

B O A R D O F S T U D I E S
N E W S O U T H W A L E S

An Introduction to English Stage 6 in the New HSC

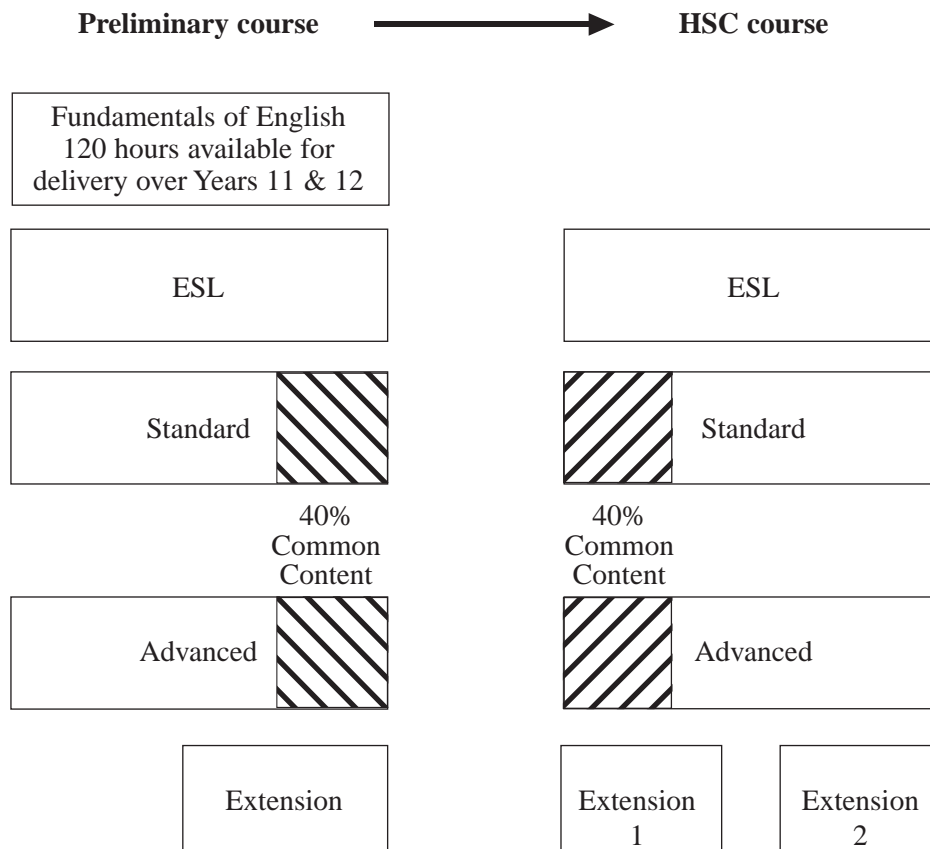
The new *English Stage 6 Syllabus* is for implementation with Year 11 in 2000 and will first be examined in 2001.

The new syllabus replaces the following current syllabuses in English:

- English Syllabus – 2 Unit (General) course (1982)
- English Syllabus – 2/3 Unit (Related) – 2 Unit course (1982)
- English Syllabus – 2/3 Unit (Related) – 3 Unit course (1982)
- Contemporary English Syllabus (1988)
- Supplementary English (1994).

English Stage 6 Syllabus

The new *English Stage 6 Syllabus* describes five sets of Preliminary and HSC courses in English.



What is similar?

English remains the mandatory subject for the Higher School Certificate.

The new *English Stage 6 Syllabus* is similar to the current English syllabuses in that there is a continued focus on the development of linguistic awareness and understanding through the study of texts in context.

It is also similar to the current syllabuses in that it is designed to develop the ability of students to read critically and to respond imaginatively and analytically. Students will continue to consider the relationships between texts and to engage in the close reading of individual texts and wide reading of a range of different kinds of texts.

Major improvements

Meeting student needs

The new syllabus represents a major reconceptualisation and expansion of the study and teaching of English, and it is designed to address the range of needs, abilities and interests of Stage 6 students in New South Wales.

The new syllabus provides opportunities for more students to achieve at higher levels. Students may now undertake the study of 4 units of English for the HSC through Extension courses.

Students who need additional assistance to meet the outcomes of Stage 6 may undertake the Fundamentals of English course to develop their ability to use the English language effectively in their study and for vocational and other purposes. This course must be taken in conjunction with either the Standard course or the English as a Second Language (ESL) course.

The provision of ESL courses for students who meet the entry requirements (see p 58 of the syllabus) will help students to participate more effectively in Australian education and society by providing them with the opportunity to learn English in varied, relevant, authentic and challenging contexts.

Theoretical underpinnings

The syllabus allows for an engagement with new theoretical developments in the study of English, while maintaining the literary orientation that has been the traditional character of HSC English in New South Wales. The syllabus recognises the significance of meaning as a process as well as a result of responding to and composing texts.

Texts

Each of the courses in the new syllabus provides students with the opportunity to study a greater diversity of texts than in the past. This development is significant in the broadening of English to accommodate the wider literacy demands of the 21st century. Students will study traditional literary texts in their historical context and relate them to ideas and experiences that affect us today. They will consider conventional forms such as drama and poetry as well as having the opportunity to study contemporary forms such as film, media and multimedia.

Students' exploration and examination of texts will involve a balance of the modes of listening and speaking, reading and writing, and viewing and representing. Students will also integrate the use of technology with their study of English.

Outcomes

The outcomes describe what students *learn about* and what they *learn to*, as a result of the teaching and learning in the course.

The outcomes that have been developed provide explicit links to the objectives and content in both the Preliminary and HSC courses. They have been differentiated between the Preliminary and HSC courses.

Content

The new syllabus:

- develops students' critical capacities and their appreciation of diversity through the close study of texts as well as through wide reading across historical periods, cultures, forms and media
- emphasises the importance of composing imaginatively as well as critically. Students are required to respond to and compose written, visual and oral texts in a range of contexts including the personal, social, historical, cultural and workplace
- emphasises the importance of a balance of the modes of speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing and representing as students and teachers engage in a study of English
- includes key competencies appropriate and relevant to the study of English. They are developed through the core processes of composing and responding that underpin each course. The key competencies are designed to enhance student learning within the context of Stage 6 English
- makes explicit the learning process and develops student ability to initiate, monitor and reflect on various strategies of learning.

Assessment

Assessment requirements and structures are more detailed and are explicitly linked to the course outcomes.

The new syllabus requires a balance among:

- the assessment of knowledge and understanding outcomes, and skills outcomes
- syllabus components and language modes
- types of assessment tasks such as creative responses over time, composition portfolio, oral presentation, viewing and listening tasks.

Examinations such as class tests, term tests and trials must not exceed 30% of the assessment program.

Features of the English Courses

1. *English Standard Courses*

Preliminary

Students explore and experiment with the ways events, experiences, ideas and processes are represented in and through texts.

In order to make explicit the forms and processes of meaning, students:

- undertake wide reading of different types of texts
- undertake close textual study supported by related reading
- respond to and compose a variety of texts in a range of modes and media for different purposes and audiences
- make connections between texts and synthesise aspects of those texts
- explore and examine the use of language in integrated study with text and context
- learn in different ways and reflect on their learning.

HSC

Students reflect on and demonstrate the effectiveness of texts for different audiences and purposes.

In addition to the activities undertaken in the Preliminary Standard course, students:

- analyse and experiment with the ways texts are responded to and composed
- explore how perceptions are shaped in language
- analyse how particular characteristics of a text shape meaning
- explore, compose and analyse texts in specific situations.

2. *English Advanced Courses*

Preliminary

Students explore the ways events, experiences, ideas, values and processes are represented in and through texts and analyse the ways in which texts reflect different attitudes and values.

In addition to the activities undertaken in the Preliminary Standard course, students:

- explore and examine texts in relation to their modes, media and contexts
- consider the ways texts reflect attitudes and values
- use and reflect on different ways of responding to and composing texts.

HSC

Students analyse and evaluate texts and the ways they are valued in their contexts.

In addition to the activities undertaken in the Preliminary Advanced course, students:

- evaluate how representation influences meaning
- evaluate texts and their reception in a range of contexts
- experiment with, explain and evaluate different ways texts are responded to and composed
- consider questions of value.

3. *English (ESL) Courses*

Preliminary

Students acquire and develop specific English language skills, knowledge and understanding in the context of an understanding of the ways ideas and processes are represented in texts.

Students use their developing skills in English to:

- engage in a broad study of language in a variety of contexts
- respond to and compose a variety of texts in a range of modes and media for different purposes and audiences
- make connections between texts and synthesise aspects of those texts
- explore cultural differences in communication
- learn in different ways and reflect on their learning.

HSC

Students reinforce and extend their language skills and develop and apply skills in synthesis.

In addition to the activities undertaken in the Preliminary English (ESL) course, students:

- undertake close textual study supported by related reading
- analyse and experiment with the ways texts are responded to and composed
- explore, compose and analyse texts in specific situations
- explore how perceptions are shaped in language
- evaluate culturally based values and perspectives in texts.

4. *Extension Courses*

Preliminary

Students explore how and why texts are valued in, and appropriated into, a range of contexts and consider why some texts may be perceived as culturally significant.

In addition to the activities undertaken in the Preliminary Advanced course, students:

- explore and examine the ways language shapes and reflects values
- consider why and how texts are valued
- further develop skills of independent investigation and sustained composition and presentation.

HSC Course 1

Students explore ideas of value and consider how cultural values and systems of valuation arise.

In addition to the activities undertaken in the the HSC Advanced and Preliminary Extension courses, students:

- explore and evaluate values in texts
- explore and evaluate different ways of valuing texts.

HSC Course 2

Students develop an extended composition and document and reflect on this process.

Students develop a Major Work by:

- undertaking independent but guided investigation in a chosen area
- documenting the process of investigation and composition
- reflecting on the process of composing and the composition itself.

5. *Fundamentals of English*

This skills-based course is designed for flexible delivery to meet students' needs for support in their study of the English (Standard) or English (ESL) courses, as well as help them with the English language demands of other subjects in Stage 6.

To support the activities undertaken in the Standard or English (ESL) courses, students receive intensive tuition in:

- responding to and composing texts
- learning skills
- workplace communications.

While this course is a Preliminary course, it may be delivered across Years 11 and 12 and will be reported on a student's Record of Achievement as a Preliminary course.

Outcomes

Outcomes are detailed for each of the new Preliminary and HSC English courses in tables that explicitly link them to the course objectives and content. They specify the intended result of student learning through each course.

The new syllabus acknowledges that the complexity of the texts is a factor in the ways and the extent to which students achieve the course outcomes.

Content

Content is expressed in this syllabus through a number of the sections of each course, including:

- course requirements (see next page).
- Area of Study, which is a new concept introduced in the syllabus. It develops students' understanding of the ways texts shape the perception of different concepts. Specific descriptions of Area of Study are contained on pages 26, 32, 44 and 50 of the syllabus.

In addition to prescribed texts, the HSC Area of Study has a prescribed stimulus booklet (available in September 1999). This booklet provides different examples of the concept to be explored in the Area of Study and offers various point of view from which the concept may be introduced.

The ESL course includes a Language Study within the Area of Study as the vehicle for students' language development (pp 63, 72–73).

For the HSC, Areas of Study, Focuses (Standard and Advanced) and texts are prescribed and are subject to periodic evaluation and review (see next page).

- module and/or elective descriptions.
In the Preliminary Standard, Advanced and ESL courses, the content of electives is designed by teachers in accordance with the course requirements to suit their students' needs and interests. HSC modules are prescribed in the syllabus. In addition, electives and texts are prescribed for each module and are subject to periodic evaluation and review.
- content statements in tables of objectives, outcomes and content.
These statements detail what students learn to do and what they learn about in each of the courses. They are specifically related to individual outcomes although, in many cases, they will assist the achievement of other outcomes of the course. The description of content will be what is assessed and examined to demonstrate the extent to which students have achieved the course outcomes.

Course Requirements

Preliminary

Although the Preliminary courses in this syllabus are designed by teachers to address course outcomes through their understanding of their students' needs and interests, each course has some requirements for study.

These are detailed on p 25 (Standard), p 43 (Advanced), p 62 (ESL), p 87 (Extension) and p 99 (Fundamentals).

HSC

HSC course requirements are detailed on p 31 (Standard), p 49 (Advanced), p 71 (ESL), p 89 (Extension 1) and p 92 (Extension 2).

Modules

Modules are prescribed for HSC study in:

- Standard (three Modules);
- Advanced (three Modules);
- ESL (two Modules)
- Extension course 1 (one Module chosen from three).

Prescriptions

For HSC courses, the Area of Study, electives and texts are prescribed and will be subject to periodic evaluation and review. The support document, *HSC English Stage 6 Prescriptions: Area of Study, Electives, Texts — HSC 2001 and 2002* is provided as part of the syllabus package.

Teachers will be aware that many of the texts prescribed for study for HSC 2001 and 2002 are on the present list or have been previously set for HSC study.

A stimulus booklet relating to the Area of Study is also prescribed.

The syllabus requirements for study of different types of texts are a minimum. In addition to these requirements, students must study other types of texts related to the Area of Study or module elective. Students are encouraged to respond to a wide range of prescribed and non-prescribed texts and types of texts.

Assessment

Assessment details in relation to components, weightings and suggested tasks are provided in the syllabus. These are outlined for each course in section 15 of the syllabus.

Examination specifications meet the requirements of the new syllabus and of standard-referenced assessment. They include a range of questions to allow the full range of students to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do.

What will be needed to teach this subject?

- The *English Stage 6 Syllabus*
- The support document *English Stage 6 Prescriptions: Area of Study, Electives and Texts — HSC 2001 and 2002*
- English Examination, Assessment and Reporting Supplement (the sample examination papers, marking guidelines and draft performance scale).

Curriculum Support

The Board of Studies will develop further subject-specific support documents for distribution later in the year. These will assist teachers with the implementation of the revised syllabus.

A list of a number of resources will be placed on the Board's website
<http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au>.

The Board of Studies will also provide assessment support materials, which will be generic across subjects.

Cross-sectoral professional development workshops (Department of Education and Training, Catholic Education Commission and members of the Association of Independent Schools) for English Stage 6 will be held. Venues and dates for these workshops have been published on the New HSC website — <http://www.newhsc.schools.nsw.edu.au> — and distributed to schools. The materials from these workshops will be available on this website.

CURRICULUM SUPPORT for Teaching English 7–12 — a publication distributed each term by the Department of Education and Training — will carry an HSC supplement.

Assessment and Reporting Bulletins — published each term as a joint venture of the Department of Education and Training, the Catholic Education Commission and the Association of Independent Schools — will build on principles outlined in Board of Studies newsletters and assessment support materials.

Professional Associations such as the English Teachers Association have plans for the delivery of professional development to their members. Teachers should contact their relevant professional association for details of proposed activities.