

curriculum for excellence: classical languages

principles and practice

www.curriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk



Classical languages

Principles and practice

What is the value to young people of learning a classical language?

Our ability to use language is central to our thinking and learning. This understanding lies at the heart of the classical languages experiences and outcomes. *Curriculum for Excellence* offers opportunities to develop awareness of the special, vibrant and valuable aspects of classical culture and heritage. As they learn a classical language young people will:

- develop a secure understanding of how language works and develop their capacity to communicate ideas and information in English and other languages
- exercise their intellectual curiosity by questioning, developing their understanding, thinking creatively and critically to synthesise ideas and arguments
- enhance their enjoyment and their understanding of their own and other cultures through literature and other texts.

Building the Curriculum 1

The experiences and outcomes in classical languages individually and together provide opportunities for the development of interesting and relevant coursework. One of the main themes promoted through the study of classical languages is that of culture and heritage. By studying a classical language, young people will become ever more aware of how vital parts of Scotland's culture, the arts, law, political systems and social values are both directly and indirectly linked with the classical world.

The statements of experiences and outcomes in classical languages can support lifelong learning for students of all ages; learning about the cultures of our world or about the social and political dimensions of our society will be enhanced by an awareness of the contributions made by Roman or classical Greek civilisations.

How is the classical languages framework structured?

The framework of experiences and outcomes for classical languages provides guidance for teachers on the levels of achievement expected of learners at different stages. The outcomes embody an appropriate level of proficiency at each level but do not place a ceiling on achievement. Similarly the breadth of the range of experiences allows for different rates of progression.

The outcomes in classical languages are organised into:

- translating texts
- interpretation of texts
- using knowledge about language
- culture and heritage.

Programmes in classical languages will provide broad-based learning experiences combining linguistic, cultural and heritage awareness. By integrating the experiences and outcomes from these different themes, teachers will enable young people to make connections across their learning through taking part in meaningful experiences within relevant contexts as well as across the wider curriculum. The level of achievement at the fourth level has been designed to approximate to that associated with SCQF level 4.

What does this framework mean for learning and teaching in the classical languages?

Teachers will use the flexibility afforded by the framework of the experiences and outcomes for classical languages to design and plan motivating teaching and learning experiences. These will enable young people to develop their awareness of how classical languages provide experiences and develop skills which contribute to the development of the four capacities of *Curriculum for Excellence*.

Young people learning classical languages within a rich and supportive environment will enjoy a skilfully planned mix of teaching approaches including:

- both collaborative and independent working
- effective direct interactive teaching
- the use of contexts which build upon young people's own experiences
- the principles of Assessment is for Learning
- the effective use of research tools and information and communications technology.

When will young people begin to learn a classical language? What does this mean for progression?

Classical languages experiences and outcomes are offered at third and fourth levels. Although young people do not commonly begin to study a classical language before S1, some are introduced to Latin or classical Greek earlier, either through study of a discrete language or as part of a language awareness course.

A well-planned early start to classical language learning will be a positive, stimulating experience which motivates children and young people through exciting contexts and meaningful, accessible content. Activities will harness the curiosity of children for patterns, codes and mythology and will include playing games, exploring different alphabetic systems, carrying out simple instructions, and listening to or reading in translation stories from the classical world. Schools which offer this earlier start will then move children and young people towards the experiences and outcomes described at third level. This will provide them with stimulating opportunities for early achievement of some or all of the outcomes and for depth and breadth of learning.

What are broad features of assessment in classical languages?

Assessment in classical languages will focus on children and young people's knowledge and understanding of the language they select for study and of its culture and heritage, on their skills in analysing, translating and interpreting literary texts, and on their abilities in using and applying what they have learned in different contexts.

Teachers will gather evidence of children and young people's progress as part of day-to-day learning during individual and collaborative activities. The use of specific assessment tasks will also be helpful in assessing progress. Children and young people will demonstrate progress in a number of ways, and approaches to assessment should identify the extent to which they can apply the skills they have been developing. For example:

- How well do they deal with translating and interpreting texts?
- To what extent do they show their understanding of how the language works, its vocabulary and its language structures?
- Do they demonstrate a growing appreciation of the culture and heritage of the classical world?

Progression in knowledge, understanding and skills will be demonstrated through the abilities of young people in dealing with texts of increasing length and complexity, in giving longer and more complex responses in writing, and by showing increasing confidence in carrying out tasks with reducing levels of support. Approaches to assessment should also provide evidence of enjoyment, curiosity, and thinking and analytical skills. They will include identifying the extent to which children and young people apply their classical language skills in other areas of their learning and daily lives, including becoming more competent communicators in English. Assessment should also link with other areas of the curriculum, inside and outside the classroom, offering children and young people opportunities to be increasingly aware of the cultural heritage and legacies of the Romans and Greeks.

How does the classical languages framework connect with other areas of the curriculum?

Language learning is greatly enhanced where it is linked to or embedded in the wider curriculum so that children and young people can enjoy exploring and using language in meaningful contexts. By the time they begin their study of classical languages, learners will have acquired their home language(s) and will have begun to study English and possibly a modern language. Very importantly, teachers can make great use of opportunities to link learning in classical languages not only with progress in English or Gàidhlig and literacy, but also with other languages used by people in the school community. In this way, young people will be encouraged to explore and experiment with sound patterns and make links and comparisons between languages. Thus, learners will understand that in working towards the third level outcomes, they will be building on the skills already acquired in their earlier language and literacy learning.

A knowledge of Latin or classical Greek accelerates the learning of other languages, not only the Romance languages and Modern Greek, by providing young people with a structural framework for language acquisition in general. The interpretative skills taught through classical languages have direct links to English, the expressive arts and social studies; learning in areas of the curriculum such as science can be enhanced through knowledge of classical languages.