Junior Cycle Short Course in Russian Language and Culture

Specification for Junior Cycle Short Course

Teangacha
Iar-bhunscoile Éireann
Post-Primary
Languages Ireland

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Introduction to Junior Cycle

Junior cycle education places students at the center of the educational experience, enabling them to actively participate in their communities and in society and to be resourceful and confident learners in all aspects and stages of their lives. Junior cycle is inclusive of all students and contributes to equality of opportunity, participation and outcome for all. The junior cycle allows students to make a greater connection with learning by focusing on the quality of learning that takes place and by offering experiences that are engaging and enjoyable for them, as well as relevant to their lives. These experiences are of a high quality, contribute directly to the physical, mental and social wellbeing of learners, and where possible, provide opportunities for them to develop their abilities and talents in the areas of creativity, innovation and enterprise. The learner's junior cycle program builds on their learning to date and actively supports their progress in learning and in addition, supports them in developing the learning skills that will assist them in meeting the challenges of life beyond school.

Rationale

We live in a multilingual society. Learning a new language opens doors to new people, new cultures and more career opportunities. Russian is the 8th most spoken language in the world by number of native speakers and the 5th by total number of speakers. The language is one of the six official languages of the United Nations. It is the most geographically widespread language of Eurasia and the most widely spoken of the Slavic languages. According to the 2016 Census of Ireland, there were 21,639 people in the country who use Russian as a home language. In March 2013 it was announced that Russian is now the second-most used language on the Internet after English, according to W3Techs (Web Technology Surveys).

In this course the emphasis is on developing communication skills in Russian at level A1 (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)).

This short course develops students' ability to understand spoken and written language, to speak the language, and to interact in a simple way on familiar topics. Students are actively involved in monitoring their own progress and derive enjoyment and confidence from communicating in a new language. They also develop awareness and skills in relation to language learning through comparing and contrasting patterns in the new language and in languages they know. They become better language learners through identifying and developing their own language learning strategies. In a multi-cultural society, it is important that young people have the opportunity to learn about other cultures, appreciate similarities and differences and learn to observe, reflect and suspend judgement when discovering the new culture and reflecting back on their own. This course offers opportunities to do this.

Finally, increasingly there are opportunities to learn language and to discover different cultures using digital tools. In this short course students will learn how to use these tools to support language learning.

By taking part in this course students may have their accomplishments in foreign language learning recognised in their Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement and benchmarked against the Common European Framework
of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Aim

The aim of this course is for students to develop language proficiency in Russian at level A1 (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)). The course also aims to develop language awareness and intercultural awareness in combination with digital literacy skills.

Overview: Links

The tables below show how modern foreign languages may be linked to central features of learning and teaching in junior cycle.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND STATEMENTS OF LEARNING (SOL)

STATEMENT	EXAMPLES OF RELEVANT LEARNING IN THE COURSE
'Listens, speaks, reads and writes in L2 and one other language at a level of proficiency that is appropriate to her or his ability' SOL2	Students engage in different learning activities where they learn to listen to and understand oral language, communicate with others, and read and write in the language
'Appreciates and respects how diverse values, beliefs and traditions have contributed to the communities and culture in which he/she lives' SOL 6	Students reflect on values, beliefs, attitudes, customs and traditions in cultures associated with Russian and in comparison with their own cultural identity. Students learn to appreciate and respect cultural differences both within the target culture and in their home culture. They develop curiosity, critical thinking skills and empathy towards people from the target culture or cultures and towards people from new cultures in general.
'Describes, illustrates, interprets, predicts and explains patterns and relationships' SOL 16	Students investigate how Russian works by exploring and looking at patterns, such as word endings, sentence order, or the phonological system. Students learn to predict how new words or sentences are formed. They also explore patterns and sounds of the language. They link the spelling, sound and meaning of words thereby appreciating how Russian looks and sounds and enjoying creative use of the language. In addition, students are encouraged to explain close or distant relationships between the languages they know, and to identify, describe and apply their preferred language learning strategies.

LINKS BETWEEN JUNIOR CYCLE MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND KEY SKILLS

In addition to their specific content and knowledge, the subjects and short courses of junior cycle provide students with opportunities to develop a range of key skills. The junior cycle curriculum focuses on eight key skills.

Figure 1:

Key skills of

junior cycle

- Developing my understanding and enjoyment of words and language
- Reading for enjoyment and with critical understanding
- Writing for different purposes
- Expressing ideas clearly and accurately
- Developing my spoken language
- Exploring and creating a variety of texts, including multi-modal texts.

- Knowing myself
- Making considered decisions
- Setting and achieving personal goals
- Being able to reflect on my own learning
- Using digital technology to manage myself and my learning

- Using language
- Using number
- Listening and expressing myself
- Performing and presenting
- Discussing and debating
- Using digital technology to communicate

- Being healthy and physically active
- Being social
- Being safe
- Being spiritual
- Being confident
- Being positive about learning
- Being responsible, safe and ethical in using digital technology

- Developing good relationships and dealing with conflict
- Co-operating
- Respecting difference
- Contributing to making the world a better place
- Learning with others
- Working with others through digital technology

- Being curious
- Gathering, recording, organising and evaluating information and data
- Thinking creatively and critically
- Reflecting on and evaluating my learning
- Using digital technology to access, manage and share content

- Imagining
- Exploring options and alternatives
- Implementing ideas and taking action
- Learning creatively
- Stimulating creativity using digital technology

- Expressing ideas mathematically
- Estimating, predicting and calculating
- Developing a positive disposition towards investigating, reasoning and problem-solving
- Seeing patterns, trends and relationships
- Gathering, interpreting and representing data
- Using digital technology to develop numeracy skills and understanding

KEY SKILLS

BEING LITERATE · COMMUNICATING · MANAGING MYSELF · WORKING WITH OTHERS · STAYING WELL · BEING CREATIVE · BEING NUMERATE · MANAGING INFORMATION & THINKING

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This course offers opportunities to support all key skills, but some are particularly significant. The examples below identify some of the elements that are related to learning activities in the foreign language classroom. Teachers can also build many of the other elements of particular key skills into their classroom planning.

Key Skills	Key Skills Elements	Activities: Examples
Being creative	Imagining	Students imagine and present the life and interests of a second level student in Russia using digital media
	Exploring options and alternatives	Students explore and discuss potential destinations for a visit to Russia
Being literate	Developing my spoken language	Students carry out routine classroom interactions in Russian effectively
	Exploring and creating a variety of texts, including multi-modal texts	Students use drawings or create image-words, songs, or raps about a particular topic
Being numerate	Estimating, predicting and calculating	Students carry out a class survey such as food preferences, music or sport preferences
	Seeing patterns, trends and relationships	Students participate in learning activities which involve using numbers for example, time, calendars, order and distance
Communicating	Listening and expressing myself favourite movie star, athlete or music	Students take turns to introduce their band and agree on the class favorite
	Performing and presenting	Students prepare and present a role play based on a real life situation

Key Skills	Key Skills Elements	Activities: Examples
Managing information and thinking	Gathering, recording, organising and evaluating	Students use a Portfolio to plan, and present evidence of their learning
	Thinking creatively and critically	Students engage in group work to develop a web quest or cultural project for their peers
Managing myself	Setting and achieving personal goals	Students set themselves personal goals by selecting can-do statements
	Being able to reflect on my own learning	Students reflect on their progress, carry out self-assessment and chart their progress over time possibly by using an ELP/e-ELP, e-Portfolio etc.
Staying well	Being confident	Students produce a short video for pen-pals or e-pals
	Being positive about learning	Students talk about their successes in learning as recorded in their learning journal or ELP
Working with others	Co-operating	Students conduct a very simple audit as a group and present the results to the class

Overview: Course

The strands in this short course are:

Strand 1:   Communicating in Russian: Students learn to communicate in a simple manner on topics that are familiar to them.

Strand 2:   Reflecting on Russian culture and how I relate to it: Students learn to appreciate and respect cultural difference both within the target cultures and their own culture (intercultural awareness).

Strand 3:   Reflecting on how Russian works and how I learn: Students learn to reflect on the languages they know, on how Russian works and what strategies help them in their language learning.

In this course strands are designed to be interwoven. This enables students to develop all aspects of language learning as they progress through the course. Intercultural and language awareness need to be incorporated in the language curriculum for students to develop an appreciation and understanding of the language and culture(s) studied, an awareness of their own culture, and the development of skills that will allow them to be competent, adaptable communicators.

The short course adopts an activity and task-based approach to language learning. Activities and tasks should encourage students to engage in lifelike communication exchanges and should be carefully planned to include all the language skills. The target language should be the preferred language for learning and teaching.

Team work and pair work is encouraged throughout all strands. Students collaborate, seek feedback, reflect and provide feedback on their learning and experiences. Communicative activities as well as reflective activities should be in evidence across all strands.

Students are encouraged to complete self-assessment checklists.

The Classroom-Based Assessment reflects the learning students undertake in this short course. Schools have the flexibility to adapt any short course to suit their particular needs and school context. If adapting the course, schools may also need to adapt the Classroom-Based Assessment, so that it reflects the learning their students undertook. Schools may also develop their own short course(s) and related classroom-based assessment. Guidelines for schools who wish to develop their own short course(s) are available.

The learning outcomes of this course are broadly aligned with the level indicators for Level 3 of the National Framework of Qualifications (Appendix 1).

The Modern Foreign Language short course has been designed for approximately 100 hours of student engagement.

Expectations for students

Expectations for students is an umbrella term that links learning outcomes with annotated examples of student work. Schools who design their own short courses may wish to create a bank of examples of student work for discussion and for future reference.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning outcomes are statements that describe what knowledge, understanding, skills and values students should be able to demonstrate having completed this junior cycle short course in a Modern Foreign Language. The learning outcomes set out in the following tables apply to all students and represent outcomes for students at the end of their period of study (approximately 100 hours).

The outcomes are numbered within each strand. The numbering is intended to support teacher planning in the first instance and does not imply any hierarchy of importance across the outcomes themselves.

STRAND 1:
COMMUNICATING IN RUSSIAN (COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE)

Students learn about:	Students should be able to
1. Listening:	**1.1.1** Follow simple classroom or other instructions and directions to a place when spoken clearly and slowly
	1.1.2 Identify numbers related to a familiar topic when spoken clearly in a conversation, a presentation or a game
	1.1.3 Demonstrate an understanding of a simple announcement, presentation, song/poem on a familiar topic
	1.1.4 Demonstrate an understanding of a very simple conversation on a familiar topic
2. Reading:	**1.2.1** Identify and pronounce letters from the alphabet, familiar words and phrases
	1.2.2 Recognise the meaning of familiar words and phrases
	1.2.3 Identify key information on familiar topics in a variety of media such as videogames, posters, printed ads, menus, brochures
	1.2.4 Read simple correspondence on familiar topics in written messages or electronic media

Students learn about:	Students should be able to

3. Spoken interaction:

1.3.1 Take part in routine classroom interactions

1.3.2 Use numbers in predictable everyday life interactions, including time

1.3.3 Understand and use simple words and phrases for predictable social interactions such as meeting and greeting, invitations, meeting arrangements, etc.

1.3.4 Ask for and give very simple information on familiar topics about people, places or events face to face and on digital media

4. Spoken production:

1.4.1 Pronounce words and names accurately

1.4.2 Make a short presentation about themselves

1.4.3 Give simple classroom or other instructions

1.4.4 Make a very simple report or presentation on a familiar topic, including numbers when relevant

5. Writing:

1.5.1 Use the written alphabet and a Russian keyboard to produce a simple text, e-mail etc in Russian

1.5.2 Fill in a simple form or profile with personal information

1.5.3 Write captions for pictures or digital presentations on familiar topics

1.5.4 Write very short descriptions on familiar topics

STRAND 2:

REFLECTING ON RUSSIAN CULTURE AND HOW I RELATE TO IT

Students learn about:	Students should be able to
1. Preconceptions and representations	**2.1.1** Identify their own and other common stereotypes about Russia and Russian speakers
	2.1.2 Investigate where their own or other common stereotypes about Russia and Russian speakers come from
	2.1.3 Reflect on whether their perceptions, representations and feelings about Russia and Russian speakers have changed during the course and explain how and why
2. Russia and Russian speaking countries, and my own country: key facts and features	**2.2.1** Name and describe some features of Russia such as geographical features, places and landmarks and food
	2.2.2 Discover and use facts and figures related their own country to life in Russian such as statistical data, festivals, currency, prices
	2.2.3 Compare and contrast similarities and differences between Russia or a Russian speaking country and their own country, in one specific area of interest
3. People and daily life in Russia and Russian speaking countries and in my country	**2.3.1** Identify and compare similarities and differences between Russian speaking countries and Ireland with reference to such areas as eating habits, socialising or school life including diversity within these countries
	2.3.2 Examine cultural traditions, customs or behaviors and identify similarities and differences with Ireland and other countries they may be familiar with
	2.3.3 Reflect on what they have learned about the country /countries associated with the target language

STRAND 3:

REFLECTING ON HOW RUSSIAN WORKS AND HOW I LEARN (LANGUAGE AWARENESS)

Students learn about:	Student should be able to
1. Russian and the languages I know	**3.1.1** Investigate the Russian writing system compared to the writing systems of the other languages they know, including SMS language compasisons
	3.1.2 Identify differences between the Russian sound system and the sound systems of the other languages they know
	3.1.3 Identify loanwords and cognates between Russian and the other languages they know
	3.1.4 Compare and contrast differences in language use between Russian and the other languages they know, such as forms of address, naming conventions, variations linked to generation or gender, body language, etc.
2. How Russian works	**3.2.1** Identify language patterns in Russian such as those found in script, word order, marks for gender or number use of personal pronouns, as well as key aspects of phonology such as stress, new sounds or silent letters
	3.2.2 Apply language patterns of Russian such as those mentioned above to already acquired language
3. Enjoying and being creative in (Target Language)	**3.3.1** Explore the patterns and sounds of language through songs, chants, raps and rhymes and link spellings, sounds and meanings of words
	3.3.2 Describe oral or written features of Russian which they enjoy
	3.3.3 Express themselves creatively using simple forms of drama

Students learn about:	**Student should be able to**

4. How I learn languages

3.4.1 Identify their preferred language learning strategies such as strategies for building up vocabulary or for developing listening, speaking, reading or writing skills

3.4.2 Explain their preferred language learning strategies such as how to learn new words or what to do when they don't understand

3.4.3 Apply their preferred language learning strategies to their learning in class and out of the classroom

3.4.4 Monitor and assess their own learning, using feedback they receive to reflect on what they need to improve and to set goals for improvement

Assessment and Reporting

In this short course assessment supports learning in a wide variety of approaches. It includes teacher-led assessment, both on-going and final assessment, and student-led assessment including self-assessment and peer-feedback. All learning outcomes lend themselves to be assessed on an ongoing basis as students engage in different learning activities such as responding to and initiating communication through the target language, investigating, comparing and contrasting languages or cultures, identifying differences and similarities, reflecting, presenting and exchanging information. In this context, students, with their teachers, reflect upon and make judgements about their own and their peers' learning by looking at the features of quality of particular activities or pieces of work. They plan the next steps of their learning, based on feedback they receive and on self-assessment of their progress.

Self-assessment checklists

The emphasis in this course is on what students 'can do' as they progress through their learning. 'Can-do descriptors' have been developed in line with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Can-do descriptors and learning outcomes are used by teachers to plan and communicate lesson's learning goals to students. Students' reflection is supported by Self-Assessment Checklists. These checklists are made up of can-do descriptors; they include all strands in the course and mirror the course learning outcomes. They support students' reflective learning through the process of setting goals, self-assessment and recording progress. Once the can-do approach and self-assessment checklists have been thoroughly introduced in class,z students are encouraged to refer back to their checklists independently. The self-assessment checklists are not included in assessment for certification.

Classroom-Based Assessment

Classroom-Based Assessments are the occasions when the teacher assesses the students in the specific assessment(s) that are set out in the subject or short course specification. Junior cycle short courses will have one Classroom-Based Assessment. Where feasible, teachers of short courses will participate in learning and assessment review meetings. In this short course Classroom Based assessment will have two components: a language and culture project, and the students' learning journal. Assessment will be recorded on the student's Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

Classroom-Based Assessment: Language and culture project

Students will complete a language and culture project as their Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA).

Students are given an opportunity to choose a topic or issue that is of interest to them and to carry out an exploration over time leading to an oral presentation. The development of spoken interaction and spoken production will be central to this and students will also demonstrate their cultural knowledge and intercultural awareness. Other skills which will be developed include basic research skills, organising material, using key phrases and questions to give shape to ideas, as well as creative skills needed to prepare a presentation. This CBA provides useful opportunities for using a range of oral presentation styles. In addition, the activity offers students opportunities, where appropriate, to collaborate with classmates and others in gathering and developing materials, as they prepare for their presentation.

A particular purpose of the CBA will be to facilitate developmental feedback to students during their engagement with the task and at the end of the process. The CBA for the Russian as a heritage language short course can be completed in second or third year.

Features of quality

The features of quality support student and teacher judgement of the Classroom-Based Assessments and are the criteria that will be used by teachers to assess students' language and culture project. More detailed material on assessment and reporting in this short course, including features of quality and details of the practical arrangements related to assessment of this Classroom-Based Assessment, will be available in separate assessment guidelines for Junior Cycle Short Course in Russian Language & Culture. The guidelines will include, for example, the suggested length and formats for students' projects, and support in using 'on balance' judgement in relation to the features of quality.

Inclusive assessment

Inclusive assessment practices, whether as part of ongoing assessment or the Classroom-Based Assessment, are a key feature of teaching and learning in schools. Accommodations, e.g. the support provided by a Special Needs Assistant or the support of assistive technologies, should be in line with the arrangements the school has put in place to support the student's learning throughout the year. Where a school judges that a student has a specific physical or learning difficulty, reasonable accommodations may be put in place to remove, as far as possible, the impact of the disability on the student's performance in the Classroom-Based Assessment.

Accommodations which enable all students to access learning and assessment are based on specific needs. For example, a student who cannot physically type may use free dictation software to complete ongoing assessments and the classroom-based assessment. Equally, a student who cannot speak may draw/write/type/create visuals and subtitles to present and communicate ideas. A student with a specific learning difficulty may benefit from having learning tasks and activities presented in a different way.

Comprehensive guidelines on inclusion in post-primary schools are available here.

Guidelines for teachers of students with general learning disabilities are available here.

Appendix 1: Level indicators for Level 3 of the National Framework of Qualifications

This short course has been developed in alignment with the level indicators for Level 3 of the National Framework of Qualifications. Usually, for Level 3 certification and awards, the knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.

NFQ Level 3

NQF	3
Knowledge Breadth	Knowledge moderately broad in range
Knowledge Kind	Mainly concrete in reference and with some comprehension of relationship between knowledge elements
Know-how and skill Range	Demonstrate a limited range of practical and cognitive skills and tools
Know-how and skill Selectivity	Select from a limited range of varied procedures and apply known solutions to a limited range of predictable problems
Competence Context	Act within a limited range of contexts
Competence Role	Act under direction with limited autonomy; function within familiar, homogeneous groups
Competence Learning to learn	Learn to learn within a managed environment
Competence Insight	Assume limited responsibility for consistency of self-understanding and behaviour