# Junior Cycle Short Course in Polish as a Heritage Language

## Specification for Junior Cycle Short Course

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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 at all stages of their lives. Junior Cycle is inclusive of all students and contributes to equality of opportunity, participation and outcome for all. Junior Cycle allows students 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 abilities and talents in the areas of creativity, innovation and enterprise. The learners' Junior Cycle programme builds on their learning to date and actively supports their progress in learning. In addition, supports them in developing the learning skills that will assist them in meeting the challenges of life beyond school.

## Rationale

Ireland has experienced momentous change over the last two decades, with a sharp reversal in its traditionally outward migration patterns to a very rapid increase in inward migration, particularly noticeable after the accession of ten new EU Member States, including Poland, on May 1st 2004. Census 2016 showed that the Polish community is the biggest national minority living in Ireland with a population of 122,585. Approximately 25,000 of these are children and young people. Across education, there is an imperative to support and capitalise on the multilingual abilities of the social, cognitive and psychological benefits that go with heritage language maintenance.

This short course is designed to stimulate students' interest in the Polish language and culture and to nurture their desire to maintain proficiency in Polish. It will foster an attitude of curiosity and openness to both the heritage culture (Polish) and the people who have been born in Ireland to Polish parents and to whom the Irish culture is not newly acquired. They may still want to keep up their heritage language but this term would not necessary apply to them., and it will highlight students' participation in a multicultural, cosmopolitan society. In a multicultural society, it is important that young people have the opportunity to learn about their Polish culture, appreciate similarities and differences, and learn to observe, reflect and suspend judgement when discovering new cultures while simultaneously reflecting on their own. This course offers opportunities to do this.

## Aim

This Short Course in Polish as a Heritage Language aims to maintain and develop students' proficiency levels in Polish, to explore the interdependence between language and culture and to foster an appreciation for the culture, traditions and values of their heritage language. It also aims to consolidate and deepen their literacy skills and make them more self-aware as learners.

## 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 |
|---|---|
| 'Communicates effectively using a variety of means in a range of contexts'<br>SOL 1 | Students will participate in a wide range of language activities to develop their oral and written communication in a wide variety of contexts and forms. |
| 'Creates, appreciates and critically interprets a wide range of texts'<br>SOL 3 | Students will engage critically with texts in a wide range of forms, to understand and respond to their content, and to enrich their own spoken and written output. |
| 'Appreciates and respects how diverse values, beliefs and traditions have contributed to the communities and culture in which s/he lives'<br>SOL 6 | Students will encounter diversity through reading a wide variety of texts, and will learn to appreciate the significance of diversity through discussion and reflection. |
| 'Describes, illustrates, interprets, predicts and explains patterns and relationships'<br>SOL 16 | Students will learn, through the study of texts produced by others and through the creation of texts of their own, the significance of patterns and structures and the centrality of relationships in expression and communication. |

## 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**

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 will engage with literary narratives and will compose imaginative narratives of their own. |
| Being literate | Writing for different purposes | Students write a brief text describing a character encountered in a text they have viewed or read. |
| Being numerate | Seeing patterns trends and relationship | Students participate in learning activities which involve using numerical data relating for example to numbers, dates and calendar, time, size, order and distance. |
| Communicating | Listening and expressing myself<br>Discussing and debating | The Polish classroom is a place of talk and discussion. Students enjoy frequent opportunities to debate, adopt a point of view and defend it. They learn to communicate by writing in a range of forms and for many purposes. |
| Managing information and thinking | Gathering, recording, organising and evaluating information and data | Students will plan for and conduct an investigation into a chosen contemporary issue leading to the production and presentation of a report. |
| Managing myself | Being able to reflect on my own learning | Students will manage the development of a portfolio of their own texts, which they will build up over time. Through this they will learn about writing as a process and how to refine it. |
| Staying well | Being confident | Students will gain in confidence by giving a presentation on a project. |
| Working with others | Co-operating | Students will collaborate with others to explore and discuss views on a range of texts and contexts. |

## Overview: Course

The short course is designed for students who are studying Polish as a heritage language at Junior Cycle level in Irish schools. The students already have a native-speaker level of Polish although levels across the skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing may vary. This short course will develop and improve linguistic competence and the communication skills of reception and understanding (listening and reading comprehension) as well as production (speaking and writing). Students will be actively involved in monitoring their own progress and will derive enjoyment and confidence from communicating in Polish. They will also develop language awareness and intercultural awareness.

**The strands in this short course are:**

**Strand 1:** Communicative competence: Students learn to communicative across a range of media

**Strand 2:** Reflecting on Polish culture and how I relate to it: Students learn to appreciate and respect cultural difference both within Polish culture and other cultures (intercultural awareness)

**Strand 3:** Reflecting on how Polish works and how I learn: Students learn to reflect on the language they know, on how Polish works and what strategies help them in their language learning (language awareness)

In this course, strands are designed to be integrated. 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 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 Polish 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 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.

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 Polish as a heritage 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 Polish as a heritage 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:
## COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

| Students learn about | Students should be able to |
|---|---|
| **Listening** | 1.1 Listen to follow classroom instructions and presentations |
| | 1.2 Listen to the main points and demonstrate an understanding of the gist of a discussion, account or conversation on familiar relevant topics identifying the purpose |
| | 1.3 Listen actively for detail to retrieve information from a message, broadcast audio material or announcement on a familiar and relevant topic |
| Spoken interaction | 1.4 Engage in conversation face to face and digitally conveying different emotions and personal experiences or events. Express thoughts about cultural topics |
| | 1.5 Collaborate with others in defining, planning, organising and delivering a group project Exchange and confirm information, make hypothesis, and give opinions |
| | 1.6 Discuss and respond to spoken or written texts on familiar topics, including multimedia, by expressing belief, agreement, disagreement and opinions |

**Spoken Production**

1.7 Relate a narrative or description, the plot of a book or film, dreams, hopes and ambitions

1.8 Give a clear, prepared presentation based on experience or research, for chosen purposes: persuading, informing, narrating, describing a process

**Reading**

1.9 Read factual texts on familiar and relevant topics scanning the text to locate desired information to fulfil a task

1.10 Understand relevant information in everyday material, such as emails, brochures, short official documents

1.11 Recognise significant points in a story, article or text on familiar topics

**Writing**

1.12 Write notes conveying information of immediate relevance to friends, teachers and others on matters of everyday life including appropriate digital technology

1.13 Write short descriptions of events, activities and personal experiences real or imaginary

1.14 Write brief reports on familiar topics and convey simple information and ideas

## STRAND 2:

## REFLECTING ON POLISH CULTURE AND HOW I RELATE TO IT

| Students learn about | Student should be able to |
|---|---|
| **Perceptions and Representations** | 2.1. Identify their own and other common stereotypes about Poland and Polish people as well as Ireland and Irish people, including diversity within each country. |
| | 2.2 Distinguish between fact and opinion in relation to one commonly held view of Poland and one commonly held view of Ireland |
| | 2.3 Reflect on whether their perceptions, representations and feelings about Poland and Polish people and Ireland and Irish people have changed during the Polish Junior Cycle short course and explain how and why |
| **Poland and Ireland: Key Facts and Features** | 2.4 Name and describe, geographical features, major regions, cities, landscape and climate of Poland |
| | 2.5 Discover and use facts and figures related to life in Poland such as statistical data, festivals, inventions, currency, prices |
| | 2.6 Investigate significant events in Polish history, recognized authors, artists and their works which have contributed to Polish culture and society |

| Students learn about | Student should be able to: |
| --- | --- |
| **People and Daily Life in Poland, Ireland** | 2.7 Identify and compare similarities and differences between Poland and Ireland with reference to such areas as eating habits, socialising or school life including diversity within these countries |
| | 2.8 Examine cultural traditions, customs or behaviours and identify similarities and differences with Ireland and other countries they may be familiar with |

## STRAND 3:

## REFLECTING ON HOW THE POLISH LANGUAGE WORKS AND HOW I LEARN

| Students learn about | Student should be able to |
|---|---|
| **Polish and the Other Languages I Know** | 3.1 Investigate the Polish writing system and compare and contrast it with the writing systems of the other languages they know, including SMS language comparisons |
| | 3.2 Identify loanwords between Polish and the other languages they know |
| **How Polish works** | 3.3 Recognise, describe and use language patterns such as and word order, verbal system, nouns, adjectives, spelling and punctuation conventions |
| | 3.4 Recognise how social conventions, form of address, variations linked to generation or gender can influence language use |
| | 3.5 Apply all language learning to creative activities such as producing simple posters, presentations, games and drama |
| | 3.6 Identify and explain their preferred language learning strategies, such as what to do in order to expand vocabulary, what to do when they don't understand, to make sense of a text |
| | 3.7 Monitor and assess their own learning, using feedback they receive to reflect on what they need to improve and to set goals for improvement |

## Expectations for Learners

Examples of student work are used to illustrate the expectations for learners in this short course. These examples relate directly to a learning outcome or groups of learning outcomes. They are annotated, indicating whether the work is in line with, ahead of, or behind expectations for learners.

## Assessment and Reporting

This short course's assessment supports learning in a wide variety of approaches. It includes teacher-led assessment, both ongoing and final assessment, as well as 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 engaging in spoken interaction through Polish on a wide variety of topics, and using a variety of registers, as well as reading, writing and listening to various types of texts, including digital media and literary texts, investigating, comparing and contrasting languages or cultures, and 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' inspired by the Common European Framework of Reference or Languages (CEFR) have been selected. Can-do descriptors and learning outcomes are used by teachers to plan and communicate 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 introduced in class, students are encouraged to refer back to their checklists independently. The self-assessment checklists are not included in assessment for certification.

## Online Assessment / Feedback Tools

Students are encouraged to avail of existing online language learning tools in the context of independent study. Progress charts and other forms of feedback built-in to such software can be a key motivational feature for many learners. Such forms of feedback provide learners with an opportunity to measure their progress, set themselves new goals and challenge themselves to improve the particular skill tested in the self-selected activity or 'game'. Learners are given the opportunity to test themselves against each other and some may enjoy an element of healthy competition when comparing their results with peers. This form of assessment is used purely for self-motivation; it is not included in assessment for certification.

## Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA)

CBAs 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 CBA. Where feasible, teachers of short courses will participate in learning and assessment review meetings. In this short course, CBA will take the form of a language and culture project. 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 CBA. Students are given an opportunity to choose a topic or issue that is of interest to them and is related to one or more of the strands they have studied, 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 Polish 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 CBAs and are the criteria that will be used by teachers to assess students' language and culture projects. 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 CBA, will be available in separate assessment guidelines. The guidelines will include, for example, the suggested length and formats for students' projects and support in using balanced judgement in relation to the features of quality.

## Inclusive Assessment

Inclusive assessment practices, whether as part of ongoing assessment or the CBA, 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 CBA.

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