



An Introduction to Russian Background Speakers Stage 6 in the New HSC

The new *Russian Background Speakers Stage 6 Syllabus* replaces the current 2 and 3 Unit Russian syllabuses (1992 and 1995 respectively). The new syllabus will be implemented with Year 11 in 2001 and will be first examined in 2002.

The syllabus provides information that was formerly available in the *Languages KLA Handbook*. This includes descriptions of course requirements, assessment weightings for internal and external assessment and examination specifications.

What is similar?

The new *Russian Background Speakers Stage 6 Syllabus* represents a change to the current 2 and 3 Unit Russian syllabuses. The new syllabus is, however, similar in intent, structure, content and in method of assessment to the current syllabuses. The macro skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking are implicit in the four objectives and are assessed in the internal assessment.

The prescribed themes and contemporary issues are comparable with the themes and topics suggested in the current 2 Unit and 3 Unit syllabuses. Texts continue to provide a focus for the study of the themes and contemporary issues.

What are the overall improvements?

- The syllabus makes explicit what students are required to know and do.
- The syllabus objectives represent the communicative use of the language, and integrate the macro skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. Special emphasis is given to the role of textual analysis.
- The language content is specified by prescribing themes and contemporary issues, with a section on texts and text types and grammar. Texts are prescribed for the HSC course.
- Assessment, both internal and external, is linked to the syllabus objectives and content.

The following changes have been made to particular sections of the course

Rationale, Aims and Objectives (pp 6, 10)

The syllabus provides a comprehensive rationale for studying Russian, and has a clear set of aims and objectives, which provide statements of the overall purpose and intent of the syllabus.

Objectives focus on the knowledge, skills, and understanding involved in exchanging information, opinions and ideas in Russian; producing original texts in Russian; analysing, evaluating and responding to texts in Russian; and understanding aspects of the Russian language and culture.

Outcomes (p 11)

The syllabus supports an outcomes-based approach to teaching and learning. The outcomes are designed so that students of Russian for Background Speakers can demonstrate what they know and can do as a result of teaching and learning in the course. The outcomes are derived from the objectives.

Content (pp 14–20)

The syllabus prescribes both themes and contemporary issues as the organisational focus of the language content.

The four themes in the new syllabus are:

- The individual and the community
- Youth culture
- Russian life as depicted in contemporary texts
- Relevance of classical Russian literature in contemporary society.

Each theme has a number of prescribed contemporary issues that demonstrate the particular focus of the themes.

While students will encounter a wider range of texts and text types than those listed in the content section, the syllabus makes explicit those text types students may be expected to produce in the external examination.

Grammatical elements which students are expected to know are identified, with examples provided.

There are prescribed texts in the HSC course. These will be published in the *Board Bulletin* and on the Board's website (<http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au>).

Assessment (pp 23–36)

The assessment is aligned to the syllabus objectives and content. Students will be required to demonstrate achievement of the full range of outcomes across the internal and external assessment components.

The internal assessment specifies the components to be assessed and their weightings, as well as suggesting a variety of tasks that may be undertaken. This ensures that a student's achievement can be measured against a wider range of syllabus content and outcomes than may be covered by the external examination alone.

In the external assessment, students will be assessed on their ability to:

- exchange information, opinions and ideas in response to a written text
- express ideas through the creation of an original text in Russian
- analyse, evaluate and respond to spoken and written texts, including prescribed texts.

What will be needed to teach this subject?

- *Russian Background Speakers Stage 6 Syllabus*
- Russian Background Speakers course prescriptions, sample assessment items, and draft performance scale.

Current resources are appropriate for use with the new syllabus although there may need to be some adjustment in the way teachers use them.

Texts currently recommended for the 2 Unit syllabus may continue to be used to support various aspects of the syllabus content. For example, these texts may illustrate themes and contemporary issues, the use of particular structures, or demonstrate the conventions of a particular text type or discourse form.

Text books and resource materials that support language learning will continue to apply as the themes and contemporary issues, grammatical items, text types and tasks are similar to those in current syllabuses.

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