

Subject Overview

There is a common syllabus framework for the teaching and examining of modern languages in the Leaving Certificate. Syllabus content draws on and develops many aspects of the aims, objectives and content of languages at junior cycle. The aims are

- To foster in learners such communicative skills in the target language as will enable them to:
 - take full part in classroom activities conducted in the target language
 - participate in everyday transactions and interactions
 - extract information and derive enjoyment from the mass media
 - consider as a realistic option the possibility of pursuing leisure activities, further study and/or career opportunities through the medium of the target language
- To give learners a critical awareness of how meaning is organised and conveyed by the structures and vocabulary of the target language, and thus to contribute to their understanding of the workings of human language in general
- To help learners develop strategies for effective language learning
- To equip learners with a broad acquaintance with the cultural, social and political complexion of countries in which the target language is a normal medium of communication and thus to help raise their awareness of cultural, social and political diversity generally.

Content

The three broad components of the syllabus are:

- Basic Communicative Proficiency
- Language Awareness
- Cultural Awareness

An integrated approach to these components is recommended.

Basic Communicative Proficiency builds on the repertory of communicative targets established by the Junior Certificate programme. The communicative skills acquired in the junior cycle will be maintained and continually reactivated during the senior cycle.

The objectives specified in this section relate to:

- practical challenges that might be faced by the learner when operating in the target language community for example
- meeting and getting to know people and maintaining social relations
- coping with travel and transport
- buying goods and services
- dealing with emergencies
- activities and discussion that are likely to take place through the target language in the classroom for example
- understanding, seeking and giving information about climate and weather
- understanding, expressing feelings and emotions
- engaging in discussion
- passing on messages

Language Awareness

Aspects of the junior cycle syllabus referring to the development of learners' language awareness are further developed in the Leaving Certificate syllabus

The objectives specified in this section relate to:

- raising the learner's awareness about the workings of the target language
- raising awareness about the learner's own encounter with the language
- fostering effective use of the language
- developing awareness of relevant aspects of the mother tongue and other languages known to the learner.

Cultural Awareness

Aspects of the junior cycle syllabus referring to the development of learners' cultural awareness are further developed in the Leaving Certificate syllabus. The objectives in this section should contribute to cultural and intercultural education generally. The focus is on

- the target language community and
- its relationship to Ireland and the Irish way of life.

Issues referred to go beyond cultural divisions.

The objectives specified in this section relate to

- learning in the target language about the present-day culture associated with the target language
- reading modern literary texts in the target language
- describing and discussing everyday life in the target language community
- understanding, describing and discussing aspects of the relations between the target language community and Ireland
- understanding, describing and discussing in general terms issues that transcend cultural divisions.

Assessment

Assessment is by means of a written examination at two levels, Ordinary level and Higher level. There is also an aural and an oral examination at both levels.