provides feedback after the session.</p> <p>This activity can be repeated at regular intervals with different topics. As students become familiar with the activity they will become involved immediately.</p>	<p>A 'talking stick', microphone etc.</p> <p>The advantage of the 'talking stick' approach is that it prevents the more talkative students from taking over and gives the less confident an equal opportunity!</p>	
Module:	Activity at A1 level	Additional activity at A2 level	Resources required
<p>Geography</p> <p>Classroom Interaction</p>	<p>Introduction to the local area.</p> <p>Working in groups, students formulate questions about the area in which they are living. The lower-level students prepare to pose these questions to the higher level group.</p>	<p>Higher-level group use map of the area, or local information to formulate questions and answers. They write these in the form of a simple guide to the area/town etc. If they have access to IT facilities, material of this sort can be printed out and put on wall of language-support room etc.</p>	<p>Map of area</p> <p>Information about local facilities, services etc.</p> <p>Photographs of places in the area.</p> <p>Access to internet site for local tourist information etc.</p>
	<p>This introductory activity leads naturally into a geographical topic.</p>		
<p>History</p>	<p>Lower level learners should be encouraged to work with pictures, graphs, proper nouns, dates etc. to support comprehension. They should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather key vocabulary and information and put it into an appropriate grid, spidergram or personal dictionary list. • Add labels to diagrams or pictures. 	<p>Higher-level learners work with portions of text such as one page, a number of paragraphs etc. They work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key words, • Identifying new vocabulary • Using dictionaries to work on vocabulary • Writing sentences with the key information (e.g. 8 sentences) • Preparing questions based on the text etc. 	<p>Text-books used in the school.</p> <p>Blank grids for organizing vocabulary etc.</p> <p>Copies of portions of the text for focused study, as appropriate.</p> <p>Copies of pictures, diagrams etc. with labels blanked.</p>

	<p>All students should gather categorized vocabulary, examples etc. and should use the monolingual dictionary throughout to support their learning.</p> <p>All students should be encouraged to write as much as possible throughout all activities.</p> <p>Lower level learners can copy relevant vocabulary, expressions or chunks of language and use this to assemble short pieces of text.</p> <p>All writing activities should be set up collaboratively on the basis of pairs or small groups.</p>		
Module	Activity at A1 level	Additional activity at A2 level	Resources required
Cultural awareness	<p>Whole class works on brainstorming values, habits, important aspects of cultural or social life.</p> <p>Students working in pairs list the parts of their life that are important e.g. family, religion, education etc. and compare with other pairs.</p>	<p>Having done the activities for A1, students work in pairs or small group to compare their impressions of their own set of values with that of Irish teenagers. They could organize their thoughts on a blank grid under the appropriate headings.</p>	<p>A set of keyword prompts which may be elicited during a brainstorming session on the topic.</p> <p>A blank grid with two columns for A2 students.</p>
Developing writing skills English Language	<p>Creating a story</p> <p>(Could be continued over a number of sessions, not necessarily consecutive sessions.)</p> <p>Take a single theme, for example describing people. Brainstorm personality traits and physical descriptions. Read a short piece of text to the students that includes a vivid description of a person.</p> <p>Students work in pairs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 identify a range of characters 2 assemble a range of descriptions for each character 3 create a sentence or two based on each character to describe something what they are doing/thinking/feeling etc. The sentences are read aloud to the whole class 	<p>Having identified the characters and categorized them descriptively, the A2 level students continue to work in pairs creating a story that includes each of these characters.</p> <p>Text is edited as it is developed with help and suggestions from teacher.</p> <p>Students read their short stories to the class when finished.</p>	<p>Brainstorming on board at the beginning</p> <p>Empty grid with a number of columns to categorise different traits.</p> <p>Monolingual dictionaries</p> <p>Grammar reference book</p> <p>A short piece of text to introduce the topic</p>

By the end of Week 3, in addition to subject-based learning, students have learnt:

Language

- Exchanging greetings
- How to ask to be excused
- Some classroom/school rules
- How to talk about themselves
- How to ask other students some basic questions about themselves
- Vocabulary for describing people
- The main features of their local area

Skills

- Understanding and responding to teacher's instructions
- Understanding items of vocabulary spoken by teacher
- Providing, categorizing and listing items of vocabulary
- Asking questions of and responding to a partner
- How to construct text
- Responding spontaneously

Students can mark off their achievements in their copies of the *European Language Portfolio* under the following module headings:

- * **Personal identification**
- * **Cultural awareness**
- * **Learning to learn**
- * **Cross-curricular learning**
- * **Classroom interaction**
- * **Developing writing skills**
- * **English language**
- * **History and geography**

*Preparing students for
examinations*

NOTE: The introduction, in 2004, of the use of dictionaries by candidates whose mother tongue is not English has provided a significant support for students in public examinations. HOWEVER, frequent and constant use of a dictionary is inevitably going to impact on time management in examination conditions. It is very important, therefore, that students are:

1. Capable of dealing with standard examination materials and approaches
2. Able to use a dictionary efficiently and effectively (see *Developing dictionary skills* page 82).

1 Preparing for the challenge in language support class

Initial access to examination questions is through the **wording** of different types of questions. It is important, therefore, to introduce language support students to examination-type questions by:

Identifying and working on the range of VOCABULARY used in exam questions for different subjects (describe, compare, explain etc.)

Establishing ROUTINES for approaching questions

PRACTISING the routines regularly so that they become second-nature to students (use questions in textbooks, sample papers etc.)

2 Routines for approaching exam questions

Students must develop habits, through practice, which they can learn to depend upon. The time spent working with the QUESTION is critical because of the increased danger, for non-English speakers, of misunderstanding the point. This time is also valuable as it allows the candidate to begin to mentally formulate the ANSWER.

A good approach is as follows:

1. Read the questions, highlighting the key words
2. If the question seems unclear, read it again
3. If it still remains unclear try to find another question instead
4. Check tenses of verbs (does question refer to past, present or is it hypothetical etc?)
5. Check to ensure that question is not stated in the negative
6. Check other details such as prepositions (e.g. is it 'before' or 'after' ...)

3 Preparing an answer

Language support students face particular challenges in examination conditions for the following reasons:

1. They must activate both SUBJECT knowledge and the range of appropriate LANGUAGE to go with it. Different categories of subjects demand different styles of language use as well as vocabulary (see *Language Proficiency Benchmarks*)
2. They must have previously-developed STRATEGIES in order to overcome particular language problems
3. They may encounter inability to access a particular item of VOCABULARY
4. They may be uncertain about a GRAMMATICAL structure.

4 Gathering the necessary language for an answer

Having made decisions about the choice of questions (paying attention to compulsory sections) the student must now return to a question in the next process of preparing the answer. For this it is necessary to:

1. Re-read and focus on the single question to **activate ideas** for the answer
2. Getting the ideas will, in general, automatically activate the **necessary language**
3. Jot down (and group) the **words/phrases** as they come to mind
4. Use this collection of words and phrases as a basis for constructing the text

It is important to separate this planning phase from the actual writing of the answer. Producing the necessary vocabulary is, for a non-native speaker, a different process to constructing text. It is important not to attempt to mix the two tasks. Introducing this phase makes valuable use of time with the result that writing will be both easier and better.

5 Writing the answer

The important aspects of a piece of written text are:

1. Organising and sequencing information appropriately
2. Linking different parts of an answer
3. Ensuring clarity of opinion, description, comparison etc.

These aspects of writing may be practised regularly during language support by using questions at the end of units in text books and, when appropriate, exam questions. It is a good idea to begin with short pieces of written text gradually increasing the length until the text is more or less representative of an examination answer.

6 How can the student prepare?

He/she must LEARN the language for:

- The particular subject and theme including specialised vocabulary (use textbooks, learner dictionaries etc.)
- Words and expressions for linking information and opinions – in addition, however, on the other hand, as a result of, in the first place etc.
- Words and expressions for indicating process, change, time etc. – after that, the next stage, following the ...

7 What should the student practise in the classroom?

The following classroom tasks provide good practice and raise students' awareness to the demands of written text:

- Sequencing paragraphs of text (e.g. cut up and re-assemble)
- Using linking words/connectors appropriately
- Writing short pieces of text for different purposes – describing a place/thing etc, describing a process, making comparisons between two things/situations, expressing an opinion etc.

Tip:

If a student's level of literacy is low on entry to language support, it is a good idea to get the student to 'talk' a sentence or two to the teacher. The teacher writes this, correcting as necessary, cuts it into phrases or single words and the student sequences the text. This approach allows the student to begin working with written text from an early stage.

8 Two important points about writing

1. Reading and writing are two sides of a coin. Using reading to stimulate writing and using experience of writing to analyse text in a reading task will help to develop the student's awareness and understanding of how text is structured.
2. Regular and varied practice dramatically improves writing

Notes

Resources for teachers

USEFUL CLASSROOM RESOURCES

- * Paper for posters, diagrams, word trees etc.
- * Graded readers to be borrowed by students
- * Camera (disposable if necessary, digital for preference)
- * Video camera for recording presentations, making short 'films' etc.
- * Picture/photo dictionaries—a small set for the classroom. These are an excellent resource. The photo dictionaries tend to be more age appropriate for teenagers and adults.
- * Laminated photographs—areas and particular parts of the school. local places, buildings, shops, park etc., sports played in school and locally
- * Maps or diagrams—school, local town, streets around school
- * Soft ball
- * Empty food packets
- * Games that focus on language and/or can be used to encourage interaction. Examples include Boggle™, Scrabble™, Pictionary™
- * Tape/digital recorder
- * Songs for vocabulary and pronunciation
- * Rhymes and tongue twisters for pronunciation
- * Charts, for example nature, environment seasons, food pyramid etc.
- * Any information posters typically found in the school
- * Pack of signs and labels found around the school (e.g. signs on doors)
- * Picture card sets for sequencing, matching, emotions etc.
- * Packs of cards – pairs of pictures (and/or words) can be stuck on the cards to make *Snap* game
- * File of useful pictures from magazines, catalogues etc.
- * Software for vocabulary development, creating text, improving pronunciation

Some classroom approaches for developing particular language skills

To develop listening skills

- Read text to students:
- Listen and draw what you hear
- Listen and find keywords on flashcards
- Listen and guess/predict what will happen next
- Listen and finish the story

To develop reading skills

- Flashcards with key vocabulary or phrases
- Match words to words/explanations
- Sequencing activities using cut up sentences
- Make vocabulary charts for particular themes and get students to find relevant vocabulary there when they need it
- Use labels and match these to objects, pieces of text, posters, pictures etc.
- Picture dictionary
- Make and do word searches (see blank grid for word search on **page 83**)

To develop speaking skills

- Themed role play
- Songs for rhythm and pronunciation
- Chain games – adding a word, sound etc. each time
- Students dictate to teacher who writes it down
- Picture dictionary to help with unknown words
- Regular 'tell us about ...' sessions

To develop writing skills

- Make word searches and simple crosswords
- Themed scrapbooks
- Write and reply to notes from other students
- Class newspaper made by students

Note:

The creation of teaching/learning resources may often be carried out by the students themselves. For example, making word searches with new vocabulary is a valid and effective means of getting students to engage with the vocabulary. Doing this as a pair activity provides an opportunity for authentic interaction between students. Giving the word search to another pair to do, introduces an element of competition.

DEVELOPING DICTIONARY SKILLS

NOTE:

All students in post-primary education should develop effective dictionary skills. It is recommended that every language support classroom should have enough learner's dictionaries for students to work in pairs or small groups practising the effective use of the dictionary. Most of the major publishers have produced such dictionaries and they are available from specialist language bookshops.

Dictionaries at beginner or intermediate levels would be suitable for most post-primary language support use.

Activity 1 Making a word search for revision and review

1. Students work in pairs or small groups to make a word search, which will be passed to another group to see if they can find all the words.
2. Students discuss and write down all the words they can think of that relate to the theme/subject being studied.
3. They select and list 10 words.
4. Using the dictionary they try to find alternative vocabulary for the ten words they have selected (e.g. *beach/strand, holiday/vacation*)
5. They enter the words in the grid (see next page), writing always from left to right, and surround the words with random letters (see Note below).
6. They write the original ten words on the lines below and students doing the word search are told that they will find **either** the word listed or an **alternative** word that will be in the dictionary.
7. They also provide a title for the wordsearch that indicates the theme.

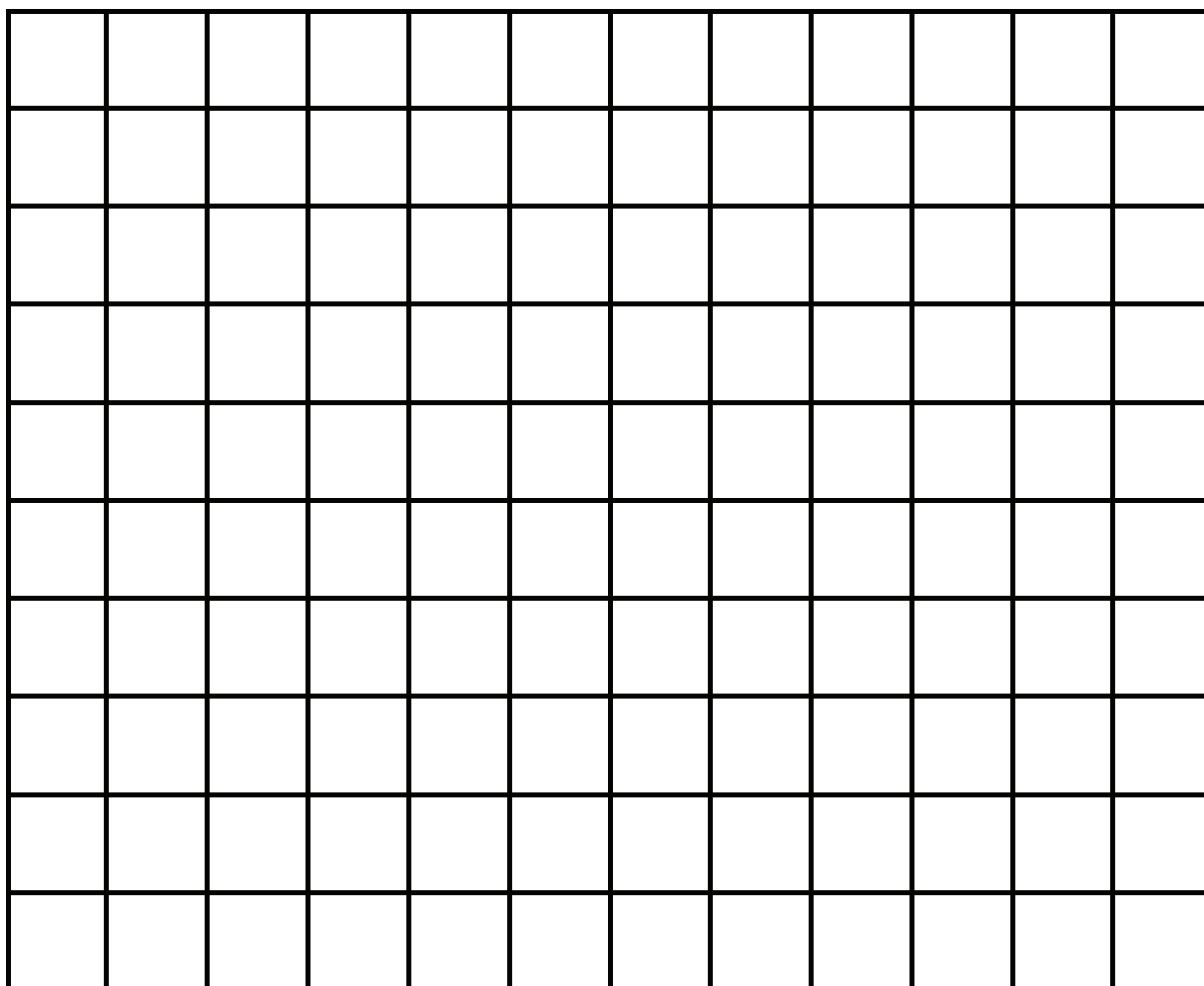
(Even if students do not find alternative vocabulary, the practice in using the dictionary is invaluable.)

NOTE:

- The wordsearch activity described above has been made additionally challenging to encourage the use of a dictionary and to make students aware that several words can mean the same thing.
- The same grid can be used by students at any level to make a wordsearch based on new vocabulary or as a means of revising what has been learnt.
- Wordsearches can be made more difficult by inserting random letters that are also included in the words. For example:

b e **b e a c h** e a c

This is a good exercise for practising word recognition.



Find **either** these words in the grid **or** words that mean the same as these words (use the dictionary).

Activity 2 Making multiple-choice questions

Multiple-choice questions are frequently used in tests and exams. Nothing prepares students better for this type of question than preparing some themselves. Students use dictionaries to make multiple-choice questions based on definitions. They can either confine their range of vocabulary to the themes they are studying or, for pure dictionary practice, they can find **any** word and create 2 or 3 incorrect definitions.

Example:

to **decorate** is

- 1) to put on your coat
- 2) to make something look attractive
- 3) to watch a film

1. Give one or two readymade examples to the pairs or small groups of students and get them to do the task, using the dictionary to find the correct definition
2. Tell the students to find five difficult words in the dictionary and make the same type of multiple-choice activity for each word
3. The students should circulate the responsibility within the group for looking up and selecting the word, and writing the multiple-choice task. All should be involved in creating the 'distractors' using previous knowledge.

Activity 3 Making crosswords

1. Give the students a readymade example to do in pairs or small groups.
2. Then, using the dictionary to check spelling, each group makes their own crossword as follows:
 - i. Choose a theme or topic
 - ii. Select a main word that is not too long for the middle
 - iii. Find other words to go around this so that the letters match
 - iv. Leave the main word that runs down the middle to provide help
 - v. Write down the clues to the words that go left to right
 - vi. Make up a final version with neat boxes
 - vii. Then students pass their crossword and clues to another pair/group

			l	a	b						
				b	u	n	s	e	n		
				t	r	i	p	o	d		
					n	u	c	l	e	u	s
		p	i	p	e	t	t	e			
p	o	o	t	e	r						

Example on theme Science:

Activity 4 Word chains

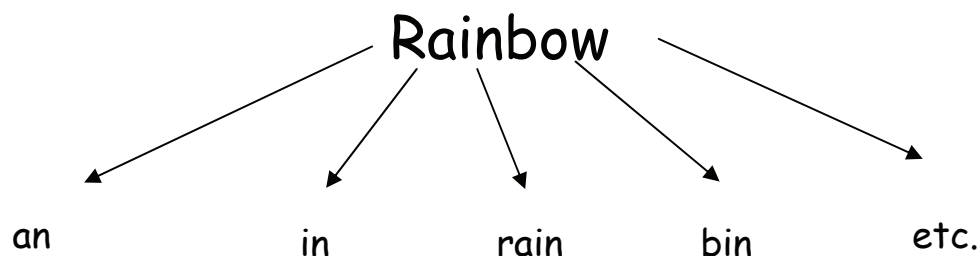
1. Students work in groups (approx 4-5 per group) or whole class if appropriate.
2. First student, or teacher, writes down the first word.
3. Next student must add a word using the last letter of the previous word. The word chain may focus on the vocabulary of a particular subject. In this case subject textbooks should be used to search for appropriate words.
4. The chain continues around the group.
5. When a chain has been completed, review the words used and get students to explain the word(s) that they contributed (textbook may be necessary again).

Example based on geographical terms:

riveribbonlakerosionimbuspur
1 2 3 4 5

Activity 5 Words from words

This is like the game 'Boggle' except that the new words are made from a single word. Teams can compete to see how many words they can make. The dictionary can be used.



Activity 6 Working on opposites and prefixes (wordbuilding)

Teacher provides words for which the opposite is made by adding a prefix. Students working in pairs must:

1. **Find words** in dictionary and discuss the meaning
2. Find the **opposite**
3. **Write the word** with an explanation or translation into their own languages
4. **Write the opposite**, highlighting the prefix

Example:

Word	Explanation or translation	Opposite
articulate	able to express thoughts or feelings clearly in words	<u>in</u> articulate
contented		<u>dis</u> contented
comfortable		<u>un</u> comfortable

Note : It is not unusual for students, particularly under examination conditions, to fail to notice that a word is in negative form. The answer may then be completely wrong.

Activity 7 Working with dependent prepositions

There are a number of verbs in common use that regularly take a particular preposition. It is important that students learn these verbs WITH their prepositions. When one of these verbs arises in the classroom, it is important to point out the preposition so that students learn the two parts of the verb together. To raise students' awareness to this the following activity should be done.

1. Teacher writes up or gives a list to students of the following words
agree, benefit, concentrate, blame, protest, spend
2. Students work in pairs, using dictionaries, to find the word, make sure that they have the VERB form and find the sentence that uses this verb with the preposition
3. All examples are read out to the class

Examples from *Cambridge Learner's Dictionary*©:

I don't **agree with** hunting

The film **benefited from** the excellent acting by its stars.

I can't **concentrate on** my work.

Many people **blame him for** Tony's death.

Students were **protesting about** cuts to the education budget.

She **spends** too much money **on** clothes.

Activity 8 Multi-word verbs

Multi-word or phrasal verbs can present difficulties to students. These verbs are generally idiomatic and the individual parts do not make sense to learners. It is important that students make their own collections of multi-word verbs so that they can refer back to them as necessary. They should always put their new verbs into complete sentences.

The same type of activity as for 'dependent prepositions' (above) can be used.

Examples of multi-word verbs:

To come up with = to find or produce (e.g. an idea, answer etc.)

To get away with = to escape punishment

To own up to = to confess

To put up with = to tolerate

FOCUSING ON SPEAKING

The subskills of *speaking* are:

1. Developing vocabulary
2. Developing structural accuracy
3. Developing phonological accuracy

New vocabulary

The development of **new vocabulary** is an activity which spans all the skills of language and will be an ongoing challenge for all students. The development of the key vocabulary for subject specific study is essential to the student's integration into mainstream classes.

In addition to the collaborative 'brainstorming' type activities, all students would benefit from practice in using dictionaries effectively. See dictionary activities above.

Structural accuracy

Developing **structural accuracy** in *speaking* is a process that should be accompanied by classroom activities which are guaranteed to involve students in contributing to the activity from the earliest stage, even when their contributions may be largely inaccurate. Nothing will motivate students more than the achievement of communication even if it is accompanied by gesture or involves finding more roundabout means of making a point.

It is important, however, that accuracy is reinforced frequently without putting students off communicating. Writing, therefore, becomes most important in the reinforcement of aspects of structure such as sequencing and tenses. Writing and speaking, as a result, are mutually supportive learning activities.

Pronunciation

Phonological accuracy is critical for accurate spelling. If a student develops bad patterns of pronunciation then it is inevitable that spelling will suffer because there is no correct correspondence between sound and symbol. Pronunciation and intonation may be developed through a range of classroom activities.

In addition to learning through activities, students will also focus on the teacher as a model. It is important, therefore, that the teacher is constantly aware of his/her clarity of pronunciation and of correcting/clarifying pronunciation that is inaccurate.


Developing pronunciation and intonation

Giving a spoken account

By the time students have reached A2 level, they are capable of giving a short account or description of a particular experience, activity, routine, interest etc. See *Benchmarks* under Spoken Production for ideas.

A regular session per week should be devoted to this activity so that it becomes a natural part of the programme. This regular activity will give students confidence to contribute to mainstream classes.

Example:

Physical Education	A1	A2	B1
Spoken Production 	Can name familiar sports and games and the equipment associated with them.	Can use a series of phrases and sentences to give a simple explanation of rules.	Can give a short connected account of the rules of a game or sport he/she is familiar with. Can give a short connected account of a sporting event in which he/she took part.

Teacher and other students can comment or ask questions if the account has not been clear.

Using songs, poems and tongue twisters

Songs

Popular songs provide an excellent means of practising pronunciation and intonation. They are largely dependent on intonation and rhythm to carry the message. Raps are particularly good for this purpose. When students get the idea, they can create their own raps. Songs also introduce new and different vocabulary.

Poems

Short poems can be useful for practising intonation and pronunciation. If they are not read aloud correctly, they often make little sense. If students are working with particular poems in their English courses, it is a good idea to use some of these poems in language class.

Making tongue twisters

If students have difficulties with a particular sound, it is a good idea to involve them in making a tongue twister based on that sound. The activity of creating the tongue twister will help to make them aware of the sound.

To make a *tonguetwister*:

1. Brainstorm as many words as possible containing the same sound.
2. Students should look around the word charts, in their own text books, or in dictionaries for examples.
3. In groups or whole class, students make up a tongue twister with as many of the words as possible
4. Everybody has to say the tongue twister until all students pronounce all the words correctly.

Example, to practise the final 't' sound: **cat bat hat sat mat**
The cat sat on the mat and caught a bat with a hat.

Word stress

Photographs from magazines or newspapers can be used as a stimulus for working on word stress. For example, photographs from the sports section of a paper may show **emotions** such as:

disappointment, excitement, despair, concern, concentration etc.

Remember that students will benefit from working with the authentic language that surrounds them. This will be useful, for example, in writing English essays or responding to literary texts.

Method:

1. Students collect up the words related to the pictures
2. Words are written and the stress is marked
3. Words are categorised into groups in accordance with where the stress falls

disappointment excitement despair concern concentration

2 nd syllable	3 rd syllable	final syllable
exc <u>i</u> t <u>e</u> ment	concentr <u>a</u> tion disapp <u>o</u> intment	desp <u>a</u> ir concern <u>e</u>

Regular stress patterns

If students learn the stress patterns that are **regular**, they will be able to apply them to new words that fall into the same category.

Example: Nouns and verbs that are spelt the same way. Frequently the noun is stressed on first syllable and verb on second syllable.

Noun	Verb
an <u>o</u> bject	to ob <u>o</u> ject
a <u>p</u> rotest	to prot <u>e</u> st
an <u>i</u> ncrease	to incre <u>a</u> se
a <u>s</u> econd	to se <u>c</u> ond
an <u>i</u> mport	to imp <u>o</u> rt
a <u>c</u> ontest	to cont <u>e</u> st

Rôle-play

Carrying out rôle-play activities is a good way for students to practice their use of formulaic expressions with the correct intonation.

Method:

1. Students work in pairs or threes (depending on the rôle-play)
2. Teacher gives each student in the pair/three a rôle-play card which describes briefly the role of the student

Example:

Student 1: *You are a visitor to Dublin and you are completely lost. You ask somebody in the street for directions.*

Student 2: *You are stopped by a visitor who wants directions. You cannot fully understand what the visitor is saying.*

The purpose of this rôle-play is to get one student to seek clarification at several points during the activity while the other student must find different ways of making him/herself absolutely clear.

For lower-level students it is necessary to work on some of the expressions before they do the rôle-play – *Excuse me. Can you help me please? I think I am lost. Can you say that again please?* etc.

Thinking back and expressing thoughts

Getting students to think back briefly over the class/week and say what they liked best is an excellent way of developing **thinking ability** and the **expression of thoughts**. It also provides insights into what individual students enjoy doing and how they like to learn.

Method:

1. In final few minutes before class ends, or at the end of a week, teacher tells students to think about what they have been doing and find the one thing that they **really enjoyed and why**.
2. Each student, in turn, says what he/she enjoyed and why. For new or vulnerable students the teacher may need to prompt and the response may be in single words.
3. This activity may be extended to thinking about what has immediate relevance in the mainstream subject classroom. Students identify one or two things that they **will use in the next day or two**.

FOCUSING ON WRITING

The subskills of writing are:

1. Developing vocabulary
2. Developing structural accuracy
3. Developing orthographic accuracy

New vocabulary

The development of new vocabulary, as indicated for speaking, is an activity which spans all the skills of language and will be an ongoing challenge for all students. Brainstorming activities and dictionary-based activities (described above) are both excellent means of leading into a written task. Brainstorming gets the students involved in the task from the outset and activates their thoughts and previous learning. Using a dictionary effectively is particularly important for students whose range of vocabulary in English is significantly smaller than the peer group. This skill will transfer into all areas of learning.

Structural accuracy

Developing structural accuracy is particularly important in writing tasks because the student has time to work on written text with the objective of producing a perfect final version. The teacher must use a variety of means to make students aware of the importance of both accuracy and orthography (handwriting, punctuation etc.) in their written work.

Accuracy will automatically be reinforced through comment and feedback from the teacher. It is advisable, however, to encourage students to identify and correct their own mistakes by drawing attention to them but not immediately providing the correct answer. The more a language learner, of any age, is encouraged to work at a problem such as a vocabulary item, or a structural/grammatical inaccuracy, the more he/she will retain the information and apply it in the future.

Orthographic accuracy

The development of orthographic accuracy is particularly important for students whose existing level of literacy is low or those whose existing literacy is in a non-Roman script. The development of inadequate orthographic skills will prove a serious handicap as education proceeds. The language support teacher, therefore, has an important role to play both in modelling good handwriting and in correcting what students have written and providing further practice as necessary.

Correcting written text

It is important to remember, when correcting written text produced by language learners, that there are two distinct aspects to correction:

1. The text/story/account itself: Are the ideas good and have they been assembled in a clear and coherent way?
2. The English language: Is there an adequate range of vocabulary evident in the text and is it put together in a (reasonably) accurate way?

1 Students requiring literacy practice

Using published materials designed for senior-primary pupils

There is a wide range of published material available to support the development of the writing skills of students in senior primary education. Such materials will provide an introduction to different subjects and are suitable for students in the early years of post-primary education who present difficulties with basic literacy.



Drills which provide repetitive practice should be avoided as they are generally de-motivating and appear irrelevant to students.

2 The particular demands of written text

Students at post-primary level need to learn about **the formal requirements for written text** as well as experiencing **a wide variety of text types**. While they will be doing many of these things in the mainstream subject class, they will inevitably need the benefit of extra time, practice and experience in the context of the language support class. The skills of writing are complex and of the utmost importance for educational success.

Students must learn:

1. How to **organise and sequence** text appropriately
2. How to connect ideas appropriately – expressions such as **in addition, however, on the other hand, as a result of, in the first place etc.**
3. Words and expressions for indicating process, change, time etc. such as **after that, the next stage, following the ...**
4. How to make sure that their **opinions, descriptions, comparisons etc.** are clear to the reader
5. How to write text for **different purposes and genres**

Working on organising text

Step 1:

1. Use a short newspaper article (4-5 paragraphs) but don't read it with the class first
2. Cut up the first paragraph into its component sentences and get the students to sequence the sentences. They should do this in pairs as it should involve considerable discussion.
3. Discuss, with the class, their reasons for sequencing in the way they did.
4. Elicit from the students,
 - a. what they think the text is about
 - b. what they think will happen next (prediction)
5. Then produce the text again, this time cut into paragraphs.
6. Students sequence the text
7. Discuss, with the class, what the 'clues' were that helped them organise the text in this way.

This type of activity may be repeated using different types of text – school subject text, magazines, stories etc.

Step 2:

1. The students, in pairs, write 3-4 paragraphs (e.g. describing something, arguing the good and bad points, comparing things etc.). They should not connect them yet but leave a line or two between each paragraph.
2. Discuss, with the pairs, the best ways of linking the paragraphs to express the ideas accurately
3. Then the students should write the linking sentences into the spaces
4. Teacher gives feedback
5. Students write a finished example which should be kept in the Dossier for future reference

Experiencing different types of text

Language support students need time to explore the different text types that they meet in mainstream subjects.

A general method for doing this activity at regular intervals is:

1. Bring sample texts to class
2. Discuss, with the whole class, how the text is organised, the type of structures used, the type of vocabulary used etc.
3. Get the students, working in pairs, to write their own example of that type of text

Typical text types	Students can ...
Advertisements	Write an advertisement for something that interests them – a car, a concert, a film, a new watch etc.
Instructions	Write instructions for – riding a bicycle, cooking a meal, playing a CD etc.
Directions	Write directions for getting from one place to another
Descriptions1	Describe a person, place
Descriptions2	Describe an event or experience (with appropriate linking words/phrases)
Arguing	Pros and cons, advantages and disadvantages etc.
Letters (formal and informal)	May use some of the above

3 Creative text

Making words from single words is an excellent way of getting students to use all the language that they know in an imaginative way. The result is a great sense of achievement, particularly for those whose level of English is still low.

Method:

1. Write a single word on the board. It could be a word that the students have recently learnt, a word from a subject class, or the name of a member of the class.
2. Brainstorm all the words that the students know that start with the letters in the word and write these under the original word.
3. Then, working in pairs, students make a short imaginative text using, as a basis, as many of the words that they have collected as possible.

Example:

H	i	s	t	o	r	y
he	in	school	teacher	orange	run	year
head	is	science	toilet	open	rain	you
hair	it	second	tape	over	rose	yellow
hat	idea	seat	table	out	red	
homework	ice		together		rules	
heavy						

4 Newspaper

Students are generally familiar with newspapers, newsletters and magazines. A project for students who have developed basic literacy is the compilation of a 'class newspaper'. This activity could be done with all language support groups in the school, each group producing material at the level appropriate to that group.

Method:

1. Teacher shows a newspaper to the class and brainstorms/discusses what is in a paper.
2. Students look back through the work that they have done and talk about what they could put in a newspaper
3. Class is organised in pairs and each pair must discuss and decide what they will contribute to the paper. Contributions could include text, pictures, cartoons, wordsearch or crosswords, etc.
4. Students work in pairs or small groups on their contributions over several sessions
5. Teacher with students brings the work together in a scrap book, printed document or other form, and it is shown to all classes.

NOTE:

This activity could take place across a number of language support groups at the same time with all work being brought together for the final version. Less proficient learners produce what they can – pictures, copied text etc.

Classroom activities and materials

In the activities that follow the indications for levels refer to the **English Language Proficiency Benchmarks**:

< A1 indicates that the learner's current target is A1 level (effectively a complete beginner)

A1+ indicates that the activity is suitable for all learners from A1 to B1 level. The tasks may be made more or less challenging to accommodate this learning range.

Learning basic classroom instructions

When you are in the classroom you will hear your teachers giving you important instructions. These instructions are written below so that you can remember what they mean.

Sit down

You should sit down in class so you can do your work without disturbing the other students



Put your hand up

You should put your hand up if you want to say something or ask the teacher a question.



Copy this down

The teacher may write something on the board, and you should write the same thing in your book.



Open your books

At the beginning of a lesson or a new piece of work you may be told to open your books so that you can all start work together



Listen/Be quiet

It is important to listen to your teacher in your lessons and not talk while he or she is talking.



Get into pairs/groups

Sometimes you may be asked to work with other students. This can be in pairs, when you find one other person to work with, or in groups, when three or four students will work together.



Do this for homework

You may be told to do some work as homework. This means that you don't do it at school but when you get home.



Icebreaking activities

Activity 1: Planned tour of the school

Objective: To introduce different parts and activities of the school

Method

Stage 1:

1. Print, cut out and, if possible, laminate and stick labels on the doors of rooms. Language support students can be involved in doing this.
2. Take new students around the school and show them all the different rooms
3. At each room they can suggest what they think may be taught in that room and why

Note: If an actual tour of the school is not thought to be appropriate then a virtual tour can be done using photographs of the different rooms and the subjects/activities are discussed as above.

EXAMPLE:



Stage 2

1. Students collect the labels as they do the tour
 2. Back in the classroom, they go through the labels again
- If it is possible to provide a blank plan of the school, they can write in the names of rooms in the relevant places.

Stage 3

1. Students use the labels and make a list of the subjects that are studied in the school. (a wordsearch may also be created)
2. The new vocabulary is put on a chart with an appropriate picture to indicate the content of the subject.

If students have already been given a timetable, they should examine the timetable with this new information. They can enter the room numbers on their timetables, or find the location of rooms on the plan of the school.

Stage 4

Labels are put randomly around the room and students must find the appropriate label when the teacher calls out the room and subject.

Activity 2: Ball game

Level: < A1

Objective: To encourage students to give limited responses

Resources: A soft ball



Method:

1. Students stand or sit in a circle with teacher as part of circle
2. Teacher says 'good morning' and throws the ball to a student
3. Student repeats greeting or offers another one, e.g. 'hello'
4. Ball is thrown from student to student.

After the ball has gone round everybody, teacher rounds up what has been said

This method can be used to get students to respond in a wide variety of ways:

Examples: Teacher starts game by saying:

[his/her name] *Helen*

complete statement e.g. *I'm Helen* or *My name is Helen*

occupation e.g. *I'm a teacher*

age e.g. *I'm 28*

likes and dislikes e.g. *I like chocolate* or *I don't like cold weather*

country of origin e.g. *I'm from Ireland*

Each approach suggested above is an extension of learning.

- Existing students can be asked to introduce new students from the information received.
- Students can take turns to come to the board and write the basic information about another student.
- If students lack confidence they can be encouraged to come to the board in pairs.

This approach can also be used at intervals throughout the course, for example at the beginning or end of a week, to encourage students to reflect, briefly, on progress e.g. *This week is easier than last week*, on feelings e.g. *I'm tired*, etc.

ACTIVITY 3: Who am I?

Level: A1+

Objective: To develop skills of questioning

Resources: cards or post-its™



METHOD:

1. Teacher devises cards with a single word or name representing either a famous person or, closer to home, a person or position in the school.

Example: *Jose Mourinho*

The Principal (of the school)

2. Students are told the category of people they represent (world famous figures, famous footballers, people in the school etc.)
3. The cards are stuck on the backs or foreheads of students so that they cannot see who they are
4. Students circulate, questioning other students,
e.g. *Am I a man or woman?*
Am I French or English? (footballer)
etc.
5. Students finish when they guess what is on the card or the teacher calls the group together and asks each person what they have learned about the 'person' they represent and they can attempt to guess who it is.

Note: this activity can also be used to consolidate learning that has taken place in the class. For example the individuals in a history unit, important people in Ireland etc.

Activity 4: What I can do

Level: A1+

Objective: To raise students' self-esteem and to stimulate description or discussion

Resources: a drawing of a hand for each student

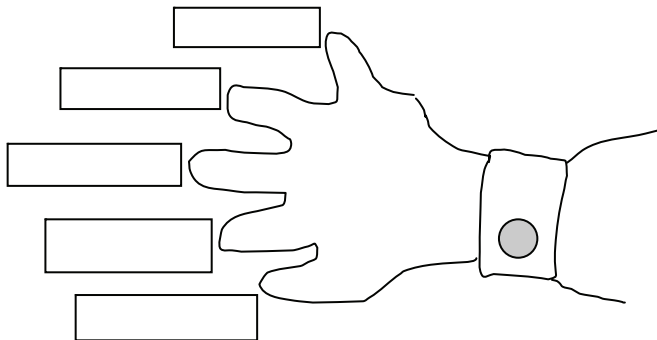
Method:

1. Each student draws an outline of a hand
2. Students note the five things that they can do well / have done in the boxes attached to fingers.

They can do this:

- By discussing in pairs and identifying the vocabulary for themselves
- By describing what they can do using the vocabulary that is already available to them
- By using the learner dictionaries in the classroom

3. Students tell the whole class what their 'strengths' are.



Activity 5: Difficult and easy!

Level: A1+

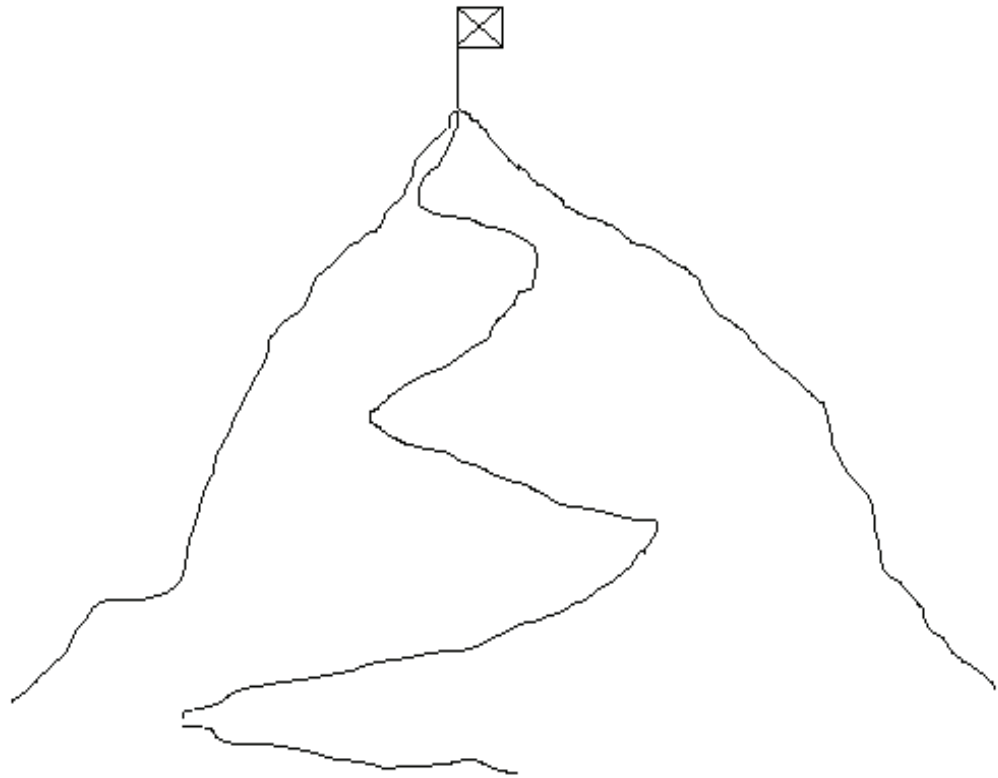
Objective: To help students talk about the challenges they face and to give the teacher insights into a student's personal view.

Resources: a copy of the following page for each student

Method:

1. Brainstorm the concept of **difficult and easy** and collect ideas on the board
2. Teacher adds ideas e.g. playing the piano, riding a horse, driving a car etc.
3. Draw the outline of the mountain on the blackboard and show that learning difficult things is like climbing the steep side of the mountain. There are many challenges on the way (these may be drawn in as extra cliffs and crags)
4. Easy things are like climbing the path to the top without the challenges
5. Give **each** student a copy of the blank mountain
6. Working in pairs they:
 - Identify the things that they have learnt/had to do
 - Decide if they were difficult or easy
 - Then indicate, on their own copy, their progress to the top
 - They should draw a picture to show what point they have reached now for different challenges
 - End with a class discussion/sharing of ideas.

Difficult and easy!



You want to reach the top of the mountain. There are two ways: The difficult climb up the sides and the easy climb up the path.

- What things do you find **difficult**? Show where you are on the mountain now with these difficult things.
- What things do you find **easy**? Show where you are on the easy pathway to the top.

Activity 5: The name game

Level: A1+

Objective: To discuss the significance of names and the importance of pronouncing them correctly

Method:

1. Teacher explains his/her name under the following headings:
 - * *Name*
 - * *Where does the name come from*
 - * *Meaning of the name*
 - * *Whether it has religious origin*
 - * *Who chose the name*
 - * *Other people in family called this name*
2. Teacher distributes a grid with these headings to each student, or makes a grid on the board, and students write or dictate the information to the teacher.

Activity 6: My favourite things

Level: A1+

Objective: To stimulate the use of descriptive language—either describing an object or an event

Method:

1. Teacher brings something in to class that he/she likes (e.g. a signed tee-shirt, an ornament, piece of jewellery, CD etc.)
2. Elicits from the students why they think the teacher brought this in to class
3. Teacher explains that the following day or later in the week everybody will be asked to talk about a favourite thing. If possible they should bring this object with them. Students are instructed in what they are expected to say so that they can prepare:
For example: *What the object is*
When/where they got it and why
Why it is important
Whether it has any special use etc.

Note: If the students have any particular objects relating to their own cultural background they could bring these in and explain their use in a separate session.

School

p	e	n	a	h	o	m	e	w	o	r	k	e	i	o	u
w	a	s	t	e	p	a	p	e	r	b	a	s	k	e	t
u	t	v	w	p	q	r	d	e	s	k	b	l	o	d	e
t	v	c	o	p	y	b	o	o	k	p	c	o	n	e	b
m	a	p	e	s	c	i	s	s	o	r	s	o	u	e	t
c	o	a	t	h	o	o	k	n	p	q	r	a	b	c	d
v	t	b	a	s	k	e	t	b	a	l	l	x	y	z	w
p	h	i	j	k	p	e	n	c	i	l	p	b	e	l	l
c	h	a	i	r	k	f	o	o	t	b	a	l	l	v	x
t	e	a	c	h	e	r	v	c	l	o	c	k	t	u	t
b	o	o	k	s	h	e	l	f	v	w	c	o	a	t	x
n	p	q	s	t	u	b	l	a	c	k	b	o	a	r	d
r	b	l	m	l	e	s	s	t	u	d	e	n	t	y	z
a	b	d	c	a	b	p	e	n	c	i	l	c	a	s	e
s	p	i	k	p	i	e	g	r	o	p	e	c	o	a	t
s	c	h	o	o	l	b	a	g	b	t	v	b	o	o	k

Find the words: all words are written from left to right

- | | | | |
|-------------|------------|----------|--------------------|
| pencil | school bag | book | pen |
| pencil case | clock | chair | desk |
| copybook | blackboard | coat | cone |
| coathook | teacher | scissors | basketball |
| student | homework | bell | coat |
| map | bookshelf | football | waste paper basket |

Places in the school

d	g	h	s	c	i	e	n	c	e	l	a	b	c	b	h	t	k	n	a
n	a	a	r	t	r	o	o	m	e	h	p	g	y	m	p	h	k	i	a
h	m	k	l	f	r	c	l	o	a	k	r	o	o	m	a	f	h	o	l
b	j	m	k	t	d	b	s	x	j	i	l	t	o	i	l	e	t	s	p
l	p	l	a	y	i	n	g	f	i	e	l	d	p	r	g	a	q	e	d
j	m	l	r	f	n	u	k	c	o	m	p	u	t	e	r	r	o	o	m
a	g	n	i	s	t	a	f	f	r	o	o	m	h	m	k	p	r	g	b
o	f	f	i	c	e	f	n	k	m	r	d	l	h	n	j	i	m	s	c
r	g	n	v	i	k	a	s	m	l	p	e	f	r	h	n	j	k	m	d
h	n	m	k	a	s	d	c	l	a	s	s	r	o	o	m	n	e	h	g
q	g	y	u	j	m	l	f	v	b	y	k	m	l	i	b	r	a	r	y
a	v	g	m	u	s	i	c	r	o	o	m	h	n	m	k	e	g	d	l
k	m	e	f	k	i	t	c	h	e	n	s	n	m	l	f	b	h	o	p
m	k	s	g	h	n	k	w	o	o	d	w	o	r	k	r	o	o	m	l
p	c	h	a	n	g	i	n	g	r	o	o	m	s	j	g	n	c	e	f
m	k	g	b	a	d	r	t	h	n	u	k	m	d	f	n	w	o	k	l

Find the words: all words go from left to right →

changing rooms

science lab

class room

art room

playing field

music room

staff room

woodwork room

cloak room

computer room

kitchens

library

gym

toilets

office

School subjects

m	h	j	l	t	y	j	p	d	h	e	y	m	v	g	b	n	s	y	h
g	b	i	o	l	o	g	y	h	k	i	m	u	s	i	c	p	o	j	s
c	h	n	m	h	r	f	d	s	v	j	n	u	i	l	m	d	e	q	r
f	j	I	r	i	s	h	k	p	l	w	o	o	d	w	o	r	k	s	c
v	n	h	m	s	r	f	g	F	r	e	n	c	h	a	h	b	n	m	k
l	h	e	d	g	e	o	g	r	a	p	h	y	f	h	n	j	m	k	e
d	f	g	n	m	k	l	o	p	h	s	v	g	b	n	j	m	t	h	e
f	g	j	G	e	r	m	a	n	h	n	m	k	l	o	p	f	g	b	d
e	f	g	s	d	v	c	h	i	s	t	o	r	y	a	b	h	n	k	m
g	b	m	k	e	c	o	m	p	u	t	e	r	s	t	u	d	i	e	s
x	b	n	m	k	j	y	c	h	e	m	i	s	t	r	y	s	h	b	n
m	e	g	v	r	e	l	i	g	i	o	n	a	f	v	b	k	m	i	p
n	m	a	t	h	s	s	t	h	x	n	m	a	r	t	g	j	m	k	p
f	b	h	m	k	l	d	e	v	h	b	n	j	m	d	s	w	q	c	e
t	s	t	j	h	o	m	e	e	c	o	n	o	m	i	c	s	m	b	h
n	c	e	t	s	b	s	c	i	e	n	c	e	s	v	b	n	h	m	c
e	g	n	j	y	s	c	n	u	j	n	g	l	s	x	b	t	u	g	i
o	p	h	y	s	i	c	s	s	t	r	f	b	n	u	o	m	g	s	c
f	t	e	r	n	j	m	o	p	E	n	g	l	i	s	h	m	s	h	b
n	u	e	n	c	t	h	n	o	p	l	i	k	m	g	y	h	t	s	r

Find the words: all words go from left to right →

Highlight the subjects that you are learning

biology

woodwork

home economics

chemistry

science

computer studies

French

Irish

German

music

physics

English

geography

history

religion

Nationalities

(where our families come from)

The nationality of a person tells you where he or she has come from.

If a person is from Ireland, his or her nationality is Irish.

If a person is from Russia, his or her nationality is Russian.

If a person is from the Lebanon, his or her nationality is Lebanese.

Ask the people in your class these questions and fill in the boxes.

Then make a word search using as many names of countries and nationalities as you can.

What's your name?

Where are you from?


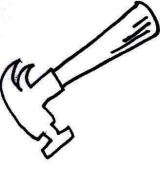
What is your nationality?

Can you spell it?

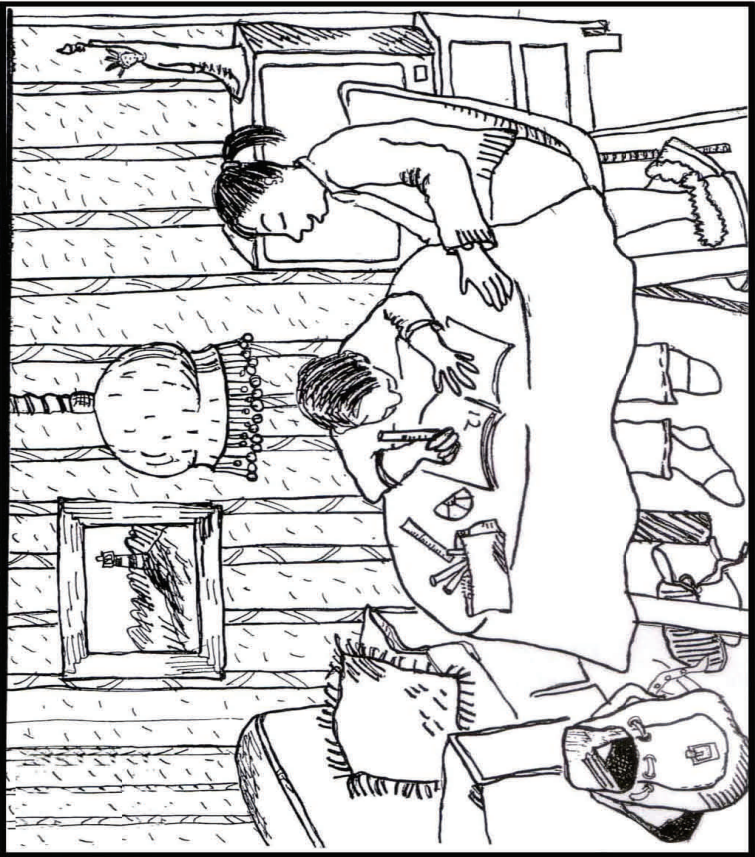
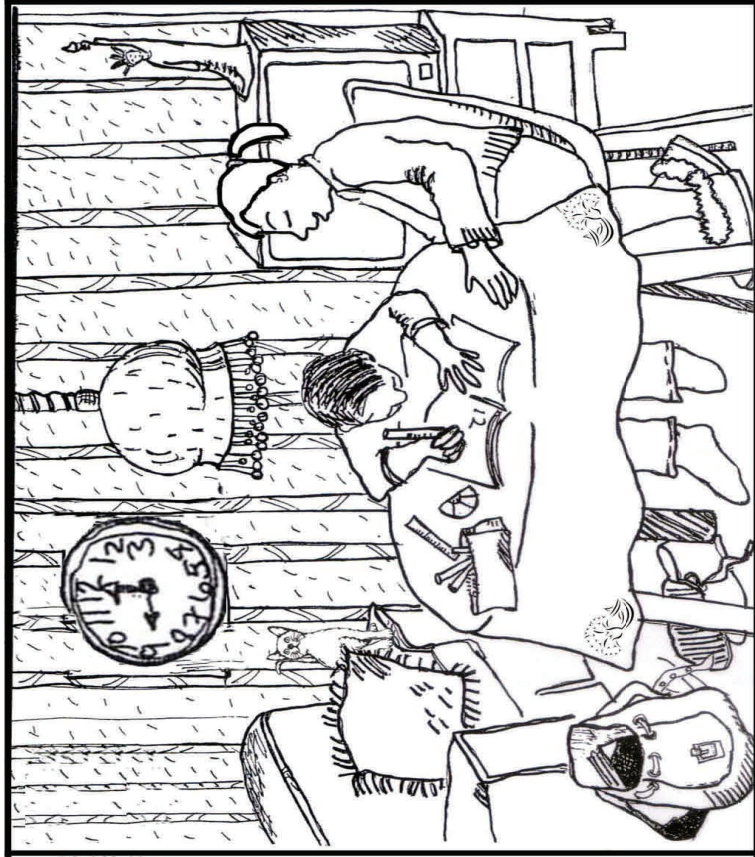
Name	Country	Nationality

Opposites.

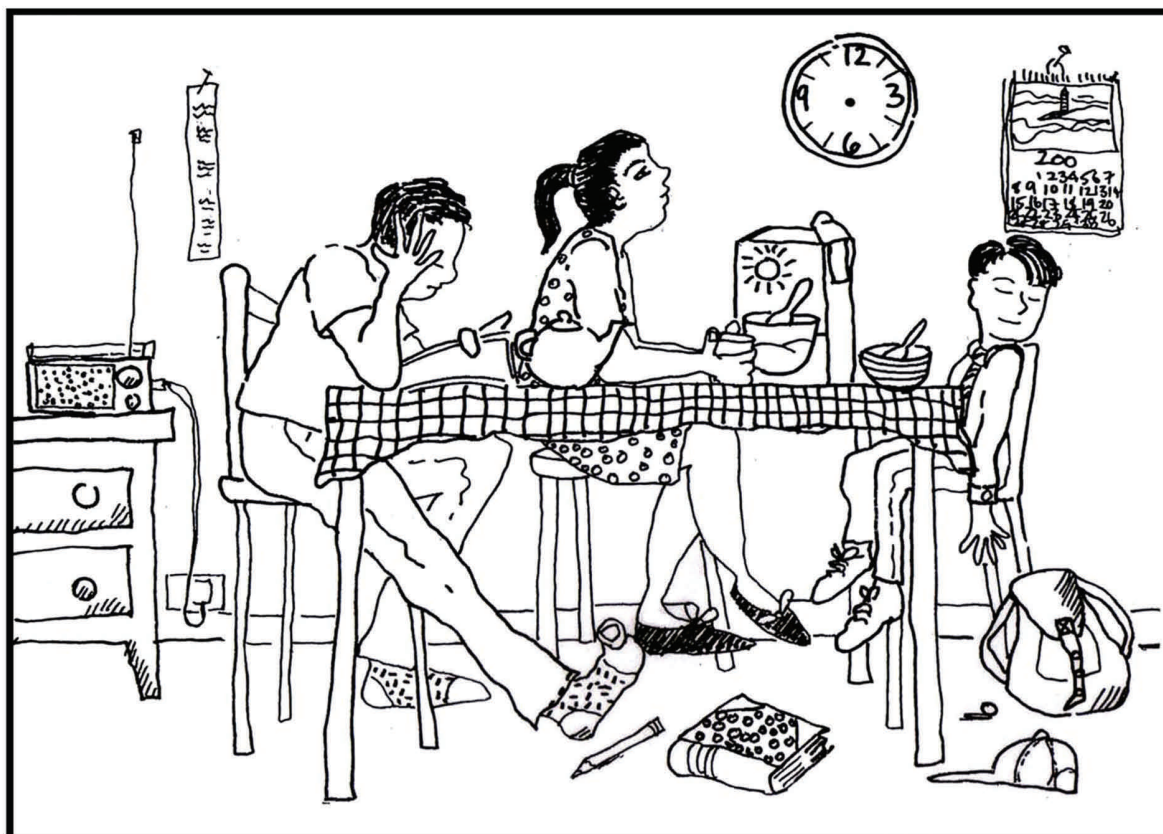
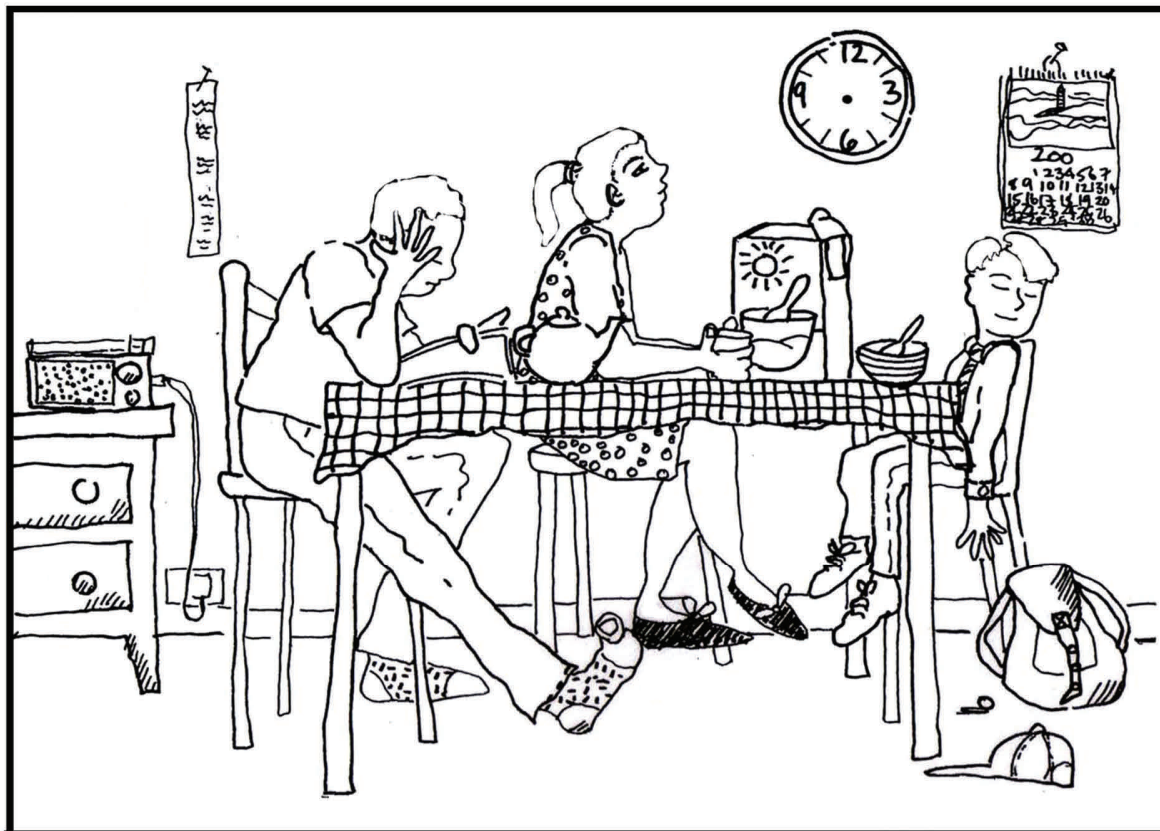
Draw an object in each box that the word describes.

Kitten	Hammer		
		soft	hard
hot	cold		
long	short		
		full	empty
		sweet	sour
		happy	sad
		young	old
		nice	nasty
		ugly	attractive

Can you spot the 5 differences?



Which picture is it?



Working with subject texts in language support

Vocabulary

There are a number of effective approaches for helping learners to access, identify and collect subject-specific vocabulary.

Activity 1: Developing scan reading skills by finding words and expressions from a vocabulary box.

atlas map	blank map	lines of latitude	rivers
sea areas	islands	mountain ranges	lakes
country	ocean	lines of longitude	memorise
lake	sea	city	countries
cities	capital city	tropic	

Method:

1. Teacher extracts the key words from a page or section of subject text and adds some 'distractors' (i.e. words that do not belong in the text)
2. Students work in pairs to scan the text, find the words/expressions and circle or highlight them in the vocabulary box
3. Students create their own personal glossary for the page or section by writing the key vocabulary into a grid, indicating where it appears in the text (e.g. page number)
4. Students *either* use learner's dictionaries to write a brief explanation for the words/expressions in English *or* the teacher helps with the explanation
5. If appropriate, a student may also make a note in the mother tongue as an additional support for future subject learning.

Activity 2: Singular, plural and spellings

Method:

1. Students make a blank grid for each subject area
2. As they encounter irregular forms of plurals they enter these on the grid
3. The grids should be kept in the Dossier section of the European Language Portfolio so that they are available for support in mainstream classes

Singular	Plural
<i>river</i>	
<i>area</i>	
	<i>countries</i>
<i>city</i>	
	<i>lakes</i>
<i>capital city</i>	
	<i>mountain ranges</i>

Activity 3: Definitions of key terms

Method:

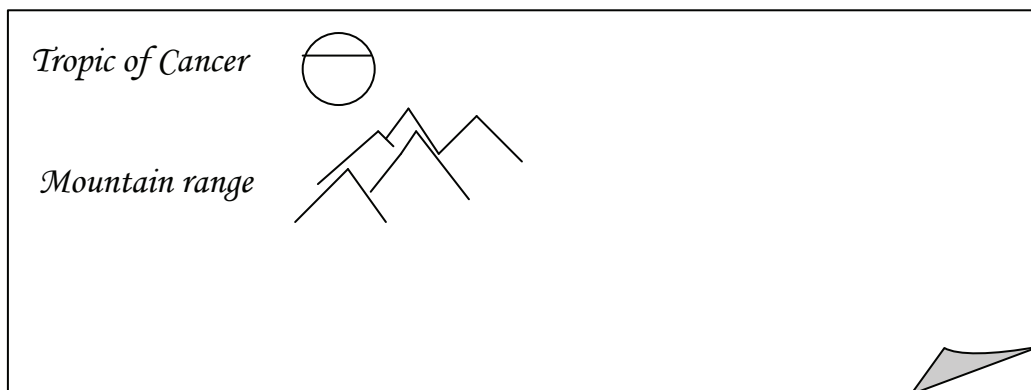
1. Using a blank grid, students work in pairs and scan read a page or section to identify key terms
2. All pairs pool their ideas and a combined list of key terms is drawn up
3. Students transfer the words or phrases to their own grids
4. Either, higher level students may continue to work in pairs to create definitions or, lower level students work with teacher to create definitions referring to the subject text book as they do so

Word or phrase	Definition
	<i>The place where the government meets</i>
	<i>A line of mountains</i>
	<i>An area of water surrounded by land</i>
	<i>A large amount of fresh water flowing in a line across the land</i>
	<i>A piece of land surrounded by water</i>
	<i>The tropic that is north of the Equator</i>
	<i>The tropic that is south of the Equator</i>

Activity 4: Making wall charts with specific vocabulary

Method:

1. Put a large sheet on the wall with the appropriate heading at the top (e.g. history, business studies etc)
2. As new terms are encountered by students, they take responsibility for adding these to the chart with drawings, illustrations or definitions to explain the terms.



Working with subject information

Similar approaches may be used for the identification and categorisation of key information as for key vocabulary.

Example 1:

All pictures/illustrations/diagrams should be discussed before the text is accessed.

Method:

1. Draw students' attention to the illustrations etc. in a particular chapter or unit.
2. Brainstorm:
 - * What is being illustrated—elicit ideas from students
 - * Predictions—what do students think will be the focus of the text
 - * What terminology the students already know about this topic
 - * Have they seen/learnt this before?
 - * etc.
3. When the information available from illustrations has been exhausted, turn to the text and apply the scan reading teaching shown above (i.e. look for key words, define key words)
4. Put the information into a grid such as the example below.

Example 2: From a Geography text book—the stages of a river

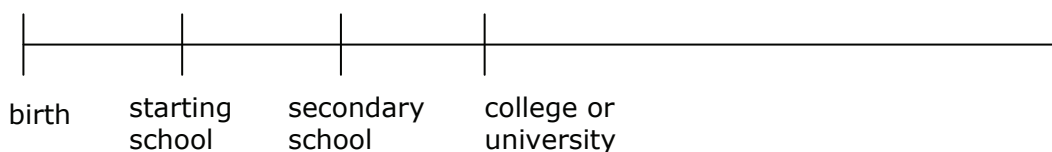
The main information relating to each stage of a river is itemised briefly using key words/phrases.

Youth	Maturity	Old age
<i>Steep slope</i>	<i>Gentle slope</i>	<i>Almost flat</i>
<i>Many contours</i>	<i>Few contours</i>	<i>No contours</i>
<i>V-shaped</i>	<i>etc.</i>	<i>etc.</i>

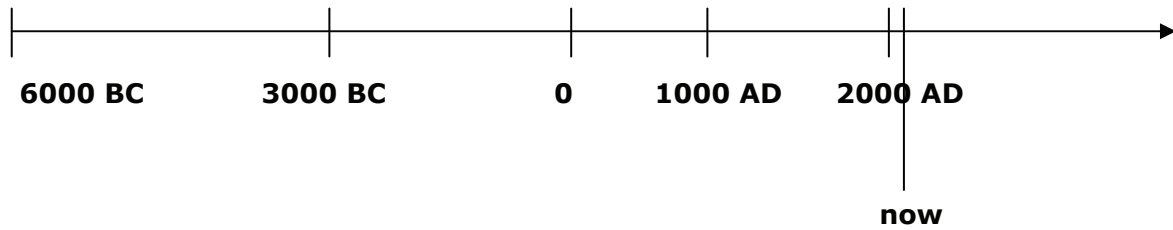
Example 3: Making sure that students understand the basic concepts

Method: (example from History)

1. In order to ensure that students understand that they will be learning about the past, begin with a time line and talk about the 'histories' of people



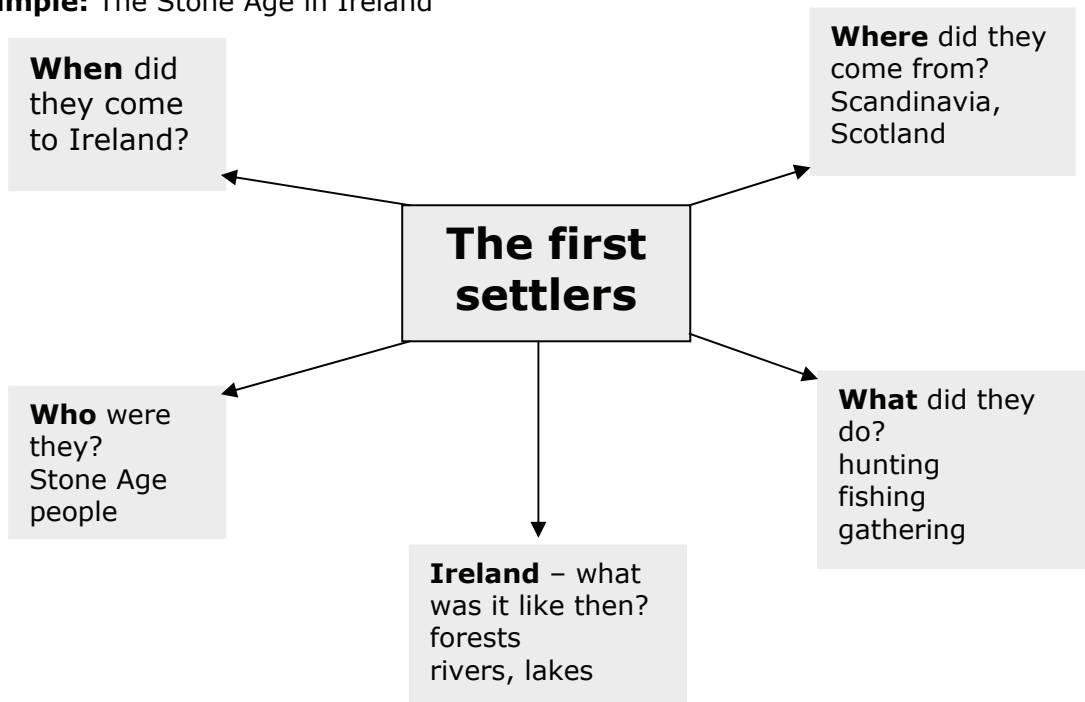
2 Introduce the concept of historical time by using another time line



Example 4:

Using diagrams to explore the information contained in a section, chapter or unit.

Example: The Stone Age in Ireland



Note: This type of diagram, often called a 'spidergram', is a very useful way to organise categories of information or vocabulary. This approach can be applied in many situations such as:

- * Brainstorming/introducing new vocabulary
- * Introducing the key points from a subject text
- * Reviewing a theme

The most effective way of using spidergrams is to gather the information on the board with all students involved in making suggestions, then each student copies the spidergram for future reference/revision.

Example 5:

Making appropriate grids for text which does not have adequate visual support.

Curriculum texts which do not have pictures or diagrams to prompt understanding, may be broken into smaller parts to make them more accessible. This challenge often arises with texts used in the English curriculum.

1 Grid which breaks the text into either sentences or paragraphs (as appropriate)

Paragraph (or sentence)	Who	What	Where	When
1				
2				
3				
4				

2 Grid which summarises specific information

Example taken from science text on topic 'Energy'.

Page and paragraph	Type of energy	Advantage(s)	Disadvantage(s)	Any other important information
X X	hydroelectricity	renewable little or no pollution	produce smaller amounts of energy	
X X	fossil fuels		non-renewable	being used up quickly



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