

B O A R D O F S T U D I E S
NEW SOUTH WALES

Classical Hebrew Continuers

Stage 6 Syllabus

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1 The Higher School Certificate Program of Study

The purpose of the Higher School Certificate program of study is to:

- provide a curriculum structure which encourages students to complete secondary education;
- foster the intellectual, social and moral development of students, in particular developing their:
 - knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes in the fields of study they choose
 - capacity to manage their own learning
 - desire to continue learning in formal or informal settings after school
 - capacity to work together with others
 - respect for the cultural diversity of Australian society;
- provide a flexible structure within which students can prepare for:
 - further education and training
 - employment
 - full and active participation as citizens;
- provide formal assessment and certification of students' achievements;
- provide a context within which schools also have the opportunity to foster students' physical and spiritual development.

2 Introduction to Classical Hebrew in the Stage 6 Curriculum

2.1 The Language¹

The language to be studied and assessed is Classical Hebrew. One of the Western Semitic languages, Classical Hebrew has been the language of Jewish religious literature from earliest writings to the modern day. It was the language of speech and inscriptions in Biblical times.

Written works based on Classical Hebrew include the Bible, Mishna, Talmud, Rabbinic writings and liturgy. In having forms that have remained current for 3000 years, Classical Hebrew is a unique language. Today it forms the basis of the language of the modern state of Israel.

2.2 Description of Target Group

The *Classical Hebrew Continuers Syllabus* is designed for students who, typically, will have studied Classical Hebrew for 400–500 hours at the completion of Year 12.

2.3 Rationale

Classical Hebrew is an important cultural language, the study of which not only gives students access to the culture, thought and literature of ancient Israel, but also sheds light on the languages, cultures, literatures and traditions that are derived from those of ancient Israel. Classical Hebrew was a spoken and written language, but in the course of time it came to be regarded by its users as sacred, both in language and script (*Leshon ha-qodesh*) (שְׁלֹשׁוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ).

It should also be noted that more advanced Biblical study cannot be undertaken without an understanding of Classical Hebrew.

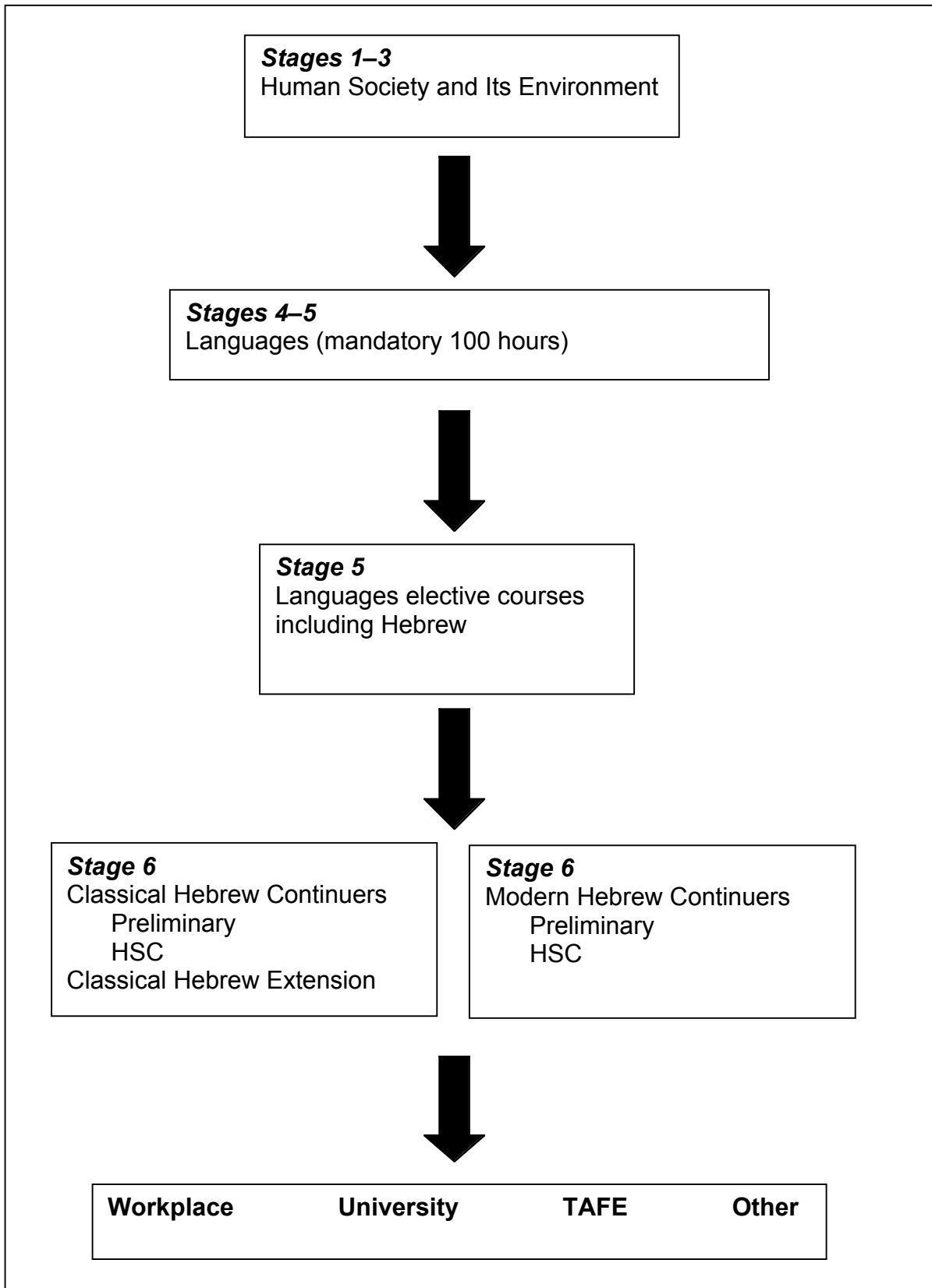
Through the study of Classical Hebrew, students gain insights into a civilisation that is one of the bases of western civilisation. In Australia, the study of Classical Hebrew:

- assists students of Jewish background to maintain and to develop their culture and to appreciate the Jewish way of life;
- helps students of Jewish and non-Jewish background develop linguistic skills and an appreciation of the culture and religious values that strongly influence western civilisation.

Footnote 1

All transliterations follow the rules laid down in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol 1 p 90. The spelling of all Biblical names is that used in *Tanakh, The Holy Scriptures* (Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1985). A convenient survey of the conventions in using Hebrew characters in English texts is found in Judith Butcher, *Copy Editing for Editors, Authors, Publishers, The Cambridge Handbook*, Cambridge University Press (3rd edn, 1992) pp 408-410.

3 Continuum of Learning for Classical Hebrew Stage 6 Students



The New South Wales curriculum provides opportunities for students to study a language or languages from Stage 1 through to Stage 6.

In the K–6 (Stages 1–3) Human Society and Its Environment key learning area, students develop an awareness of languages and may learn about the world through the study of a language.

In Years 7–10, a language is a mandatory component of the School Certificate, with students being required to complete 100 hours of language study. Elective study in Stages 4–5 in Hebrew builds upon the mandatory study.

Stage 6 offers the opportunity to continue the study of Classical Hebrew at Continuers level with the option of an Extension course, as well as Modern Hebrew at Continuers Level.

4 Aims

The aims of the syllabus are to develop students':

- ability to understand Classical Hebrew texts
- ability to understand how language works at the level of grammar and syntax
- ability to recognise connections between Classical Hebrew and English or other languages
- ability to recognise stylistic conventions of Classical Hebrew texts and understand their literary effects
- ability to assimilate the ideas contained in a Classical Hebrew text
- ability to explore the ideas of a Classical Hebrew text in its social, cultural, historical and religious contexts
- ability to explore their own culture(s) through the study of Classical Hebrew culture
- ability to recognise how ideas and beliefs of the classical period have influenced subsequent societies
- enjoyment of the study of Classical Hebrew through the reading of Classical Hebrew texts
- general cognitive, analytical and learning skills.

5 Objectives

Students will achieve the following objectives:

- Objective 1 — understand seen and unseen texts written in Classical Hebrew
- Objective 2 — understand the linguistic, literary, contextual, historical and religious features of prescribed Classical Hebrew texts
- Objective 3 — understand the ideas, values, attitudes and arguments contained in prescribed Classical Hebrew texts.

6 Course Structure

The Preliminary Course (120 indicative hours)

The Preliminary course is structured to provide students with opportunities to read original Classical Hebrew texts or texts in translation and to develop the skills needed to study the prescribed texts for the HSC course.

The HSC Course (120 indicative hours)

The course is structured to provide students with opportunities to analyse prescribed Classical Hebrew texts or texts in translation and to develop skills needed to understand unseen texts in the original.

7 Objectives and Outcomes

7.1 Listing of Objectives and Outcomes

Outcomes represent the knowledge, skills and understanding that students will achieve by the end of a course based on this syllabus. The following outcomes are derived from the objectives.

Objectives	Outcomes
<p>Students will:</p> <p>1. understand seen and unseen texts written in Classical Hebrew</p>	<p>The student:</p> <p>1.1 applies knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, syntax and vocalisation to read and understand a prescribed Classical Hebrew text</p> <p>1.2 infers the meaning of unfamiliar words or phrases — from their cognates, from common patterns of word formations and from context</p> <p>1.3 demonstrates understanding of the meaning of a seen or unseen Classical Hebrew text</p>
<p>2. understand the linguistic, literary, contextual, historical and religious features of prescribed Classical Hebrew texts</p>	<p>2.1 identifies and/or explains verb forms of a prescribed Classical Hebrew text</p> <p>2.2 demonstrates knowledge of grammatical and syntactical features of a Classical Hebrew text through comprehension</p> <p>2.3 identifies stylistic conventions characteristic of a prescribed Classical text in Hebrew or in translation and explains their literary effects</p> <p>2.4 identifies and explains the contextual, historical and religious references of a prescribed text</p> <p>2.5 identifies and explains Halakhic and/or liturgical concerns, arising out of a prescribed Classical Hebrew text</p>

<p>3. understand the ideas, values, attitudes and arguments contained in prescribed Classical Hebrew texts</p>	<p>3.1 explains the ideas, values and attitudes presented in a prescribed text in the context of the culture in which it was produced</p> <p>3.2 explains the plain and interpreted meaning — <i>peshat</i> (פֶּשֶׁט) and <i>derash</i> (דֵּרַשׁ) — of prescribed Classical Hebrew texts, with reference to prescribed traditional commentaries</p> <p>3.3 identifies important ideas, beliefs and practices of the classical period of study as they occur in its literature</p> <p>3.4 identifies the order of the books in the canon and their quintessential content</p>
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7.2 Key Competencies

Classical Hebrew provides a powerful context within which to develop general competencies considered essential for the acquisition of effective, higher-order thinking skills necessary for further education, work and everyday life.

Key competencies are embedded in the Classical Hebrew syllabus to enhance student learning. The key competencies of ***collecting, analysing and organising information*** and ***communicating ideas and information*** reflect core skills in learning Classical Hebrew and are explicit in the objectives and outcomes of the syllabus. The other key competencies are developed through the methodologies of the syllabus and through classroom pedagogy. Students work as individuals and as members of groups to conduct research and through this, the key competencies of ***planning and organising activities*** and ***working with others and in teams*** are developed. During such research, students will need to use appropriate information technologies and so develop the key competency ***using technology***. The skills associated with the analysis of texts, such as the ability to infer meaning from context, translate accurately from Classical Hebrew to English, and using a dictionary, contribute towards the students' development of the key competency ***solving problems***.

8 Content

The content of this syllabus is based on prose Classical Hebrew texts and literary, linguistic, cultural and historical studies derived from them.

8.1 Texts

Texts in Classical Hebrew provide the focus of this course. Students will be required to study texts in order to develop skills in understanding the language, and in the interpretation and analysis of texts as literary forms. Texts are the key to the study of the Classical Hebrew language and they will allow students to experience representative writing both in the original Hebrew and in translation.

8.2 Language

Students will need to understand the linguistic features of the texts, such as vocabulary, grammar and syntax.

8.2.1 Vocabulary

While there is no prescribed vocabulary list, it is expected that students will be familiar with the range of vocabulary contained in the prescribed texts. In preparing for unseen students should use the vocabulary list at the end of Weingreen, *A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew*, as a guide to words which are common.

8.2.2 Dictionaries

Students should be encouraged to use dictionaries in class and for private preparation.

8.2.3 Grammar

Grammar is the organisation of, and relationship between, all the elements that constitute a language as it functions.

It is recognised that students will already have acquired a significant understanding of the function of grammar in Classical Hebrew through prior study.

The following grammatical structures are those that students studying Classical Hebrew in a Continuers course are expected to recognise.

Items for Analysis

Grammatical item	Sub-elements	Example/s
verbs	forms of the root of the verb—גזרה regular i.e. שלמים <i>Lamed he</i> <i>Pe nun</i> <i>Ayin vav/Ayin yud</i> conjugations: (Binyan) <i>Pa'al (Kal)</i> פעל <i>Niph'al</i> נפעל <i>Pi'el</i> פעל <i>Hiph'il</i> הפעיל <i>Hitpa'el</i> התפעל aspects: (tenses) present participle perfect imperfect imperative infinitive: absolute and construct vav consecutive: וו ההפוך (relating to the above) negative commands	שמר קנה נפל קום/שים שָׁמַר נִשְׁמַר דָּבַר הִדְלִיק הִתְקַדַּשׁ שׁוֹמֵר שָׁמַרְתִּי אֲשַׁמֵּר שִׁמֵּר כְּשֹׁמֵר שְׁמוֹר וְאָמַר וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא/אֵל

Items for Recognition

Grammatical item	Sub-elements	Example/s
nouns	masculine singular feminine singular masculine plural feminine plural suffixes absolute and construct states	מלך מלכה מלכים מלכות אויביו בן-האיש
adjectives	masculine singular feminine singular masculine plural feminine plural numerals (1–10 000)	גדול גדולה גדולים גדולות
prepositions	separable inseparable	מן/כמו/על אל בכל"ם
pronouns	subject demonstrative pronominal suffixes relative object (with endings) interrogative	אני/אתה... זאת/זה אלה/ שמרת יהו אשר/ש אותי/אותך... מה/מי/ה למי/ איזה/איפה

Grammatical item	Sub-elements	Example/s
conjunctions (<i>Vav hahibur</i>)	vocalisation of the <i>vav hahibur</i> (וּו החבור)	טו נ וּרַע אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה
the definite article	vocalisation of the definite article (הַא הידיעה)	הַתֵּלַךְ
sign of the definite object	'et- — אֶת	
locative <i>He</i>	הַא המגמה	מִצְרַיִם

8.3 Content of the Preliminary Course

8.3.1 Reading Skills

Students should be able to read aloud accurately any vocalized and cantillated Biblical prose text (excluding Aramaic portions) with due regard to the vocalised *Qeré Ukhetiv* (קְרִי וּכְתִיב) and *ta'amei hammiqra* (טַעְמֵי הַמִּקְרָא). Students should pay attention to *mill'el* (מִלְעִיל) and *milr'a* (מִלְרַע). The text should be between five and ten verses. While it is advantageous for students to know the *ta'amei hammiqra*, students should be able to recognise a *qaton*, an *etnahta* and a *sof-pasuq*.

8.3.2 Canon

Students should exhibit knowledge of the acronym 'Tanakh', the order of the books and the summary knowledge of content and authorship according to Jewish tradition.

Students should exhibit knowledge of their content, historical context, dating, authorship according to Jewish tradition and liturgical usage (liturgical usage is defined as the use of the Biblical text within Jewish ritual at home and in the synagogue).

8.3.3 History

Students will demonstrate knowledge of the historical background of texts chosen from the Hebrew sections of the Bible. The historical background should include:

- the context of the texts
- the settings and the historical sequence in which events took place with evidence both from within the texts and external sources.

8.3.4 Seen Tanakh Texts

Teachers should select texts from the Hebrew sections of the Bible. Students should demonstrate an understanding of:

- verb forms
- parts of speech
- knowledge of content
- the difference between *peshat* and *derash* of specific verses.

Hebrew texts will be extended by reading the texts more extensively in translation. Students should demonstrate a knowledge of the content, literary form and themes of texts studied.

8.3.5 Mishna Texts

Teachers should choose these texts from:

- *Zera'im*
- *Mo'ed*
- *Neziqin*.

Students should demonstrate knowledge of:

- the background to the Mishna and its compilation
- the major compilers including:
 - Hillel
 - Shammai
 - Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai
 - Rabbi Akiva
 - Rabbi Meir
 - Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi
- content of the seen text
- Halakhic applications of the seen text.

8.3.6 Unseen Tanakh Texts

Students should demonstrate knowledge of:

- the plain sense of the text
- the meaning in context of common words or phrases

Suitable editions of these texts are listed in section 8.4.

8.4 Content of the HSC Course

Prescribed extracts from texts in Classical Hebrew provide the focus of this course. 14–18 chapters of Tanakh (תנ"ך) drawn from *Torah*, *Nevi'im* and *Ketuvim*, and no more than five chapters (*peraqim*/ פ"ר ק"י) of Mishna are prescribed.

Prescribed chapters from *Ketuvim* are to be read as '*peshat*'. The whole book from which these chapters have been drawn, is to be read in translation. One or more themes are prescribed for this extensive study.

In addition to understanding the language of the text, the study of the prescribed texts should enable students to develop the necessary skills to make comparisons, analyse, interpret and evaluate the texts as works of literature. This involves examining the ways in which the writers convey their message and their impact on either a listening audience or a silent reader. It is expected that students will be able to identify the figures of speech that are characteristic of the prescribed texts. The texts will be drawn from the following canon:

8.4.1 Tanakh

Selections from each of:

- *Torah*
- *Nevi'im*.

Any edition of the Hebrew text may be used.

Prescribed commentaries

Kaplan, Aryeh, *The Living Torah*, print edition, Web edition or Hebrew–English edition, Moznaim Publishing Corporation, 4304 12th Avenue, Brooklyn, New York, 1981.

Elman, Yaakov (ed), *The Living Nach: The Early Prophets*, Moznaim Publishing Corporation, 4304 12th Avenue, Brooklyn, New York, 1994.

Elman, Yaakov & Shapiro, Moshe (eds), *The Living Nach: Later Prophets*, Moznaim Publishing Corporation, 4304 12th Avenue, Brooklyn, New York, 1995.

- *Ketuvim*

Any edition of the Hebrew text may be used.

Prescribed translation

The Jewish Bible, Tanakh: the Holy Scriptures, Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia & Jerusalem, 1985.

8.4.2 Mishna

Selections included from one of:

- *Zera'im*
- *Mo'ed*
- *Neziqin*.

Prescribed commentary

Kehati, Pinchas, *Mishnayot*, Heichal Shlomo Publishing, 1977.

8.4.3 Rotation of Texts

Information regarding the rotation of texts is available under Course Prescriptions on the Board's website at www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_hsc/classical-hebrew-continuers.html

9 Course Requirements

For the Preliminary course:

- 120 indicative hours are required to complete the course.

For the HSC course:

- the Preliminary course is a prerequisite
- 120 indicative hours are required to complete the course
- texts and a number of themes are prescribed for study.

Prescribed Texts – Prose

All parts of the Hebrew Bible, which are in prose and not in Aramaic, are to be studied with a prescribed commentary, where applicable. Each year this will include selections from:

- *Torah*
- *Nevi'im*
- *Ketuvim*

Prescribed Texts – Mishna

The following texts will be studied with the prescribed commentary. Each year this will include selections from:

- *Zera'im*
- *Mo'ed*
- *Neziqin*

Unseen Tanakh Texts

Unseen texts will be studied for comprehension. They will be drawn from any part of the narrative texts of the former prophets. The Aramaic sections of the Bible will be excluded. Selected passages should be read for the plain sense of the text.

10 Post-school Opportunities

The study of Classical Hebrew provides students with knowledge, understanding and skills that form a valuable foundation for a range of courses at university and other tertiary institutions. The study of Classical Hebrew directly links with courses in ancient history and archaeology in universities, from undergraduate studies through to post-doctoral research. The study of Classical Hebrew vocabulary and language directly link with courses in linguistics and other languages. The key competencies developed in the study of Classical Hebrew provide components of competence in industry.

In addition, the study of Classical Hebrew assists students to prepare for employment and full and active participation as citizens.

11 Assessment and Reporting

Advice on appropriate assessment practice in relation to the Classical Hebrew Continuers syllabus is contained in *Assessment and Reporting in Classical Hebrew Continuers Stage 6*. That document provides general advice on assessment in Stage 6 as well as the specific requirements for the HSC course. The document contains:

- mandatory components and weightings for the internal assessment of the HSC course
- the HSC examination specifications, which describe the format of the external HSC examination.

The document and other resources and advice related to assessment in Stage 6 Classical Hebrew Continuers are available on the Board's website at www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_hsc