



**Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission**

Corr na Madadh, Baile Átha Luain, Co. na hIarmhí
Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co. Westmeath

S90 /17

JUNIOR CYCLE ENGLISH ASSESSMENT TASK

TO THE BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT/AUTHORITIES OF SECOND-LEVEL SCHOOLS AND CHIEF EXECUTIVES of ETBs

The State Examinations Commission (SEC) is now providing the following information and materials to facilitate the completion of the Assessment Task in Junior Cycle English by candidates in your school:

1. A matrix of 2018 Junior Certificate examination numbers (if the October Returns process was completed on time)
2. Details of online resources for the Task, Stimulus Materials and instructions
3. A supply of Assessment Task (AT) Booklets
4. A green tamper-evident packet to facilitate return of the completed AT Booklets
5. Registered Label for return envelope of AT Booklets to provide Track and Trace through the postal system
6. AT Approval Forms for completion by the class- teacher(s) and the Principal which includes an Exception Report to record additional candidates not on matrix provided
7. A pre addressed return envelope to facilitate return of the Approval Form
8. Instructions on completing the Assessment Task with students with special educational needs

1. Matrix of Junior Certificate Examination Numbers

Please find enclosed your 2018 Junior Certificate examination numbers to facilitate the completion of the AT Booklet. The Junior Certificate examination numbers are being provided to any school which returned their 2018 Junior Certificate examination candidate data through the PPOD System to the Department of Education & Skills by 13th of November 2017. Please check this data carefully and contact the Entries Section on 090-6442702 in the event of any query.

Any school that did not meet the PPOD deadline of 13th of November has not been provided with examination numbers at this time. These schools will be issued with their Junior Certificate examination numbers in February. Schools that do not have their examination numbers at the time of completion of the AT Booklet will need to record sufficient identification details with each AT Booklet to enable them to correctly record the examination number on the Booklet

when they receive the examination numbers from the SEC in the normal way in February 2018. The SEC will not accept AT Booklets from schools for marking without the examination number. The identifying information used by schools should not be returned to the SEC as to do so would compromise the anonymity of the examining process.

2. Details of online resources for the Task, Stimulus Materials and Instructions

The NCCA document *Junior Cycle English Assessment Task December 2017* will be published online on Friday 8th December. It contains instructions for the completion of the AT and Section B writing prompts. The website address for accessing these assessment resources is <http://www.curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Junior-Cycle-Subjects/English>.

For those schools who opt for the second window for completion of the Collection of Texts and related Assessment Task, the NCCA document *Junior Cycle English Assessment Task April 2018* will be published online on Friday 13th April 2018. It will contain instructions for the completion of the AT and Section B writing prompts.

The stimulus materials remain unchanged and can be accessed on: [http://www.curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Junior-Cycle-Subjects/English-\(1\)/Assessment-and-reporting/Assessment-Task](http://www.curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Junior-Cycle-Subjects/English-(1)/Assessment-and-reporting/Assessment-Task)

Throughout this Circular and on the approval forms - Guidelines refers to Junior Cycle English – Guidelines for the Classroom Based Assessments and Assessment Task, Guidelines and Instructions refers to the above, Junior Cycle English – Assessment Task (NCCA December 2017) and SEC Cir 90/17.

3. Completion Dates for Assessment Task Booklets

Schools must opt for one of the two windows for **all** of their students.

Window 1

Latest date for completion of the Collection of Student Texts	Friday 15 th December 2017
Window for completion of the Assessment Task - Session 1	Monday 18th - Friday 22nd December 2017
Latest date for award of provisional descriptors by the teacher	<i>Friday 12 January 2018</i>
Latest date for completion of Subject Learning and Assessment Review and for the award of final descriptors by the teacher	Friday 19 th January 2018
Latest date for receipt in SEC of completed AT Booklets and Approval Forms	Tuesday 23 rd January 2018

Window 2

Latest date for completion of the Collection of Student Texts	<i>Friday 20th April 2018</i>
Window for completion of the Assessment Task - Session 2	Monday 23rd - Friday 27th April 2018
Latest date for award of provisional descriptors by the teacher	Friday 4 th May 2018
Latest date for completion of Subject Learning and Assessment Review and for the award of final descriptors by the teacher	Friday 11 th May 2018
Latest date for receipt in SEC of completed AT Booklets and Approval Forms	Tuesday 15 th May 2018

4. Assessment Task Booklets

The supply of AT Booklets enclosed is to cover all candidates in your school. No further supply of AT Booklets will be issued. These official bar-coded AT Booklets must be used by all candidates completing the task in handwriting in either Window 1 December 2017 or Window 2 April 2018. The specimen version of the AT Booklet (available on the websites of the SEC, JCT and NCCA) is for familiarisation purposes only and will not be accepted for marking by the SEC. An electronic version of the AT Booklet, for use by students with special educational needs, is available. See Section 7 below.

1. The Assessment Task should be completed in schools as outlined in the table above as follows;

Window 1 - between Monday 18th to Friday 22nd of December 2017.

OR

Window 2 - between Monday 23rd to Friday 27th of April 2018

Schools must opt for one of these windows for ALL of their students.

2. In line with *Junior Cycle English – Guidelines for the Classroom Based Assessment and the Assessment Task* (NCCA, December 2015), where an individual student is absent for the completion of all or part of the Task, schools should make local arrangements in the school to allow the student to complete the task as close as possible to the timeframe scheduled for completion.
3. Care should be taken to correctly record each candidate's examination number, as provided by the SEC, in the space provided on the cover of the AT Booklet.
4. The Window number (1 or 2) should be recorded by ticking the appropriate box.
5. Care should also be taken to ensure that there is no writing or other marks in or on any of the barcodes in the booklet.
6. Students should be instructed to complete the AT booklet using **blue or black pen only**. The booklet must **not** be completed using pencils or coloured pens.
7. Students should be instructed to write within the boundaries of the boxes in the AT Booklets in order to receive credit for work completed.

5. Approval Forms for School Confirmation of the Assessment Task

Responsibility for ensuring that the AT Booklet has been completed by each individual student in accordance with the instructions and that the completed booklet is submitted to the SEC for marking rests with the school. The class-teacher(s) and the Principal are required to confirm that the work presented was completed under the supervision of the class teacher in class-time and is the candidate's own individual work. The class-teacher and Principal are also asked to confirm that the conduct of all other aspects of CBA2, including the award of descriptors and the Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR), will be completed in accordance with the guidelines. The Approval Form should be completed by the class teacher(s) and Principal as soon as practicable following the completion of the Assessment Task by students.

The SEC will not routinely follow up the absence of an AT Booklet with a school. Final examination grades which do not include the marks from the AT Booklet will be flagged by the SEC on the statements of provisional results in September. The presence of such an indicator will allow schools to engage with the SEC on any missing ATs at that time. The records provided to the SEC by the school when submitting the AT Booklets will be of particular importance in seeking to resolve issues later.

The Approval Process

1. The Assessment Task Booklets and the Approval forms must be returned to the SEC as soon as the activities associated with the Classroom-Based Assessment 2 have been completed and no later than the following dates:
 - For Window 1 - (18th to 22nd December) Return materials to SEC by Tuesday 23rd January 2018.
 - For Window 2 - (23rd to 27th April) Return materials to SEC by Tuesday 15th May 2018.
2. Separate envelopes have been provided for the return of;
 - a. The completed AT Booklets
 - b. The Approval FormPlacing the Approval Form(s) in the packets with the AT booklets is likely to delay the marking of the tasks.
3. At the end of the session the completed AT booklets must be collected by the class teacher and retained securely until the booklets and the Approval Form(s) are being returned to the SEC.
4. The total number of candidates recorded on the Approval Form must match the total number of candidates registered by the school to take Junior Cycle English in 2018 as detailed on the matrix of examination numbers (if such has been provided to the school). Any differences must be accounted for. (Use additional forms as required.)
5. Each class-teacher should complete the form as indicated and record the total number of completed AT Booklets from the class being submitted for marking. This may be different to the total number of students in the class.
6. When the form has been completed by all of the class-teachers, the form should be completed and counter-approved by the Principal indicating the total number of completed AT Booklets from the school being submitted for marking. This may be different to the total number of candidates entered for Junior Cycle English in the school.
7. Any differences between the number of AT booklets being submitted for marking and the total number of registered candidates must be reconciled. In order to do this any candidate not listed on the matrix but for whom an AT booklet is being submitted for marking (e.g. a student recently transferred into the school) must be added on the Exception Report, on the back of the Approval Form, by the school authority. Arrangements must also be made to enter the candidate through the normal Examination Entries process in due course.
8. Details of any candidates who have not completed the AT Booklet, for whatever reason, should be recorded on the Approval Form as indicated. If the absence of the AT booklet is because the student has left the school before completing the AT, the school authority should record this on the Approval Form **and** notify the Entries Section in the normal way.

Full compliance with these procedures will assist the SEC in processing the JC English examination results for the candidates in your school.

6. Return of AT Booklets and Approval Forms to SEC

A tamper-evident green plastic envelope is provided to facilitate the return to the SEC of the completed AT Booklets from your school. Immediately following the completion of the SLAR, and in line with the deadlines set out in Section 3, the Principal should ensure that the AT Booklets are immediately returned to the SEC in the special Green Return envelope provided using the enclosed registered label.

The completed Approval Form signed by the class teachers and Principal should be returned in the separate envelope provided to Online Marking Section, State Examinations Commission, Athlone, Co Westmeath at the same time as the AT Booklets.

Any queries regarding completion of the AT Booklets or Approval Forms should be submitted to onlinemark@examinations.ie or **Tel 090 6442406**.

7. Completing the Assessment Task by students with special educational needs

In line with the Diversity and Accessibility statement in the Framework for Junior Cycle, the greater degree of flexibility afforded by the Framework allows schools to ensure that, within the school's programme, there is sufficient flexibility to cater for the individual learning needs of all students, including those with special educational needs.

With the exception of the Spelling/Grammar waiver, the SEC's Scheme of Reasonable Accommodations at the Certificate Examinations (RACE Scheme) does not apply to the Assessment Task for Junior Cycle English, which is undertaken as part of normal classroom activity. Nonetheless, appropriate arrangements should be made at local level to facilitate students with special educational needs in accessing the Task. Schools will be aware of a student's normal way of working when making such access arrangements. If the student's special needs mean that they exclusively use a word processor or a lap-top in class (as opposed to for homework) or that they have access to reading assistance or other supports in their day-to-day teaching and learning activities then a similar provision seems in order, provided such support was warranted in the first instance and already in place for normal class activities, and does not undermine the validity of the test instrument.

School authorities will need to be sure that any arrangements that they make are merely enabling the student to access the assessment, rather than providing them with assistance in the responses, as the process needs to be fair to all of the students in the class. Schools must also be sure that the support arrangements are actually required by the student to access the task and are not just their preferred way of working. It would not be appropriate, for example, to allow a student who uses a word-processor by choice in the classroom but who is capable of writing, to use the word-processor for the Task.

Any logistical issues arising from the provision of access arrangements are matters to be resolved at school level, as is the case for all classroom activities linked to the state examinations.

Any student ultimately deemed eligible for a Spelling/Grammar waiver under the RACE Scheme will have the waiver applied to the AT as well as the final written examinations in language subjects.

The SEC is making available, on request, an e-version of the AT Booklet to facilitate students with special educational needs using word processors, laptops or other assistive technology. Any such requests should be made immediately by e-mail to race@examinations.ie or by phoning the Reasonable Accommodations Section at 090- 644 27782/3.

Please ensure that this important information and documentation is brought to the immediate attention of teachers teaching the new Junior Cycle English specification to third year students and any other interested personnel. The information in this circular should also be brought to the notice of students, parents and guardians.

Andrea Feeney
Director
State Examinations Commission.
December 2017