

ENGLISH

ENGLISH
(CLASSES IX–XII)

Introduction

English in India is no longer a language of the colonial masters. In some important domains of activity, it has become an integral part of the Indian multilingual repertoire. In a variety of ways it has enriched Indian languages, which in turn have made significant contributions to English in India and as it is used abroad. The attitudes of the contemporary Indians towards English are significantly more positive than what we for example find in the Constituent Assembly Debates of 1946-1949.

English plays an important role in the domains of education, administration, business and political relations, judiciary, industry, etc. and is therefore a passport to social mobility, higher education, and better job opportunities. In urban India, it is very common to see young people code-mixing and code-switching between English and Indian languages. It is indeed unfortunate that English has so far remained associated with the rich, elite or upper middle class. It should be the effort of the Indian educational system to reach English to every Indian child and to ensure that she/he gains a sufficiently high level of proficiency in it and not suffer discrimination for lack of it.

The teaching and learning of English today is characterised by the diversity of schools and linguistic environments, and by systemically pervasive classroom procedures of teaching a textbook for success in an examination. The emphasis should be on teaching language use in meaningful and often multilingual contexts. For the majority of our learners, what is needed is a basic or fundamental competence in the target language. We need to develop a focus in which the research on language learning is integrated with language teaching. From the research in language learning, we know that children have an innate faculty to construct grammatical systems on their own. What we need to do in the classrooms, and to the extent possible, outside them is to create socio-cultural contexts that would encourage children to participate actively in understanding and creating appropriate communicative practices. It is extremely important that textbook writers and teachers realize that children learn as much outside as in the classroom, particularly in the case of language since it is there all around them all the time. Playgrounds, street hangouts, recreation centres, picnics, adventure tours etc are all important sites of language learning from a socio-cultural perspective. If these considerations inform the new textbooks, they are bound to look different. It would be largely unnecessary and futile to teach isolated grammatical items to students. Grammars would emerge from an active engagement in communicative practices. Input rich methodologies (such as the whole language, the task-based and the comprehensible input approaches) aim at exposure to the language in meaning-focused situations so as to trigger the formation of a language system by the learner.





Input-rich communicational environments are a prerequisite to language learning since languages are learnt implicitly by comprehending and communicating messages, either through listening or reading for meaning. A comprehensible input rich curriculum lays the foundation for spontaneous language growth, and different language skills develop simultaneously in communicative socio-cultural contexts rather than in any linear order as reflected in the traditional LSRW approaches. The learner can receive meaningful language input that is appropriate to his/her age and knowledge of language or readiness for language skills, given the variety and range of English-learning situations in India.

There is substantial evidence available now to show that Indian English as used by fluent educated Indian speakers does not differ in any significant way from standard varieties of English in UK or USA. There is no doubt that there are significant differences at the phonological and lexical levels. But that is also true of British and American English within those countries. Indian English can be considered a distinct variety with an identity and status of its own, and should serve as a model in teaching-learning situations.

What is to be taught and how?

The goals of a language curriculum are twofold: attainment of a basic proficiency, and the development of language as an instrument for basic interpersonal communication and later for abstract thought and knowledge acquisition. One hopes that by the time a student finishes her school, she would become an autonomous learner. This argues for a language-across-the-curriculum approach that breaks down barriers between English and other languages and subject areas. At the initial stages, English may be one of the languages for learning activities designed to enhance children's awareness of their immediate surroundings. It is at this stage that the use of the languages of children may turn out to be most productive for teaching English. It is important to note that children effortlessly learn several languages if adequate comprehensible input is available in anxiety free situations. It is also important to note that simultaneous exposure to several languages does not, as many people tend to believe, 'confuse' children. These facts would constitute significant guidelines for teaching strategies in the classroom.

Input-rich communicational environments are essential for language learning. Inputs include textbooks, learner-chosen texts, class libraries, parallel books and materials in more than one language, media support (learner magazines/newspaper columns, radio/audio cassettes), and authentic materials.

Themes/sub-themes should be in conformity with the learners' immediate environment – physical, social and cultural. These should lead to an understanding and practice of the values enshrined in the Constitution of India, including the Fundamental Rights and Duties. The various sub-themes to be included are personal relationships, the neighbourhood, the larger community, the nation, the world, etc. In addition to textual materials, various other inputs can be brought into the language classroom, which include cards, charts, advertisements, texts produced by children, brochures, pamphlets, radio, T.V. news, etc.



In the case of textbooks, it is imperative that layout and illustrations etc are treated as integral to the text rather than as mere cosmetic add-ons.

Language and Knowledge

Language learning is essentially a matter of acquiring the important skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in an integrated manner, and harnessing these skills to the performance of formal as well as informal communication tasks. We would expect that by the end of Class XII, every child would have acquired the whole range of skills and abilities subsumed under the continuum ranging from the Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) to Cognitively Advanced Language Proficiency (CALP).

Language is not only a means of communication, it is also a medium through which most of our knowledge is acquired. It is a system that, to a great extent, structures the reality around us. Language acquisition involves processes of scientific enquiry such as observation of data, classification and categorisation, hypothesis formation and its verification. It should be possible to use the languages available in the classroom not only for the enhancement of above cognitive abilities but also for increasing language proficiency and sensitivity. Such exercises prove particularly useful in the conscious use of language rules in formal situations.

Social harmony in a country as diverse as India is only possible through mutual respect for each other's language and culture. Such respect can only be built on knowledge. At all levels, the materials need to be sensitive to perspectives of equity (gender and societal), dignity of manual work, and peace and harmony (between humans, and between humans and nature). A substantial part of our existing knowledge carries a distinct gender bias. If we wish that our dream of a democratic society should become a reality, we must make every effort to eliminate gendered construction of knowledge.

In spite of all major technological breakthroughs, we know that the textbook will continue to be the major source of knowledge for the ordinary child. It is therefore important to produce textbooks that are contextually rich and provide incentives to the innate curiosity and creativity of learners. The process of materials preparation should include close collaboration with teachers and children and with various agencies that have rich experience in producing textbooks and related materials. Every possible effort should be made to reflect the potential of using multilingualism as a teaching strategy in the classroom. It is of course neither possible nor desirable to have examples from all the 22 languages listed in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution. What is required is just a few examples that would illustrate that language data can be elicited from children and that they can actively participate in its classification, categorisation and analysis to arrive at linguistically significant generalisations. It should also be necessary to develop feedback mechanisms, which will help us improve the materials on a regular basis. A teacher's handbook spelling out methods and techniques, and notes for the teachers in the textbook itself, could prove to be of great practical value.



Skills to be fostered

The development of linguistic proficiency in the learner is needed for the spontaneous and appropriate use of language in different situations.

- The learner should acquire the ability to listen and understand, and should be able to employ non-verbal clues to make connections and draw inferences.
- The learner should develop the habit of reading for information and pleasure; draw inferences and relate texts to previous knowledge; read critically and develop the confidence to ask and answer questions.
- The learner should be able to employ her communicative skills, with a range of styles, and engage in a discussion in an analytical and creative manner.
- The learner should be able to identify a topic, organise and structure thoughts and write with a sense of purpose and an awareness of audience.
- The learner should be able to understand and use a variety of registers associated with domains such as music, sports, films, gardening, construction work, etc.
- The learner should be able to use a dictionary and other materials available in the library and elsewhere, access and collect information through making and taking down notes, etc.
- The learner should be able to use language creatively and imaginatively in text transaction and performance of activities.
- The learner should be able to develop sensitivity towards their culture and heritage, aspects of contemporary life and languages in and around the classroom.
- The learner should be able to refine their literary sensibility and enrich their aesthetic life through different literary genres.
- The learner should be able to appreciate similarities and differences across languages in a multilingual classroom and society.
- It is important for the learner to notice that different languages and language varieties are associated with different domains and communicative encounters.
- The learner should become sensitive to the inherent variability that characterises language and notice that languages keep changing all the time. It is possible for a student to notice the differences between her own speech and the speech of her, say, grandparents.

Attitudes to be nurtured

Attitudes and motivation of learners and teachers play an important role in all learning, including language learning. When the teacher is positively inclined towards pupils of diverse linguistic, ethnic and socio-cultural backgrounds, pupils will also tend to get positively motivated and involved in the teaching-learning processes. It is extremely important that teachers begin to appreciate the fact that all languages represented in their multilingual classrooms are equally scientific and should receive equal respect from the teacher and the taught. The teacher should also begin to use the multilingual classroom as a resource. Languages flourish in each other's company. They die when



they are isolated as ‘pure objects’. Languages which have become powerful in the modern world have gone through a process of constant borrowing at all levels from other languages and they have still not closed their doors. The day they do so, they will start their journey on the path of destruction. The teacher’s positive attitude will go a long way in lowering the anxiety levels of learners, while raising their awareness levels of self-respect, self-discipline, respect and care for others, interdependence and co-operation.

Content

The ten core components identified in the National Policy of Education must be suitably integrated in school curriculum. These components, which will cut across all subject areas, should be reinforced in the whole range of inputs (print and non-print, formal and informal) for teaching/learning at various stages of school education.

Since all contemporary concerns and issues cannot be included in the curriculum as separate subjects of study, some emerging concerns like environmental issues, conservation of resources, population concerns, disaster management, forestry, animals and plants, human rights, safety norms and sustainable development should be suitably incorporated in the course content. Course materials should also draw upon the following concerns in an integrated manner:

1. Self, Family, Home, Friends and Pets
2. Neighbourhood and Community at large
3. The Nation – diversity (socio-cultural, religious and ethnic, as well as linguistic), heritage (myths/legends/folktales)
4. The World – India’s neighbours and other countries (their cultures, literature and customs)
5. Adventure and Imagination
6. Sports
7. Issues relating to Adolescence
8. Science and Technology
9. Peace and Harmony
10. Travel and Tourism
11. Mass Media
12. Art and Culture
13. Health and Reproductive health

The thematic package given above is suggestive and at each stage should be in line with learners’ cognitive level, interest and experience. In every textbook, there should be some lessons, which are translations from other languages.

Curricular Package

It is recommended that the package for each class except for the primary stage (Classes I -V) will consist of a textbook and a supplementary reader. The textbook should contain not more



than 10 comprehensive units (lessons, exercises and activities) and five/six poems of varying lengths depending on the class. The workbook, if there is one, will have the same number of corresponding worksheets as the number of the comprehensive units of the textbook. The supplementary reader will have about eight pieces meant essentially for self-study promoting reading for information and pleasure.

The recommended weightage in terms of marks is 40% for the textbook, 40% for language work including oral testing and 20% for the supplementary reader.

The curricular package for Classes XI-XII (Elective Course) will consist of: Class XI — (i) An Anthology of Poems, (ii) A Short Novel, (iii) A Book of Essays, and (iv) A Book of Grammar and Phonology, (Part-I); Class XII — (i) An Anthology of Short Stories, (ii) A Short Novel (Indian Writing in English), (iii) A Selection of One-Act Plays, and (iv) A Book of Grammar and Phonology, (Part-II).

Time Available

There are about 180 working days available for teaching/learning amounting to one period per day allotted to the teaching of English. The actual number of periods available, however, may be about 150. The size of the curricular package should be such as can be conveniently covered in the given time.

Evaluation

Evaluation in language should be periodic, preferably at regular intervals of 4 to 6 weeks of actual instruction. Evaluation should be both oral and written. Periodic tests should carry a weightage of fifty per cent — twenty-five per cent each to oral and written. The marks should be taken into account in the final grade.

Results of tests and examinations should be treated basically as feedback to teachers. They should guide them in programming their teaching and in organising remedial work. Evaluation should be linked to assessment of general proficiency rather than to specific achievements.

IX-X

Background

Traditionally, language-learning materials beyond the initial stages have been sourced from literature: prose, fiction and poetry. While there is a trend for inclusion of a wider range of contemporary and authentic texts, accessible and culturally appropriate pieces of literature should play a pivotal role at the secondary stage of education. The English class should not be seen as a place merely to read poems and stories in, but an area of activities to develop the learner's imagination as a major aim of language study, and to equip the learner with communicative skills to perform various language functions through speech and writing.



Objectives

The general objectives at this stage are:

- to build greater confidence and proficiency in oral and written communication
- to develop the ability and knowledge required in order to engage in independent reflection and inquiry
- to use appropriate English to communicate in various social settings
- to equip learners with essential language skills to question and to articulate their point of view
- to build competence in the different registers of English
- to develop sensitivity to, and appreciation of, other varieties of English, Indian Englishes, and the culture they reflect
- to enable the learner to access knowledge and information through reference skills (consulting a dictionary/thesaurus, library, internet etc.)
- to develop curiosity and creativity through extensive reading
- to facilitate self-learning to enable them to become independent learners
- to review, organise and edit their own work and work done by the peers

At the end of this stage learners will be able to do the following:

- give a brief oral description of events/incidents of topical interest
- retell the contents of authentic audio texts (weather reports, public announcements, simple advertisements, short interviews, etc.)
- participate in conversations, discussions, etc. on topics of mutual interest in non-classroom situations
- narrate the story depicted pictorially or in any other non-verbal mode
- respond in writing to business letters, official communications
- read and identify the main points/significant details of texts like scripts of audio-video interviews, discussions, debates, etc.
- write without prior preparation on a given topic and be able to defend or explain the position taken/views expressed
- write a summary of short lectures on familiar topics by making/taking notes
- write an assessment of different points of view expressed in a discussion/debate
- read poems effectively (with proper rhythm and intonation)
- grasp the theme of the poem and appreciate the creative uses of language
- to transcode information from a graph/chart to a description/report

Language Items

In addition to consolidating the grammatical items practised earlier, the courses at secondary level will seek to reinforce the following explicitly:

- sequence of tenses
- reported speech in extended texts

- modal auxiliaries (those not covered at upper primary)
- non-finites (infinitives, gerunds, participles)
- conditional clauses
- complex and compound sentences
- phrasal verbs and prepositional phrases
- cohesive devices
- punctuation (semicolon, colon, dash, hyphen, parenthesis or use of brackets and exclamation mark)

Methods and Techniques

The methodology will be based on a multi-skill, activity based, learner centred approach. Care would be taken to fulfil the functional (communicative), literary (aesthetic) and cultural (sociological) needs of the learner. In this situation the teacher is the facilitator of learning, s(he) presents language items, contrives situations which motivate the child to use English for the purposes of communication and expression. Aural-oral teaching and testing is an integral feature of the teaching-learning process. The electronic and print media could be used extensively. The evaluation procedure should be continuous and comprehensive. A few suggested activities are:

- Role playing
- Simulating real-to-life situations
- Dramatising and miming
- Problem solving and decision making
- Interpreting information given in tabular form and schedule
- Using newspaper clippings
- Borrowing situations from the world around the learners, from books and from other disciplines
- Using language games, riddles, puzzles and jokes
- Interpreting pictures/sketches/cartoons
- Debating and discussing
- Narrating and discussing stories, anecdotes, etc.
- Reciting poems
- Working in pairs and groups
- Using media inputs — computer, television, video cassettes, tapes, software packages.

ENGLISH (CORE) CLASSES XI-XII

Background

Students are expected to have acquired a reasonable degree of language proficiency in English by the time they come to Class XI, and the course will aim, essentially, to promote the higher-order language skills.





For a large number of students, the higher secondary stage will be a preparation for the university, where a fairly high degree of proficiency in English may be required. But for another large group, the higher secondary stage may be a preparation for entry into the world of work. The Core Course should cater to both groups by promoting the language skills required for academic study as well as the language skills required for the workplace.

Objectives

The general objectives at this stage are:

- to listen to and comprehend live as well as recorded oral presentations on a variety of topics.
- to develop greater confidence and proficiency in the use of language skills necessary for social and academic purposes.
- to participate in group discussions/interviews, making short oral presentations on given topics.
- to perceive the over-all meaning and organisation of the text (i.e., the relationships of the different “chunks” in the text to each other).
- to identify the central/main point and supporting details, etc.
- to build communicative competence in various registers of English.
- to promote advanced language skills with an aim to develop the skills of reasoning, drawing inferences, etc. through meaningful activities.
- to translate texts from Mother Tongue(s) into English and vice versa.
- to develop ability and knowledge required in order to engage in independent reflection and enquiry.
- To develop the capacity to appreciate literary use of English and also use English creatively and imaginatively.

At the end of this stage learners will be able to do the following:

- read and comprehend extended texts (prescribed and non-prescribed) in the following genres: fiction, science fiction, drama, poetry, biography, autobiography, travel and sports literature, etc.
- text-based writing (i.e., writing in response to questions or tasks based on prescribed or unseen texts)
- understand and respond to lectures, speeches, etc.
- write expository/argumentative essays of 250-500 words, explaining or developing a topic, arguing a case, etc.
- write formal/informal letters and applications for different purposes.
- write items related to the workplace (minutes, memoranda, notices, summaries, reports; filling up of forms, preparing CVs, e-mail messages, etc.).
- taking/making notes from reference materials, recorded talks etc.

Language Items

The Core Course should draw upon the language items suggested for Classes IX-X and delve deeper into their usage and functions. Particular attention may, however, be given to the following areas of grammar:





- the uses of different tense forms for different kinds of narration (e.g. media commentaries, reports, programmes, etc.).
- the use of passive forms in scientific and innovative writings.
- converting one kind of sentence/clause into a different kind of structure as well as other items to exemplify stylistic variations in different discourses.
- modal auxiliaries — uses based on semantic considerations.

The study of formal (descriptive) grammar, at a very elementary level, will be introduced in Class XI. A book for the Core Course containing suitable exercises on grammar as well as basic phonology is recommended. A conscious knowledge of some grammatical rules and sound patterns may be useful and interesting at this stage.

Methods and Techniques

The techniques used for teaching should promote habits of self-learning and reduce dependence on the teacher. In general, we recommend a multi-skill, learner-centred, activity based approach, of which there can be many variations. The core classroom activity is likely to be that of silent reading of prescribed/selected texts for comprehension, which can lead to other forms of language learning activities such as role play, dramatisation, group discussion, writing, etc. (although many such activities could be carried out without the preliminary use of textual material). It is important that students be trained to read independently and intelligently, interacting actively with texts, with the use of reference materials (dictionaries, thesauruses, etc.) where necessary. Some pre-reading activity will generally be required, and the course books should suggest suitable activities, leaving teachers free to devise other activities when desired. So also, the reading of texts should be followed by post reading activities. It is important to remember that every text can generate different readings. Students should be encouraged to interpret texts in different ways.

Group and pair activities can be resorted to when desired, but many useful language activities can be carried out individually.

In general, teachers should encourage students to interact actively with texts and with each other. Oral activity (group discussion, etc.) should be encouraged.

ENGLISH (ELECTIVE) CLASSES XI-XII

Background

The course is intended to give students a high level of competence in English with an emphasis on the study of literary texts and will provide extensive exposure to a variety of rich texts of world literature as well as to Indian writings in English, including classics, and develop sensitivity to the creative and imaginative uses of English and give them a taste for reading with delight and discernment. The course will be pitched at a level which the students may find challenging.

The course is primarily designed to equip the students to pursue higher studies in English literature and English language at the college level and prepare students to become teachers of English.



Objectives

The general objectives at this stage are:

- to provide extensive exposure to a variety of writings in English including some classics.
- to develop sensitivity to the literary and creative uses of language.
- to further expand the learners' vocabulary resources through the use of dictionary, thesaurus and encyclopaedia.
- to develop a taste for reading with discernment and delight.
- to initiate the study of formal English grammar and elementary linguistics and phonetics.
- to enable learners to translate texts from mother tongue into English and vice versa.
- to critically examine a text and comment on different aspects of it.

At the end of this stage the Elective Course would ensure that the learner

- grasps the global meaning of the text, its gist and understands how its theme and sub-theme relate.
- relates the details to the message in it; for example, how the details support a generalization or the conclusion either by classification or by contrast and comparison.
- comprehends details, locates and identifies facts, arguments, logical relationships, generalizations, conclusions, etc.
- draws inferences, supplies missing details, predicts outcomes, grasps the significance of particular details and interprets what he/she reads.
- assesses the attitude and bias of the author.
- infers the meanings of words and phrases from the context; differentiates between apparent synonyms and appreciates the nuances of words.
- appreciates stylistic nuances, the lexical structure, its literal and figurative use and analyses a variety of texts.
- identifies different styles of writing like humorous, satirical, contemplative, ironical and burlesque.
- does text-based writing (writing in response to questions or tasks based on prescribed as well as 'unseen' texts).
- develops the advanced skills of reasoning, making inferences, judgements, etc.
- develops familiarity with the poetic uses of language including features of language through which artistic effect is achieved.

GRAMMAR

Students opting for the Elective Course will be introduced to the study of the basics of English grammar and phonology. It is recommended that a book based on a suitable pedagogical model that presents the basics of functional grammar and the bare essentials of the phonology of English be used.

The basic concepts in the phonology of English will include the sounds of English, the syllable stress, strong and weak forms and intonation. The course will help the students consult a pronouncing dictionary when required.

Methods and Techniques

The techniques used for teaching should promote habits of self-learning and reduce dependence on the teacher. The multi-skill, learner-centred, activity based approach already recommended for the previous stages of education, is still in place, though it will be used in such a way that silent reading of prescribed/selected texts for comprehension will receive greater focus as one of the activities. Learners will be trained to read independently and intelligently, interacting actively with texts and other reference materials (dictionary, thesaurus, encyclopaedia, etc.) where necessary. Some pre-reading activity will generally be required, and course books should suggest those. The reading of texts should be followed by post reading activities. It is important to remember that every text can generate different readings. Students should be encouraged to interpret texts in different ways, present their views of critics on a literary text and express their own reactions to them. Some projects may be assigned to students from time to time. For instance, students may be asked to put together a few literary pieces on a given theme from English as well as regional literatures.

