**Video transcript: WACE 2015-16 – English**

Year 11 students in 2015 and Year 11 and Year 12 students in 2016 will study the revised Western Australian Senior Secondary Curriculum for the first time.

The Western Australian Curriculum will include the Australian Curriculum courses which have been adopted and adapted to suit Western Australian needs and WACE courses which have been adapted to suit the revised structure.

There is increased rigour in the syllabuses. The changes are not about making school harder for students. They do raise the bar, though. Raising expectations means that we are supporting students to achieve at a higher standard.

For more information about the changes to the WACE starting in 2015 we recommend you watch the WACE 2015–16 overview video.

Courses in English will build on the current WACE courses and/or courses developed for the Australian Curriculum.

There are English courses to meet the needs of all students.

The English learning area features nine courses. These are in English, Literature and English as an Additional Language or Dialect.

English, Literature and English as an Additional Language or Dialect are all available as ATAR and General courses. The General suite includes Foundation courses for English and English as an Additional Language or Dialect and a Preliminary course for English.

Foundation courses are typically for students with severely limited English literacy and numeracy skills. Only students who have not demonstrated the minimum standard in the relevant component of the literacy and numeracy requirement may enrol in these courses.

Preliminary courses are for students who have identified special needs.

English Foundation focuses on improving standards of literacy through reading, writing, viewing, speaking and listening with students covering the contexts of literacy for work, literacy for community participation, literacy for everyday personal contexts and literacy for learning.

The Foundation course is pitched at a standard mapped to Level 3 of the Australian Core Skills Framework mentioned earlier.

The English Preliminary course is designed for students requiring educational support and adapts the content of the previous WACE Preliminary units with the Preliminary A unit content becoming the basis of Unit 1 and the Preliminary B unit the basis of Unit 2. The units are sequential and developmental but not prescribed for a particular year.

The English as an Additional Language or Dialect Foundation course is based on Australian Curriculum bridging units 1–4 and Western Australian units 1AB and 1CD. Like English Foundation, English as an Additional Language or Dialect Foundation is mapped to the Australian Core Skills Framework Level 3.

The course focuses on everyday English language competence across the language modes for a variety of contexts in Australia. These are personal and community and workplace and education.

There is flexibility in the English learning area to allow students to move from English Foundation into English General or from English as an Additional Language or Dialect Foundation into English as an Additional Language or Dialect after Semester 1, Year 11.

It is important to remember that students who have achieved the literacy standard are not eligible to enrol in Foundation English and other List A Foundation courses. As well as this, students who achieve the minimum standard of literacy in Semester 1 of Year 11 are not eligible to continue in the associated Foundation courses in Semester 2 of that year.

Information about the literacy standard is available on the Authority website.

There is a syllabus for each year of each course that sets out the content to be covered in each unit. The Year 11 syllabus details Units 1 and 2. The Year 12 syllabus details Units 3 and 4.

Units 1 and 2 are typically studied as a pair. Units 3 and 4 must be studied as a pair.

The complexity of the syllabus content increases from Year 11 to Year 12. For this reason, a student cannot complete Year 12 units and then move to Year 11 units.

Typically, the Year 11 and 12 Western Australian syllabuses follow the same structure. They all begin with a rationale and aims that are followed by information about the organisation of the course. Unit information includes a unit description, learning outcomes and unit content.

The syllabuses include information about school-based assessment and grading, which is supported through grade descriptions. The grade descriptions have been modified from the current WACE courses. These are interim descriptions and will be refined during the early years of implementation.

The grade descriptions are included in an appendix of the syllabuses. Many courses also have a glossary that defines key words in the context of the course.

Consistent with the Australian Curriculum, the organisation section of the syllabuses includes reference to general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities. The unit information, specifically the unit content, identifies the expected learning within each syllabus. Unless they are identified within the specified unit content, the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities are not assessed.

Some syllabus elements are course and year specific.

In general, the progression from Year 7–10 in the Year 11 syllabuses shows how the courses build on knowledge, understandings and skills.

The Year 11 and 12 ATAR course syllabuses adopted and adapted from the Australian Curriculum are organised around the course aims and unit learning outcomes.

The Year 12 ATAR courses contain the WACE examination design briefs.

The Year 11 and 12 ATAR course syllabuses based on the current Stage 2 and Stage 3 WACE courses are organised around the course outcomes.

Year 12 General courses, except Preliminary, include information about the externally set tasks, known as ESTs, which are part of the Authority’s moderation processes from 2016. There are sample externally set tasks on our website.

The English ATAR course groups content descriptions in each unit under an organising framework consisting of:

* texts in context
* language and textual analysis
* engaging and responding
* creating texts, and
* reflecting.

The English General course also groups content descriptions in each unit, using the headings of:

* comprehension strategies
* language and textual analysis
* using information
* creating texts, and
* communicating and interacting with others.

Each unit in the English ATAR and English General course has a broad focus. For example, Unit 1 in the English General course focuses on students comprehending and responding to ideas and information presented in texts.

Literature ATAR follows the organisational structure of the Australian Curriculum Literature course and includes most of that course’s content which has been adapted to strengthen the emphasis on the role of the reader in the meaning-making process.

Literature ATAR focuses on readings/interpretations of poetry, prose fiction and drama. It should be noted that Literature ATAR excludes the emphasis on the analysis of film and non-fiction that is present in the Australian Curriculum Literature course.

While Literature ATAR has moved away from the analysis of film and non-fiction, it does reiterate the Australian Curriculum Literature course’s emphasis on the creative production of poetry, prose fiction, drama and multimodal texts.

Literature General is based on the WACE Literature Stage 1 and 2 content. Literature General focuses on readings of poetry, prose fiction and drama; and places some emphasis on the interpretation of multimodal texts.

The English as an Additional Language or Dialect ATAR, General and Foundation courses have been adapted from the Australian Curriculum EAL/D Units 1–4 and the bridging units 1–4, to meet the Standard Australian English Language or Dialect development needs of Western Australian students.

The Western Australian EAL/D courses use the content organisers from the Australian Curriculum. These are:

* communication skills and strategies
* comprehension skills and strategies
* language and textual analysis skills and strategies, and
* creating texts.

The EAL/D eligibility criteria continue to apply to all Year 12 students.

The EAL/D ATAR course retains the WACE examination of the practical (oral) course components.

A course unit is completed when a grade is assigned.

This means a student must have had the opportunity to complete the structured education program and the assessment program for the course unit, unless the school accepts there are exceptional and justifiable circumstances.

The assessment program is summarised in the assessment table.

You will notice the assessment tables for Year 12 now show fixed assessment weightings rather than having a weighting range.

Examinations are now specified as a separate assessment type.

Students who enrol in General courses, except Preliminary, must make a genuine attempt in the externally set task to complete a course.

The ESTs will be written assessments. The ESTs will be worth 15 per cent of a student’s final mark.

The Authority will inform schools during Term 3 of the preceding year of the section or sections of the syllabus content on which an EST will be based.

More information about ESTs is available on the Authority website.

The English ATAR and English General assessment types of responding and creating are similar to those of response and production in the current WACE English syllabus. While assessment of the speaking/listening language mode is a requirement in the school’s assessment outline, there is no prescribed weighting.

Literature ATAR has five assessment types:

* extended written response
* short written response
* creative production of literary texts
* oral, and
* examination.

Literature General has five assessment types:

* extended written response
* short written response
* creative production of literary texts, and
* oral, and
* externally set task.

The Year 12 EAL/D ATAR syllabus has new separate assessment tables for the written and practical components.

EAL/D ATAR Year 12 has five assessment types. These are:

* investigation
* response
* production (written)
* production (oral), and
* examination (written and practical).

Year 12 EAL/D General and Foundation also have five assessment types

EAL/D General has five assessment types:

* investigation
* response
* production (written),
* production (oral), and
* an externally set task in Year 12.

The EAL/D Foundation five task types include:

* response to aural texts
* production (oral)
* response to written/visual texts
* production (written), and
* an externally set task in Year 12.

Students enrolled in Year 12 ATAR courses are required to sit the WACE examination. When sitting an external examination, it is critical that students make a genuine attempt.

The English ATAR examination content is divided into three sections:

* comprehending
* responding, and
* composing.

Section 1, Comprehending, is worth 30 per cent. In this section students demonstrate their reading and comprehension skills by responding to two or three written and visual and/or multimodal texts in three short answer questions of equal weighting

In section 2, Responding, students asked to demonstrate their analytical and critical thinking skills in relation to a text or texts they have studied.

Section 2 is worth 40 per cent.

Section 3 is Composing and is worth 30 per cent. In this section, students demonstrate their writing skills by creating an imaginative, interpretive or persuasive text.

The Literature ATAR examination retains the current structure. However, three of the 8–10 questions in section 2 will make reference to specific genre: one to poetry, one to prose fiction and one to drama.

The EAL/D ATAR examination retains the current structure with the written and practical (oral) components weighted 75 per cent and 25 per cent respectively.

There has been a minor change in weightings for the written examination:

* Listening is 30 per cent
* Reading and viewing is 35 per cent, and
* Extended writing is 35 per cent.

Syllabuses will be reviewed typically on a five-year cycle, according to learning area. The schedule of review will be published in 2014.

The Australian Government announced a review of the Australian Curriculum in January 2014. The report on the review is due to be completed by 31 July 2014. Any changes that the Australian and Western Australian Governments may endorse as a result of the review will be considered in the Western Australian syllabuses as part of our curriculum review cycle.

A range of support materials for teachers can be found on the Authority’s website. We encourage teachers to participate in briefings and discussions and to register for the eCircular to keep up to date.