

Core requirements for teachers of English: knowledge and performance

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A. Rationale

The *English Curriculum: Principles and standards for learning English as a foreign language for all grades* (Jerusalem: 2001) provides the conceptual framework for this document and underlies both its content and organization. *Core Requirements for Teachers of English* also takes into account current theories and approaches to English as a foreign language. *Core Requirements* is organized into different categories; however, because of the organic nature of the learning to teach process, there is some overlap between the content areas of the different topics.

Although this document sets out the core requirements for teachers of English in terms of knowledge and performance, it does not suggest how many hours should be allotted to specific content areas, nor does it prescribe the content or order of specific courses to be offered. Rather, it outlines the core knowledge and performance that graduates and/or practicing teachers should have mastered. Although some domains contain more standards and benchmarks than others, all domains are equally important. Teacher training colleges should, therefore, re-examine their programs to ensure that the core requirements are accounted for during the course of their teacher training program.

B. Professional profile

The image of teachers that emerges from the core requirements is that of teachers who:

- see the goal of their professional actions as effective learning by pupils in the classroom.
- see their function not only as that of an English teacher, but also as an educator, promoting and fostering the development of positive values, critical thinking and world knowledge.

- are able to articulate the reasons for their classroom practices.
- continually reflect on and improve their teaching.
- can be autonomous thinkers.
- seek opportunities for on-going professional development through reading professional literature, attending in-service training sessions and conferences, continuing with their formal education, and collaborating with their colleagues.

C. Suggested uses

This document can be used:

- as a tool for approval of teacher training programs.
- for teacher colleges to set and re-examine their syllabi and goals.
- as a checklist to ensure that teacher training programs include all the benchmarks.
- to facilitate staff collaboration.
- by student teachers to map out their professional progress.
- as a basis for teacher observation and evaluation by other professionals, such as inspectors, mentors, and colleagues.
- as a diagnostic tool for planning in-service teacher training sessions.
- to help teachers understand and internalize the principles and benchmarks of the *English Curriculum* since both documents are similar in their conceptual format.

D. Organization

The core requirements are divided into five *domains*. For each *domain*, *standards* have been set. Both *knowledge* and *performance benchmarks* have been defined for each *standard*. Following is an outline of the document.

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Domain	Standards
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language Proficiency and Awareness • Literature and Culture
Learning and the Learner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theories and Practice of Learning and Language Learning • Individual Diversity
Teaching and the Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom Interaction • Planning • Teaching Materials • The Teacher as a Professional
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Role of Assessment • The Methods of Assessment • The Learners' Role in Assessment • The Role of Testing in Assessment
Classroom Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management • The Physical Learning Environment

I. DOMAIN: CONTENT

A. STANDARD: LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AND AWARENESS

Teachers are proficient in English, are aware of the structure of the language, and are able to explain it to learners.

Knowledge benchmarks

Teachers will meet this standard when they know:

- how the language is structured: orthography, phonetics, phonology, lexicon, semantics, pragmatics, and grammar
- how language functions in social contexts
- how languages differ

Performance benchmarks

Teachers will meet this standard when they:

- demonstrate proficiency in oral and written, social and academic English and serve as good language models for their learners
- are able to explain their knowledge of the language

in a way that is accessible and relevant to the language learner

- develop learners' awareness of how the English language is structured and how it compares to their first language

B. STANDARD: LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Teachers are familiar with a range of literary texts and cultural aspects of the English-speaking world, and use their knowledge to promote learners' literacy and cultural appreciation.

Knowledge benchmarks

Teachers will meet this standard when they:

- have read and continue to read with appreciation a range of literary work in English, including children's literature
- are aware of cultural, historical, and social backgrounds of literature
- are aware of the various approaches to the interpretation and analysis of literature
- are aware of different cultural practices and traditions in the English-speaking world and how they differ from each other

Performance benchmarks

Teachers will meet this standard when they:

- encourage learners to read, enjoy, and appreciate literature
- facilitate interpretation and analysis of literature appropriate for their learners
- create opportunities that foster knowledge of and respect for other cultures
- raise learners' awareness of the interrelationship between language, literature and culture

II. DOMAIN: LEARNING AND THE LEARNER

A. STANDARD: THEORIES AND PRACTICE OF LEARNING AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Teachers know about learning processes in general (both cognitive and affective factors) and language learning in particular, and apply this knowledge in their teaching.

Knowledge benchmarks

Teachers will meet this standard when they know about:

- the theoretical bases for current and past methods and approaches to learning and teaching, such as behaviorism, constructivism
- approaches and methods of language teaching, such as audio-lingualism, communicative approaches
- different approaches of teaching language skills and components necessary for achieving the standards in the four domains of the English Curriculum
- affective factors in learning and language learning, such as attitude, self-esteem, motivation

Performance benchmarks

Teachers will meet this standard when their teaching displays awareness of learning processes and sensitivity to affective factors. Some examples are when teachers:

- provide a variety of learning opportunities
- encourage learners to make links between prior and new knowledge
- encourage the meaningful use of language being learned
- provide learning opportunities for the four domains of the English Curriculum
- encourage learners to become aware of their learning processes and adopt appropriate learning strategies
- provide stimulating and success-oriented activities.
- foster a classroom climate of trust, warmth, and support
- respond to learners' behavior and performance in order to optimize learning

B. STANDARD: INDIVIDUAL DIVERSITY

Teachers are aware of the way in which learners differ and cater to these differences in their teaching.

Knowledge benchmarks

Teachers will meet this standard when they know about:

- theories of learning diversity and learning styles
- areas of environmental diversity such as socio-economic and cultural background, mother tongue
- learners' special needs including learning disabilities and physical handicaps, and the appropriate teaching practices for such learners

Performance benchmarks

Teachers will meet this standard when they:

- show respect for all learners
- adjust their demands to the needs of individual learners
- vary instructional activities to cater to individual differences
- use cultural diversity to enrich their teaching, such as encouraging learners to relate to their own cultural backgrounds and that of others
- make provisions for learners with special needs, disabilities, and handicaps

III. DOMAIN: TEACHING AND THE TEACHER

A. STANDARD: CLASSROOM INTERACTION

Teachers are aware of, use, and manage a wide range of patterns of classroom interaction appropriate for teaching English as a foreign language.

Knowledge benchmarks

Teachers will meet this standard when they know about:

- a wide range of patterns of classroom interaction
- the appropriateness of various patterns of interaction to specific learning objectives and tasks

Performance benchmarks

Teachers will meet this standard when they:

- use and manage different teacher-learner and learner-teacher interactions such as questioning, giving feedback, negotiating
- use and manage learner-learner interaction such as pair and group work
- provide opportunities for individualized work such as extensive reading and project work

B. STANDARD: PLANNING

Teachers know about the principles of effective planning and engage in long and short term planning of their teaching, including assessment, in accordance with the English Curriculum.

Knowledge benchmarks

Teachers will meet this standard when they:

- know principles of effective lesson design such as

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timing, variety of activities, lesson openings and closings

- are aware of criteria for sequencing of grading, task difficulty, and thematic development
- are aware of the benchmarks in the English Curriculum
- know how to formulate goals and objectives using the benchmarks in the English Curriculum
- are aware of the importance of reflecting on their teaching practices and the relevance of reflection for planning

Performance benchmarks

Teachers will meet this standard when:

- they plan and design teaching units based on the principles and benchmarks of the English Curriculum
- they prepare and use written lesson plans that include general goals and specific objectives in accordance with the English Curriculum
- their lessons are well-paced, well-organized and varied
- they engage in short and long term planning in collaboration with other English teachers at their school
- they engage in planning for transition (to junior and to senior high school) with teachers from the relevant schools
- they reflect on their lessons, activities, and results of assessment procedures in order to inform their future planning

C. STANDARD: TEACHING MATERIALS

Teachers know about the range of English-teaching materials available and critically evaluate, select, adapt, and design materials appropriate to their learners.

Knowledge benchmarks

Teachers will meet this standard when they:

- know the principles and standards of the English Curriculum
- are familiar with approved coursebooks and enrichment materials
- know the criteria for the evaluation of coursebooks, courseware, and other materials
- know how to access and obtain enrichment materials

from the Internet and elsewhere

- are aware of the importance of using varied teaching materials and resources, such as visual and audio aids, overhead projector, games
- are familiar with technology-based resources such as Educational Television, video, multimedia

Performance benchmarks

Teachers will meet this standard when they:

- use a wide variety of teaching materials and resources
- select appropriate materials
- create or adapt materials to suit their learners
- integrate technology-based materials in their lessons

D. STANDARD: THE TEACHER AS A PROFESSIONAL

Teachers are aware of the importance of developing professionally and use a variety of means to do so.

Knowledge benchmarks

Teachers will meet this standard when they know about:

- appropriate forums for professional development
- different resources for accessing information for professional development

Performance benchmarks

Teachers will meet this standard when they:

- reflect on their teaching and re-assess their teaching practices
- engage in on-going self and peer assessment of teaching practices
- initiate practice-oriented research, such as action research, case studies, teacher narratives
- read professional literature
- attend conferences and in-service courses

IV. DOMAIN: ASSESSMENT

A. STANDARD: THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT

Teachers are aware of the role of assessment as an integral part of the teaching-learning process and assess the performance of their learners as part of their teaching routine.

Knowledge benchmarks

Teachers will meet this standard when they know about:

- the interdependency of teaching, learning, and assessment
- the importance of providing feedback and monitoring as essential for effective learning
- methods of assessment that take into account different levels, learning styles, and abilities in heterogeneous classes
- the value of alternatives in assessment

Performance benchmarks

Teachers will meet this standard when they:

- integrate teaching, learning, and assessment in the planning of their units, lessons and tasks
- ensure that learners are regularly aware of their language learning progress
- design varied tasks and tools that allow learners to perform and succeed at different levels according to different learning styles and abilities
- use alternatives in assessment including projects, portfolios, presentations

B. STANDARD: METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

Teachers know about theories and methods of assessment and match them with the appropriate tasks and tools.

Knowledge benchmarks

Teachers will meet this standard when they know about:

- the distinction between formative and summative assessment
- various types of assessment methods such as performance-based tasks, projects, portfolios, tests, and the goals they are designed to achieve
- a wide range of assessment tools such as rubrics, assessment lists, rating criteria, verbal and written feedback to evaluate learners' achievement of the different goals

Performance benchmarks

Teachers will meet this standard when they:

- define for themselves and make clear to learners the goals and criteria of the assessment task, prior to assigning it
- provide a varied range of assessment tasks
- collect and record information about learners'

progress over a period of time from a variety of sources including homework, assessment tasks, individual, pair and group activities

C. STANDARD: THE LEARNERS' ROLE IN ASSESSMENT

Teachers are aware of the importance of involving learners and actively engaging them in the different stages of the assessment process.

Knowledge benchmarks

Teachers will meet this standard when they know:

- that learning is enhanced when learners feel ownership of the assessment procedures
- about different assessment tools that learners can generate and use to assess their learning such as peer and self assessment
- about assessment tools that allow learners to evaluate both process and product of their performance

Performance benchmarks

Teachers will meet this standard when they:

- encourage learners to contribute to the design of the assessment procedures, such as determining criteria and writing test items
- provide opportunities for learners to assess each other and themselves
- encourage the use of assessment tools for learners to evaluate process and product, such as checklists and rubrics

D. STANDARD: THE ROLE OF TESTING IN ASSESSMENT

Teachers know about theories of language testing and design, and use tests appropriately.

Knowledge benchmarks

Teachers will meet this standard when they:

- know about criteria for the design of tests (and other assessment methods) such as validity and reliability
- know about the practical constraints in designing and administering tests
- know about the appropriate ways of testing and assessing the skills and domains as presented in the English Curriculum
- know about a wide range of types of test items,

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such as multiple-choice, open-ended, T/F, their advantages and disadvantages, and when it is appropriate to use them

- are aware of test anxiety and its implications
- know about basic test calculations such as weighting, percentages, averages, distribution of grades
- know about national tests such as the Bagrut exams, and their implications for teaching

Performance benchmarks

Teachers will meet this standard when they:

- design tests that are valid and reliable, and practical to administer and grade
- include test items that are appropriate to the goals of the test
- design tests that have a balanced coverage of skills and domains as presented in the English Curriculum throughout the year
- take steps to lower test anxiety by appropriate preparation, and by creating a supportive classroom climate
- analyze test results using appropriate test calculations
- take into account national tests in their teaching

V. DOMAIN: CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

A. STANDARD: MANAGEMENT

Teachers are aware of and apply principles of effective classroom management in order to create a framework for optimal learning.

Knowledge benchmarks

Teachers will meet this standard when they know about:

- principles of classroom management
- group dynamics in the classroom
- different teacher roles and responsibilities such as instructor, facilitator, negotiator
- different learner roles and responsibilities such as initiator, responder, cooperater, researcher
- organizational structure of schools and the teacher's role in the school culture

Performance benchmarks

Teachers will meet this standard when they:

- set up and maintain a framework for orderly classroom procedures
- use appropriate patterns of interaction to maximize learners' time-on-task (teacher led and individual, pair, and group work)
- demonstrate their ability to deal effectively with discipline problems
- adopt teacher roles and enable different learner roles appropriate to a specific learning-teaching context
- provide opportunities for self-access learning
- respond sensitively to learners' verbal and non-verbal behaviors
- work in cooperation with school personnel and parents

B. STANDARD: PHYSICAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Teachers are aware of the importance of, and do their best to create, a physical learning environment that is actively conducive to learning English.

Knowledge benchmarks

Teachers will meet this standard when they know about:

- the importance of providing a learning environment rich in materials that are attractive, stimulating, and instructive
- the design, maintenance, and management of self-access materials, such as work cards, and facilities, such as learning centers
- the importance of having an easily accessible English library and Internet-linked computers

Performance benchmarks

Teachers will meet this standard when:

- a variety of stimulating teacher/learner-generated materials are displayed on the walls of their classrooms, including interactive walls and bulletin boards
- self-access materials are available and used by learners
- they actively promote the setting up and use of English libraries and computer facilities