



What's in the CAPS Package?

A Comparative study of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS): FET Phase

ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE

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INTRODUCTION

- English, as a Home Language (HL) subject and syllabus, is designed for students whose mother tongue or home language is English, or for students whose English language competency is on par with mother tongue speakers.
- Given this, the subject is characterised by topics, subject matter, skills and texts that enable students to master English and use it in many social contexts for many different purposes, rather than only communicative aspects of English.
- In the English HL subject, English is most certainly conceptualised as a tool for thought and communication, but it is also conceptualised as a cultural and aesthetic means commonly shared among a people to make better sense of the world they live in.
- The subject aims to enable learners to use English effectively to acquire knowledge, to express their identity, feelings and ideas, and to interact with others in a global context.

DOCUMENTATION

The CAPS scored higher terms of design, format and user friendliness than the NCS.

The NCS documents are lengthy, the content of the documents is more abstract and there is much repetition of information in all three documents.

The CAPS document achieves better coherence as a single document in offering clarity for teachers and uses language which is more accessible and clear. There is a more practical approach to the content matter of the subject.

Alignment in the NCS is poor because sequences are not logical; the subject matter is not in one place but scattered within and across documents and important content is not always present in each document.

Since the CAPS is articulated in one document, alignment between the documents in this case is not applicable.

The Examination Guideline Document was released in 2014. This offers a more thorough and detailed guide to the content and setting of examination papers and is aligned with the brief two pages in the CAPS

Documentation

1 National Curriculum Statement (3 Documents)	
Department of Education. 2003. National Curriculum Statement for Grades 10-12 (General): English Home Language.	Doc 1.1
Department of Education. 2008. National Curriculum Statement for Grades 10-12 (General): Learning Programme Guidelines - English Home Language.	Doc 1.2
Department of Education. 2008. National Curriculum Statement for Grades 10-12 (General): Subject Assessment Guidelines - English Home Language.	Doc 1.3
2 Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement	
Department of Basic Education. 2011. National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) Further Education and Training Phase Grades 10-12 English Home Language	Doc 2.1
Department of Basic Education. (n.d.) National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements of the National Curriculum Statement. Grades R – 12	Doc 2.2
Department of Basic Education. (n.d.) National Protocol for Assessment. Grades R – 12.	Doc 2.3

Design

Table 3: Broad design, format and user-friendliness		
	NCS	CAPS
Number of documents (subject-related)	3	1
Total number of pages (in subject-related documents)	197	94
User-friendliness (good/moderate/poor)	Poor	Moderate
Accessibility of language (good/moderate/poor)	Moderate	Good
Alignment (good/moderate/poor)	Poor	n/a A single Doc
Central design principle (the technical curriculum design aspect that organises the curriculum)	Outcomes-based	Content and skills-based

Objectives

Table 4: Subject-specific aims/objectives of the curricula		
Objectives	NCS	CAPS
Broaden and deepen home language competencies	Y	Y
Aesthetic appreciation and enjoyment of texts	Y	Y
Enable speakers to use language confidently	Y	Y
Use language appropriately in real-world contexts	Y	Y
Acquire language skills required for academic learning across the curriculum	Y	Y
Express and justify ideas, views and emotions confidently to become independent and analytical thinkers	Y	Y
Use language and their imagination to represent and explore human experience, reflect on own lives, and to consider alternative worldviews	Y	Y
Use language to access and manage information	Y	Y
Use language critically and creatively	Y	Y
Interact critically with a wide range of texts. Challenge perspectives, values and power relations that are embedded in texts.	Y	Y

Table 5: Content/skills coverage						
	Covered in the Curriculum (Y)					
	NCS			CAPS		
Grade	10	11	12	10	11	12
Total number of topics	95	96	97	77	77	77
Total number of topics per Phase	288			231		

Comparison of the relative breadth (content/skill) of the two curricula:

- The reduction in the number of 'topics' in the CAPS - elimination of a section of shorter transactional no longer being assessed in the writing paper.
- The skill to complete such texts taught in an integrated manner in the choice of texts selected for the purposes of teaching. E.g. The advertisement, is taught as visual literacy for the language paper.

Appropriateness of breadth for learners at different stages of their development:

In isolating the topics in Table 5 it must be understood that each itemised topic never stands alone and always functions within the context of the spoken or written communication.

The content and skills are appropriate and relevant for all the grades. As the learner progresses, the more subtle nuances of language should be introduced. Most of the skills should be covered in the previous grades at a simpler level.

Omissions in the CAPS

Language Structures and Conventions

The CAPS little reference to formal grammar and language structure,

NCS it is listed as a primary outcome

The CAPS uses communicative, contextual, integrative and descriptive approach to grammar.

NCS uses prescriptive or formal approach.

CAPS document (Doc 2.1) language structures and conventions use appendix at the end of Doc 2.1, pp 93-94

The CAPS assumes:

teachers have the expertise and the competence to teach language in an integrated manner.

can choose suitable texts to incorporate the teaching of language structures and conventions. (Vocabulary)

learners should be familiar with the basics of grammar.

CAPS states language:

‘should not now be part of the teaching time.’

However, ‘one lesson per week **may** be used to teach other language structures as required’.

Omissions

Reading aloud

Neither the NCS nor the CAPS mentions reading aloud as a skill and a tool for assessment.

The NCS requires this as part of the oral assessment as stipulated in the Subject Assessment Guidelines. The CAPS does not cover reading as an oral skill at all.

Summary

There is very little reference in the CAPS to Summary skills other than learners being able to make notes or summarise main and supporting ideas.

Unseen Poetry Essay

This option has been removed from the Literature Paper.

DEPTH

Comparison of the depth of the NCS and CAPS with one another:

The NCS :

focuses on Outcomes-Based Education (OBE)
is more specific in terms of the depth in the curriculum
is set out in the Learning Outcomes (LOs) and Assessment Standards (ASs). The ASs are very specific as to what learners should be able to do.

E.g: *'Grade 10 learners should be able to 'sustain own point of view/perspective and arguments with **growing confidence**'; Grade 11 learners should be able to 'sustain own point of view/perspective and arguments **with confidence**'; Grade 12 learners should be able to 'sustain own point of view/perspective and arguments **confidently and competently**'.*

DEPTH

The CAPS :

Gives little detail about **the depth** in the teaching plans.

Content is listed with no indication of the depth required

The progression from grade to grade is not indicated.

The depth of content and skills is suggested/IMPLIED by the length of texts across the Grades

The Programme of Assessment in Doc 2.1 details the number of words required for different assessments at different grades (replaces NCS SAG).

Time and Weighting

Table 7: Subject time allocation		
	NCS	CAPS
Total classroom time (hours) allocated for (subject) in the Phase	4.5	4.5
% of total classroom time allocated for all subjects in the Phase	16.6	16.6

Table 8: Weighting per topic/emphasis within the subject (Time)		
Central topics	NCS	CAPS
Listening and Speaking	Not stipulated	10%
Reading and Viewing	Not stipulated	45%
Writing and Presenting	Not stipulated	45%
Language	Not stipulated	Included in above

Pacing

- **The NCS** is very open ended in terms of specification and pacing of the curriculum. The pacing is largely determined by the SAG (Doc 1.3) and relies on the teacher to plan how the time allocated to lessons will be spent on each topic.
- **The CAPS** is more prescriptive in its specification and pacing in terms of allocating a percentage of time to oral work; to reading and viewing and to writing and presenting.
- To cover the work in the teaching plan would suggest a very brisk pace.
- Teachers are encouraged to design their own teaching plans which will influence specification and pacing.

Progression

Progression is the increase in cognitive demand/complexity/difficulty within a grade or across the grades

- NCS: The curriculum only offers the teacher a guide as to how progression within the grade should take place.
- CAPS offers no clear definition of progression, and offers scant referral to particular texts that the students must master.

Assessment

Table 13: Assessment		
	NCS	CAPS
Number of assessment tasks specified:		
Grades 10 -11	16	11
Grade 12	14	10
Types of assessment specified	Oral: Prepared reading, Prepared speaking, listening comprehension and response to literature Writing: Essay, longer and shorter transactional texts Literature: Essay and contextual Language: Comprehension, summary and language in context Two examinations (Grade 12: two examinations or one examination and one test)	Oral: prepared Speaking (2 speeches), listening. Comprehension and unprepared speaking/ informal conversation Writing: Essay and transactional texts Literature: Essay and contextual Language: Comprehension, summary, and language in context Two examinations (Grade 12: two examinations or one examination and one test)
Examples of dominant types of assessment specified	No dominant assessments as skill assessment is balanced	No dominant assessments as skill assessment is balanced
Specificity of assessment guidance (general/subject-specific/both)	Subject-specific	Subject-specific
Clarity of assessment guidance (high/moderate/low)	High in terms of tasks. Low in terms of content	High in terms of tasks. Low in terms of content

Assessment

- Collective number of tasks for HL language teachers excessive.
- The CAPS has cut down on the number of tasks but increased what is done within a s
- Teachers are still overloaded by the curriculum.

Not mentioned in Assessment:

- ANAS – now for Grade 8 and 9 compulsory marking for all Senior level. Runs concurrently with Gr 12 Preliminary Exams

Pedagogy

- NCS: Text-based and communicative approaches – moderate indication. Specifies the type of teacher and the type of student envisaged. States what teacher should cover and what learners should be able to do. No specific approach stipulated.
- CAPS: Text-based, communicative approaches with emphasis on the process – low indication. Guidance offered is not prescriptive. Left to skill of the teacher to take an approach.

EXIT-LEVEL OUTCOMES FOR THE FET PHASE

- The English HL FET Phase curriculum is comprehensive, does not omit any key content, skills or competencies, and includes a broad and inclusive range of content areas across Grades 10 to 12.
- One of the primary aims of the FET Phase of the CAPS is to equip students for Higher Education (HE) contexts. In terms of English HL, this specific curriculum should equip students with high-level literacy skills so that they are able to understand and produce complex academic texts in HE contexts.
- In theory the implementation of the CAPS would ensure the desired Exit-level Outcomes. In practice there are too many variables to ensure this.

Recommendations for CAPS

- Needs better sequencing and progression indicated in the Teaching Plans.
- A better roll out of content from Grades 10 – 12.
- Methods of informal assessment could be included.
- Assessment rubrics should be included. (now in Exam Guideline Doc).
- Rubrics should be practical, concise, user friendly with few sub-sections and 'round' mark allocations.
- Assessment schedules should take into account what may be tested within one lesson.

Recommendations

- Oral work is loaded as it is used twice: within SBA and Oral Paper 4. Difficult to moderate.
- Reading aloud should be part of an oral assessment. It is a valuable assessment tool for teachers.
- Grade 12 should essentially be a revision time for language and writing skills. Only Literature set works should be new content.
- Language conventions should be given greater emphasis in the curriculum.
- Guideline documents to support the CAPS
- Cut down on formal assessment

EXAMPLE OF THE TEACHING PLAN

GRADE 10 TERM 1			
Weeks	Listening and speaking	Reading and viewing	Writing and presenting
5 and 6	<p>Listening for comprehension: (Informative, evaluative, appreciative and interactive) Duration: 1 hour</p>	<p>• Reading for comprehension: Interpretation of visual texts</p> <p>• Literature study Duration: 4 hours</p>	<p>Transactional texts: Report/ review/newspaper article/magazine article</p> <p>Focus on: Process writing Planning, drafting, revising, editing, proof-reading and presenting</p> <p>Language structures and conventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register, style and voice • Word choice • Sentence construction • Paragraph writing • Punctuation and spelling <p>Format and features of chosen text Duration: 4 hours</p>
7 and 8	<p>Discussion/conversation: Features and conventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning, researching, organising, practising and presenting <p>Duration: 1 hour</p>	<p>Reading for comprehension:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Vocabulary development and language use o Sentence structures <p>Literature study Duration: 4 hours</p>	<p>1 x essay: Narrative/descriptive/argumentative</p> <p>Focus on: Process writing Planning, drafting, revising, editing, proof-reading and presenting</p> <p>Language structures and conventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register, style and voice • Word choice • Sentence construction • Paragraph writing • Punctuation and spelling <p>Format and features of chosen text Duration: 4 hours</p>