REPUBLIC OF GHANA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND SPORTS

NATIONAL SYLLABUS FOR GHANAIAN LANGUAGES AND CULTURE
(JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL)

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RATIONAL FOR TEACHING GHANAIAN LANGUAGES AND CULTURE

Language is not only a medium of communication; it serves also as a library in which the other elements of culture - customs and institutions, the philosophy, technology, medicine, the architecture, etc of a people are stored. Language remains the most reliable means through which the elements of culture are transmitted from generation to generation. Culture defines who and what a people are. The study of Ghanaian language and culture will therefore:

- equip students with effective communication skills,
- provide students with an understanding and appreciation of the values and skills embodied in their languages and cultures.
- provide students with knowledge as a basis for the study and appreciation of other languages and cultures
- equip students with knowledge to ensure proper integration into a speech/language community.
- develop in students the necessary knowledge and skills that will help them to develop a positive attitude toward Ghanaian languages and cultures that will encourage them to constantly review some of our customs and institutions in the light of present day developments as they grow up into adulthood
- diffuse ethnocentrism leading to national unity and development.

General Aims

The subject is designed to help students to:

1. develop linguistic and cultural awareness.
2. attain competence in speaking, reading and writing their language.
3. appreciate the linguistic, historical and cultural heritage of their community.
4. realize that much of their socio-cultural values are stored in the oral literatures of their languages.
5. re-examine and revise aspects of their customs and institutions that may need to be modified.

ORGANIZATION OF THE SYLLABUS

The syllabus for JHS is organized as follows:

JHS1 - 3

Section 1: Oral Skills – Customs and Institutions
Section 2: Grammar
Section 3: Reading Skills
Section 4: Writing and Composition
## ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE SYLLABUS

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<td>Unit 3: Summary Writing</td>
<td>Unit 3: Written Literature (Poetry)</td>
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<td>Unit 5: Literature</td>
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<td>Unit 2: Paragraph Writing</td>
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<td>Unit 4: Giving Directions using Landmarks</td>
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<td>Unit 5: Writing Simple Argumentative Essay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 6: Letter Writing (Informal)</td>
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TIME ALLOCATION

The subject is presently allocated three periods a week of 30 minutes per period for each of the three years. It is suggested that the teacher tries to find extra time if possible, for increasing the length of time for teaching the subject.

Apart from the time allocation for the subject itself, schools are advised to provide the following recommended periods for the subjects/items listed below:

- Music and Dance 3
- Physical Education 2
- Library Work (Reading and Research) 2
- SBA Project 2
- Worship 2
- Free Period 1

The teacher should try to use part of the Library periods for extra work in Ghanaian Languages and Culture. This of course has to be discussed with the headteacher.

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING THE SYLLABUS

General Objectives
General Objectives have been listed at the beginning of each Section. The general objectives are a summary of the specific objectives of the various units contained in that Section. The general Objectives state the knowledge, skills and or values a student should acquire and demonstrate at the end of teaching a Section. Read the general objectives very carefully before you start teaching the section. After teaching all the units of the section go back and read the general objectives again to be sure you have covered the objectives adequately in the course of your teaching.

Sections and Units:
The syllabus has been planned on the basis of Sections and Units. Each year's work is divided into sections. A section consists of a fairly homogeneous body of knowledge within the subject. Within each section are units. A unit consists of a more related and more homogeneous body of knowledge and skills.

The syllabus is structured in five columns: Units, Specific Objectives, Content, and Teaching and Learning Activities and Evaluation. A description of the contents of each column is as follows:
Column 1 - Units:
The units in Column 1 are divisions of the major topics of the section. You are expected to follow the unit topics according to the linear order in which they have been presented. However, if you find at some point that teaching and learning in your class will be more effective if you branched to another unit before coming back to the unit in the sequence, you are encouraged to do so.

Column 2 - Specific Objectives: Column 2 shows the Specific Objectives for each unit. A specific objective states the knowledge, skills or values a student will be able to acquire and demonstrate after a teaching learning period. The specific objectives begin with numbers such as 1.3.5 or 2.2.1. These numbers are referred to as “Syllabus Reference Numbers”. The first digit in the syllabus reference number refers to the section; the second digit refers to the unit, while the third digit refers to the rank order of the specific objective. For instance, 1.3.5 means: Section 1, Unit 3 (of Section 1) and Specific Objective 5. In other words, 1.3.5 refers to Specific Objective 5 of Unit 3 of Section 1. Similarly, the syllabus reference number 2.2.1 simply means Specific Objective number 1 of Unit 2 of Section 2. Using syllabus reference numbers provides an easy way for communication among teachers and other educators. It further provides an easy way for selecting objectives for test construction. Let’s say for instance, that Unit 2 of Section 2 has five specific objectives: 2.2.1 - 2.2.5. A teacher may want to base his/her test items/questions on objectives 2.2.3 and 2.2.4 and not use the other three objectives. In this way, a teacher would sample the objectives within units and within sections to be able to develop a test that accurately reflects the importance of the various skills taught in class.

You will note also that specific objectives have been stated in terms of the student i.e., what the student will be able to do after instruction and learning in the unit. Each specific objective hence starts with the following, “The student will be able to..” This in effect, means that you have to address the learning problems of each individual student. It means individualising your instruction as much as possible such that the majority of students will be able to master the objectives of each unit of the syllabus.

Column 3 - Content: The “content” in the third column of the syllabus presents a selected body of information that you will need to use in teaching the particular unit. In some cases, the content presented is quite exhaustive. In some other cases, you could add more information to the content presented depending on your environment and topic.

Column 4 - Teaching and Learning Activities (T/LA): T/L activities that will ensure maximum student participation in the lessons are presented in column 4. Try to avoid rote learning and drill-oriented methods but rather emphasize participatory teaching and learning, and also emphasize the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of knowledge in your instructional system wherever appropriate. You are encouraged to re-order the suggested teaching and learning activities and also add to them where necessary in order to achieve optimum student learning. As we have implied already, the major purpose of teaching and learning is to make students able to apply their knowledge in dealing with issues both in and out of school. In the case of Ghanaian Languages and Culture, the emphasis is in the acquisition of effective communication skills and associated knowledge in the relevant culture. There may be a number of units where you need to re-order specific objectives to achieve such required effects.

Column 5 - Evaluation: Suggestions and exercises for evaluating the lessons of each unit are indicated in Column 5. Evaluation exercises can be in the form of oral questions, quizzes, class assignments, essays, structured questions, project work etc. Try to ask questions and set tasks and assignments that will challenge your students to develop excellent skills in Ghanaian Languages and Culture as a result of having undergone instruction in this subject. The suggested evaluation tasks are not exhaustive. You are encouraged to develop other creative evaluation tasks to ensure that students have mastered the instruction and behaviours implied in the specific objectives of each unit. Lastly, bear in mind that the syllabus cannot be taken as a substitute for lesson plans. It is therefore, necessary that you develop a scheme of work and lesson plans for teaching the units of this syllabus.
DEFINITION OF PROFILE DIMENSIONS

The concept of profile dimensions was made central to the syllabuses developed from 1998 onwards. A 'dimension' is a psychological unit for describing a particular learning behaviour. More than one dimension constitutes a profile of dimensions. A specific objective may be stated with an action verb as follows: The student will be able to describe….. etc. Being able to "describe" something after the instruction has been completed means that the student has acquired "knowledge". Being able to explain, summarize, give examples, etc. means that the student has understood the lesson taught.

Similarly, being able to develop, plan, solve problems, construct, etc. means that the student can "apply" the knowledge acquired in some new context. Each of the specific objectives in this syllabus contains an "action verb" that describes the behaviour the student will be able to demonstrate after the instruction. "Knowledge", "Application", etc. are dimensions that should be the prime focus of teaching and learning in schools. It has been realized unfortunately that schools still teach the low ability thinking skills of knowledge and understanding and ignore the higher ability thinking skills. Instruction in most cases has tended to stress knowledge acquisition to the detriment of the higher ability behaviours such as application, analysis, etc. The persistence of this situation in the school system means that students will only do well on recall items and questions and perform poorly on questions that require higher ability thinking skills as required in application of Language principles in producing good Ghanaian language material. For there to be any change in the quality of people who go through the school system, students should be encouraged to apply their knowledge, develop analytical thinking skills, develop plans, generate new and creative ideas and solutions, and use their knowledge in a variety of ways to speak, write, and produce poems, drama and other forms of language material. Read each objective carefully to know the profile dimension toward which you have to teach.

Profile dimensions describe the underlying behaviours for teaching, learning and assessment. In Ghanaian Language and Culture, two profile dimensions and four skills have been specified for teaching, learning and testing.

The profile dimensions are:

- Knowledge and Understanding: 40%
- Use of Knowledge: 60%

The four skills are as follows:

- Listening Comprehension: 10%
- Reading Comprehension: 30%
- Speaking (i.e. Oral Skills): 30%
- Writing: 30%

The profile dimensions and the skills may be combined as follows:

- Listening - Knowledge and Understanding
- Reading - Knowledge and Understanding
- Speaking - Use of Knowledge
- Writing - Use of Knowledge
Learning language and culture implies the acquisition of two major abilities or behaviours. These are “Knowledge and Understanding”, and the “Use of Knowledge”. “Knowledge and Understanding” may be taught through Oral Skills, Grammar and Reading, while “Use of Knowledge” may be taught in Writing and Composition.

Each of the dimensions and the skills has been given a percentage weight that should be reflected in teaching, learning and testing. The weights indicated on the right of the dimensions and skills on the previous page, show the relative emphasis that the teacher should give in the teaching, learning and testing processes. Combining the dimensions and the four skills in the teaching and learning process will ensure that Ghanaian Languages and Culture is taught and studied competently in school.

The following diagram shows the relationship between the profile dimensions and the four learning skills:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profile Dimensions</th>
<th>Receptive Skills</th>
<th>Productive Skills</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and Understanding</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of knowledge</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Knowledge and Understanding” has a weight of 40%, and “Use of Knowledge” has a weight of 60% as shown in the last column of the table. The last row shows the weight or relative emphasis that should be given each of the four skills in the teaching and learning process. The productive skills are weighted 60% as against 40% for the receptive skills. The explanation and key words involved in each of the profile dimensions are as follows:

**Knowledge and Understanding (KU)**

Knowledge

The ability to:
remember, recall, identify, define, describe, list, name, match, state principles, facts and concepts. Knowledge is simply the ability to remember or recall material already learned and constitutes the lowest level of learning.
Understanding

The ability to:
explain, summarise, translate, rewrite, paraphrase, give examples, generalise, estimate or predict consequences based upon a trend. Understanding is generally the ability to grasp the meaning of some material that may be verbal, pictorial, or symbolic.

Use of Knowledge (UK)

This dimension is also referred to as “Application”. Ability to use knowledge or apply knowledge, as implied in this syllabus, has a number of behaviour levels. These levels include application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. These may be considered and taught separately, paying attention to reflect each of them equally in your teaching. The dimension “Use of Knowledge” is a summary dimension for all four learning levels. Details of each of the four sub-levels are as follows:

Application

The ability to apply rules, methods, principles, theories, etc. to concrete situations that are new and unfamiliar. It also involves the ability to produce, solve, operate, plan, demonstrate, discover etc.

Analysis

The ability to break down material into its component parts; to differentiate, compare, distinguish, outline, separate, identify significant points, recognise unstated assumptions and logical fallacies, recognise inferences from facts etc.

Inventive Thinking

The ability to put parts together to form a new whole. It involves the ability to combine, compile, compose, devise, plan, revise, design, organise, create, generate, etc.

Evaluation

The ability to appraise, compare features of different things and make comments or judgement, contrast, criticise, justify, support, discuss, conclude, make recommendations etc. Evaluation refers to the ability to judge the worth or value of some material based on some criteria.

You will note from the above that evaluation is the highest form of thinking and is therefore the most difficult behaviour. This accounts for the poor performance of learners and people generally on tasks that call for evaluative thinking. As we have said, start to develop this important skill early in your students by giving them lots of chances to do evaluative thinking while learning this subject.

Explanation of the meaning of the four skills is as follows:

Listening Comprehension:

This is the ability to listen to, understand and follow directions, instructions etc. given in a language.
Speaking: The ability to speak a language clearly, and in a way that will be understood by listeners. This is an oral communication skill that students should be encouraged to practise to perfection.

Grammar: The ability to use correct grammatical structures of a language in speaking and in writing.

Reading Comprehension: The ability to read and understand what is conveyed in a piece of writing. The reader must be able to read coherently, and must be able to answer questions arising from the passage read.

Writing: The ability to express one’s self clearly and comprehensively in writing. Writing may be in the form of simple sentences, short essays, compositions, summaries, letters.

**FORM OF ASSESSMENT**

It is important that both instruction and assessment be based on both the profile dimensions and skills of the subject. In developing assessment procedures, select specific objectives in such a way that you will be able to assess a representative sample of the syllabus objectives. Each specific objective in the syllabus is considered a criterion to be achieved by the student. When you develop a test that consists of items or questions that are based on a representative sample of the specific objectives taught, the test is referred to as a “Criterion-Referenced Test”. In many cases, a teacher cannot test all the objectives taught in a term, in a year etc. The assessment procedure you use i.e. class tests, homework, projects etc., must be developed in such a way that it will consist of a sample of the important objectives taught over a period.

The example below shows the recommended examination structure for JHS1-3. The structure consists of two examination papers and the SBA. Paper 1 will be an objective test paper, while Paper 2 will consist of comprehension and essay questions. The last column shows the weights for “Knowledge and Understanding” and “Use of knowledge”. Note the last row shows the weights of each examination paper and the weight of the continuous assessment. The objective test paper is weighted 20%; the structured question paper is weighted 50%, and SBA is weighted 30%, making a total of 100%.

The objective test paper may be constructed to consist of 40 or more items, but since the paper is weighted 20%, the total marks allocated to the paper, whether 40, 50 or more, will have to be scaled down to 20%. Similarly, the comprehension and essay paper could be scored out of 100 or any convenient number, and scaled down to 50% to derive the final total mark.
The objective test items are distributed in the following way in Paper 1: 15 items (or marks) for “Knowledge and Understanding” and 5 items or marks for “Use of knowledge”, making a total of 20 items or 20 marks.

The mark distribution for questions in Paper 2 is as follows: 15 marks for “Knowledge and Understanding”, and 35 marks for “Use of knowledge”. Paper 2 is essentially a “productive paper” and this is indicated by the rather large marks for the essay in the paper. Paper 2 is weighted more than Paper 1 and the SBA because it is a more intellectually demanding paper.

The mark distribution for continuous assessment in the table shows 10% of marks for “knowledge and understanding” and 20% of marks for “use of knowledge”, totalling 30%. School Based Assessment should be used for measuring performance in all four skills.

Note that at the BECE, the objective test, the comprehension test and essay test are all components of one examination paper. The examination has two parts: Section A is the objective test component and Section B consists of the comprehension and essay questions. The teacher at JHS3 should however, advice his/her students on the structure of the BECE examination paper and how to prepare for it.

**End-of-Term Examination**

The end-of-term examination is a summative assessment system and should consist of a sample of the knowledge and skills students have acquired in the term. The end-of-term test for Term 3 should be composed of items/questions based on the specific objectives studied over the three terms, using a different weighting system such as to reflect the importance of the work done in each term in appropriate proportions. For example, a teacher may build an end-of-Term 3 test in such a way that it would consist of the 20% of the objectives studied in Term 1, 20% of the objectives studied in Term 2, and 60% of the objectives studied in Term 3.

The diagram on the next page shows the recommended end-of-term examination structure. The structure consists of one examination paper with two sections, A and B and the School-Based Assessment. The end-of-term Test Paper will be a blend of objective-type and structured questions (i.e. short answers). The paper will test “Knowledge and Understanding” and “Use of knowledge”.

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**Distribution of Examination Paper Weights and Marks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Paper 1</th>
<th>Paper 2</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and Understanding</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Knowledge</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
JHS1: 30 items for 45 minutes  
JHS2: 40 items for 60 minutes  
JHS3: 40 items for 60 minutes

The teacher should consider the ability level of the class and determine the number of items to use for the end-of-term assessment. The above is only a guide.

### Distribution of Examination Marks and Examination paper Weights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Section A (Objective Test)</th>
<th>Section B (Structured Questions)</th>
<th>SBA</th>
<th>Total Marks</th>
<th>% Weight of dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and Understanding</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of knowledge</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Marks</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>140</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Contribution of Test Papers</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The assessment model above consists of one paper with two sections. Section A, the objective test paper will consist of 10 items. Section B, is the structured questions section made up of 20 questions, each carrying 2 marks and totalling 20 marks. The total marks of 20 marks under Section B should be multiplied by 2 to obtain 40 as the percentage contribution of Section B. SBA will cover all five sections of the syllabus and will be marked out of 100 and scaled down to 50% as indicated in the last row. Each of the marks in the last but one row will be scaled to the percentage contribution marks indicated in the last row. While the actual marks will be 140, the total scaled marks will be 100. The ranking of students on examination performance will hence be based on 100 marks.

### GUIDELINES FOR CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

The new School Based Assessment system (SBA) introduced into the school system is designed to provide schools with an internal assessment system that will help schools to achieve the following purposes:

- Standardize the practice of internal school-based assessment in all schools in the country
- Provide reduced assessment tasks for each of the primary school subjects
o Provide teachers with guidelines for constructing assessment items/questions and other assessment tasks
o Introduce standards of achievement in each subject and in each class of the school system
o Provide guidance in marking and grading of test items/questions and other assessment tasks
o Introduce a system of moderation that will ensure accuracy and reliability of teachers’ marks
o Provide teachers with advice on how to conduct remedial instruction on difficult areas of the syllabus to improve student performance

The SBA system consists of 12 assessments a year instead of the 33 assessments in the previous continuous assessment system. This will mean a reduction by 64% of the work load compared to the previous continuous assessment system. All guidelines for effective administration of the SBA are contained in the SBA Handbook.

Marking SBA Tasks

At the JHS level, just as at the primary level, students are expected to undertake assignments that may involve investigations and extended writing etc in English. The following guidelines are provided for marking assignments of such nature.

1. Introduction 20%
2. Main Text
   - Descriptions, use of charts etc. 60%
3. Conclusion 20%

Students have to be taught how to use charts and other forms of diagrams in their writing pieces. They have to be taught to start with an introduction and conclude their writing appropriately.

The marks derived from projects, the end of month tests and home work specifically designed for the SBA should together constitute the School Based Assessment component marked out of 50 per cent. The emphasis is to improve students’ learning by encouraging them to produce essays, poems, and other pieces of writing and drama.

GRADING PROCEDURE

In marking your class examination scripts, it is very important you develop a marking scheme. A marking scheme, as you may be aware, consists of the points for the best answer you expect for each essay question or structured question, and the mark allocated for each point raised by the student as well as the total marks for the question. For instance, if a question carries 10 marks and you expect 4 points in the best answer, you could allocate 2 marks (or part of it, depending upon the quality of the point raised by the student) to each point raised, totalling 8 marks, and then give the remaining 2 marks, or part of it, for organisation of answer. For objective test papers, you may develop an answer key to speed up the marking.

To improve assessment and grading and also introduce uniformity in schools, it is recommended that schools adopt the grading system explained in the SBA Handbook.