

Primary Level (Classes III – V)

Background

The demand for English at the initial stage of schooling is evident in the mushrooming of private 'English medium' schools and in the early introduction of English as a subject across the states/UTs of the country. Though the problems of feasibility and preparedness are still to be solved satisfactorily, there is a general expectation that the educational system must respond to people's aspiration and need for English. Within the eight years of education guaranteed to every child, it should be possible in the span of 5 years to ensure basic English language proficiency including basic literacy skills of reading and writing.

Classes III, IV and V

Objectives

The general objectives at this level are:

- to provide print-rich environment to relate oracy with literacy.
- to build on learners' readiness for reading and writing.
- to promote learners' conceptualisation of printed texts in terms of headings, paragraphs and horizontal lines.
- to enrich learners' vocabulary mainly through telling, retelling and reading aloud of stories/folktales in English.
- to use appropriate spoken and written language in meaningful contexts/situations.
- to give them an opportunity to listen to sounds/sound techniques and appreciate the rhythm and music of rhymes/sounds.
- to enable them to relate words (mainly in poems) with appropriate actions and thereby provide understanding of the language.
- to familiarize learners with the basic process of writing.
- At the end of this stage learners will be able to do the following:
 - narrate his/her experiences and incidents
 - exchange his/her ideas with the peers
 - carry out a brief conversation involving seeking/giving information
 - enjoy reading a story, poem, a short write-up, a notice, poster etc
 - take dictation of simple sentences and to practise copy writing from the blackboard and textbook and to use common punctuation marks
 - write a short description of a person, thing or place – prepare a notice, or write a message for someone

- write a short composition based on pictures
- take part in group activity, role play and dramatization

Language Items

At the primary level, knowledge of grammar is to be seen mainly as a process of discovering uses and functions of items through exposure to spoken and written inputs. However, for material writers, teachers and evaluators, the following items may provide a framework of reference.

- nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs
- is, am, are, has, have
- tense forms (simple present and present continuous, simple past and past continuous)
- expressing future (will and be going to)
- articles
- this, that, these, those (as determiners and empty subjects)
- question words
- an, or, but
- punctuation marks (full stop, comma, question mark and inverted commas)
- possessive adjectives
- prepositions

Methods and Techniques

(At level I, there will be a shift of emphasis from learning of limited input (textbook) to providing exposure to a wide range of inputs.)

- an oral-aural approach to be followed (with limited focus on reading and writing depending on the level)
- learner-centred activity-based approach including bilingual approach
- integration of key environmental, social and arithmetical concepts
- pictures, illustrations, cartoons, and toys to be used to arouse the interest of children
- focus on discussions, project works, activities that promote reading with comprehension depending on the level

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.

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