



BOTSWANA  
EXAMINATIONS  
COUNCIL

JUNIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

# ASSESSMENT SYLLABUS

ENGLISH  
CODE 012



2013

012  
CODE



# ENGLISH ASSESSMENT SYLLABUS

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## FOREWORD

The Botswana Examinations Council is pleased to release the assessment syllabus for the revised Junior Secondary Education curriculum implemented in January 2010.

The purpose of this assessment syllabus is to guide schools, teachers and other educational institutions on what will be assessed in the subject area and how the assessment will be carried out for certification of students completing the Junior Secondary Education.

The curriculum at junior secondary level, puts emphasis on understanding and application of concepts; development of high order thinking skills (HOTS) such as inquiry, decision making, reasoning, creative, analytical, problem solving and process skills. It also calls for the acquisition of hands on experience that should increase the participation and performance of all groups e.g. groups of different abilities, learners with special needs, girls and boys.

All these skills entail more practical and challenging content and tasks that require higher levels of engagement of a learner's cognitive ability. The assessment syllabus has been designed to allow these higher order thinking skills to be assessed. It assesses what candidates know, understand and can do, enabling them to demonstrate their full potential.

The assessment syllabus is intended to promote a variety of styles of teaching, learning and assessment to enable candidates to progress to higher levels of learning. Therefore, teachers must be proficient in planning and directing a variety of learning activities. They should be conscious of the need for the students to be accountable and responsible for their own learning to some extent. They must also take into account the widening different levels of achievement which they aspire to. This implies active participation by both students and teachers, the creation of rich and diverse learning environments and the use of relevant assessment procedures to monitor the development of each learner.

It is important then that we value the student's own experiences, build upon what they know and reward them for positive achievement. This assessment syllabus is the outcome of a great deal of professional consultation and collaboration. On behalf of the Botswana Examinations Council, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to all those who contributed to the development and production of this assessment syllabus.



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**Executive Secretary**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## 1. Introduction

As part of the Botswana Junior Secondary Education Programme, this English syllabus is designed to provide a framework for the assessment of candidates who have completed the three-year course based on the revised Junior Secondary English teaching syllabus.

The Junior Secondary Education English Assessment Syllabus aims to afford the candidate an opportunity to fully demonstrate their potential and exhibit the knowledge and skills they possess through a variety of assessment modes. The syllabus also aims at providing information on what will be assessed and how it will be assessed with the intention of achieving comparable standards from year to year.

Candidates will be assessed on a scale of A – E. Candidates who fail to meet the minimum requirement will be awarded a U.

This syllabus should be read in conjunction with:

- (a) the Junior Secondary School English Teaching syllabus;
- (b) the specimen question papers and marking schemes.

This syllabus is available for private candidates.

The outcome of instruction in the content prescribed by the English teaching syllabus will be assessed through a multiple-choice paper and **three** written papers.

## 2. General Aims of Assessment

The syllabus embraces the subject aims defined in the English teaching syllabus.

The assessment syllabus has the following additional aims:

- To ensure proper assessment of all the important skills in the curriculum.
- To enable both teaching and assessment to cater for all ability levels.
- To provide an efficient evaluative mechanism of the curriculum.
- To encourage an investigative approach to learning.
- To provide internationally recognised standards.
- To enable the students to realise their full potential.
- To foster the development of the communication skills.
- To reinforce candidates' ability to handle and interact meaningfully with given materials.
- To encourage candidates to apply learned skills to manipulate life.

## 3. Assessment Objectives

For purposes of assessment, the behavioural outcomes of instruction in the prescribed content have been classified into three broad skill areas known as assessment objectives. Brief descriptions of the assessment objectives are given below.

### **Assessment Objective 1: Understanding**

**Candidates will be assessed on their ability to;**

- 1.1 use reference materials for different purposes;
- 1.2 understand and interpret a wide range of texts heard or read;
- 1.3 locate and select relevant information from texts that are heard or read;
- 1.4 recognise, understand and distinguish between ideas, facts and opinion;
- 1.5 follow the writer's argument, make inferences and draw conclusions

### **Assessment Objective 2: Language Use and Communication**

**Candidates will be assessed on their ability to;**

- 2.1 convey information and express ideas, facts and opinions effectively;
- 2.2 handle mechanics of language correctly;
- 2.3 employ appropriate format, style and register;
- 2.4 show control of a variety of grammatical structures;
- 2.5 demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of vocabulary;
- 2.6 demonstrate creativity and critical thinking.

### **Assessment Objective 3: Literary Appreciation**

**Candidates will be assessed on the ability to;**

- 3.1 relate written text to real life situations;
- 3.2 explore different aspects of literary texts;
- 3.3 make a personal response in literary analysis;
- 3.4 interpret literal and figurative language.

## 4. Scheme of Assessment

The JCE English syllabus will be assessed through a multiple-choice paper and **three** written papers.

Paper 1		Multiple Choice Items	
<b>Time</b>	<b>1 hour 15 minutes</b>	<b>Marks</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Weighting</b>	<b>25%</b>		

Paper 1 will be a 40 item multiple choice paper assessing understanding, language use and reference skills. A passage of about one thousand (**1000**) words will be set in the paper. The items based on this passage will target candidates' level of understanding, ability to determine implicit and explicit meaning of text as well as ability to skim and scan for general and specific information. Each item will have four options.

Paper 2		Continuous Writing	
<b>Time</b>	<b>1 hour 30 minutes</b>	<b>Marks</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Weighting</b>	<b>35%</b>		

This will be a written paper assessing language use and written communication skills. There will be two sections in the paper, that is, Sections **A** and **B**.

**Section A:** In this section candidates will be given a topic on which to write a **composition** of approximately three hundred (300) to three hundred and fifty (350) words, inclusive. Candidates should demonstrate the ability to use sentences of different lengths and types, showing control of the mechanics of language and vocabulary. Candidates should write relevant and coherent pieces showing organisation and communication. This section will be worth **40 marks**.

**Section B:** In this section candidates are required to write either a letter, a report, or a speech displaying effective use of appropriate vocabulary, style and register. Candidates should use the correct format of presentation. The length of the piece of writing should be about one hundred and fifty (150) to two hundred (200) words even though the length may be governed by the type of specialised task given. This section will be worth **20 marks**.

Paper 3		Literature	
<b>Time</b>	<b>2 hours</b>	<b>Marks</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Weighting</b>	<b>30%</b>		

This will be a written paper assessing candidates' level of understanding, analysis and evaluation of literary texts. There will be two sections in the paper, that is, Sections **A** and **B**.

**Section A:** This section will present structured items based on an **unseen poem** of approximately five to six stanzas. Candidates will be required to make critical interpretation of the aspects of the poem, drawing on literary skills, experience and demonstrating personal response. Candidates will answer all questions. This section will be worth **15 marks**.

**Section B:** This section will present structured items based on an **unseen extract** of either prose or drama of about one thousand words (1000) focusing on knowledge and understanding of literary aspects such as development of plot, characterisation, setting, theme, and the author's style. In addition, candidates will be required to answer a separate task, requiring them to make a personal response to the situation presented in the extract drawing on their literary skills and life experiences. This section will be worth **30 marks**.

## Paper 4

## Listening Comprehension and Summary

<b>Time</b>	<b>55 minutes</b>	<b>Marks</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Weighting</b>	<b>10%</b>		

This will be a written paper assessing listening skills as well as summary skills. Candidates will be required to listen to one passage read to them and read another passage for themselves, following which they will be required to attempt all questions based on the passages. There will be **two** sections in the paper, that is, Sections **A** and **B**.

**Section A:** This section will present structured items based on a short passage of **about 700 words** assessing candidates' understanding and interpretation of information heard. The passage will be either a prose or a dialogue. Candidates will be given an opportunity to take notes during the reading of the passage. This section will be worth **20 marks**.

**Section B:** This section will present one open ended item based on a short passage of approximately **350 words** assessing candidates' ability to summarise. The passage which will be printed for candidates to read and it will be either a prose or a dialogue. This section will be worth **10 marks**.

## 5. Assessment Grid

Assessment objectives	Paper 1	Paper 2	Paper 3	Paper 4
1.1	√		√	√
1.2	√		√	√
1.3	√		√	√
1.4	√		√	√
1.5	√		√	√
2.1		√		
2.2		√	√	
2.3		√		
2.4	√	√		
2.5	√	√		
2.6		√		
3.1			√	√
3.2			√	
3.3			√	√
3.4			√	

## 6. Grade Descriptors

The descriptions below provide a general indication of the skill acquisition expected of the candidates for the award of key grades A, C and E.

### Grade A

**The candidate should be able to;**

- follow a line of argument precisely and interpret information accordingly;
- draw inferences accurately and form relevant conclusions;
- show understanding and demonstrate ability to interpret information presented in a variety of formats;
- explain and accurately infer meanings of words and phrases used;
- express themselves clearly in Standard English;
- show understanding and ability to use literary and linguistic devices;
- distinguish between opinion and feelings precisely;
- describe images created in their minds from the text read;
- express ideas, facts and opinions clearly and effectively;
- use wide and varied vocabulary with precision;
- organize and present information accurately in a given format, using paragraphs and a variety of sentence structures for effect;
- spell, punctuate and use grammar accurately;
- show a sense of style and the use of appropriate register;
- demonstrate creativity and critical thinking skills.

## Grade C

### The candidate should be able to;

- follow the line of argument and attempt to interpret information;
- identify main points and attempt to make inferences;
- show understanding of information presented in a variety of formats;
- explain and demonstrate some ability to infer meanings of words and phrases;
- show understanding and ability to use some linguistic and literary devices;
- attempt to distinguish between opinion and feelings;
- make an attempt to describe images created in their minds from text read;
- attempt to express ideas, facts and opinions;
- use simple vocabulary with precision;
- organize and present information in a given format using paragraphs and variety of sentence structures;
- spell, punctuate and use grammar fairly – well;
- use appropriate register.

## Grade E

### The candidate should be able to;

- attempt to follow line of argument;
- identify some main points;
- show some understanding of information presented in a variety of formats;
- attempt to explain meanings of words and phrases used;
- show some knowledge of literary and linguistic devices;
- identify some ideas and facts;
- use limited vocabulary;
- present information in a given format using paragraphs made of simple sentences;
- make an attempt to spell, punctuate and use grammar correctly.

## 7. Inclusive Assessment

BEC intends to ensure that all assessment is inclusive of all candidates regardless of their ability or challenges. This will afford all candidates the opportunity to display what they know without fear or prejudice. The assessment will therefore ensure that in the written papers items cater for all ability levels. Special needs candidates will be catered for through modification of assessments to suit visually challenged candidates, learners with hearing impairment as well as learners with learning disabilities. Candidates will also be accommodated as much as possible to gain access into the practically oriented syllabuses.

Centres are however requested to;

- inform BEC of any candidates who need special arrangements by March every year;
- ensure familiarity with the BEC special arrangements manual;
- make the necessary accommodations for learners with disabilities during the teaching and learning;
- modify learners assessments according to their various needs during the teaching and learning.

This will ensure that the special arrangements carried out by BEC do not come as a shock to candidates during examination time.