

Digital Catalogue Syllabus - User Guide

Introduction

In 2022 the Digital Catalogue (DC) for Palestine was launched, it provided links to open access, online English teaching and learning resources developed by British Council. The catalogue was developed by Palestinian educators to provide supplementary learning resources and is aligned to the Palestine's National Curriculum for teaching and learning English, and to all the English for Palestine coursebooks.

Those resources are now further developed into a syllabus for each of the early Primary grades: Grades 1, 2, 3 and 4. It is hoped that the guidance given in the syllabus documents and sample Lesson Plans will extend the DC's potential as a source of classroom materials, enabling teachers to use the DC resources as core material in their classrooms.

There are four components to the new Digital Catalogue

1. The existing Digital Catalogue with British Council global teaching resources.
2. A syllabus for each grade using the British Council global teaching resources, divided into 12 thematic learning units.
3. Sample lesson plans for each unit which serve as a model for teachers to follow in their classrooms and to demonstrate how to select content from the syllabus for lesson planning.
4. An easy to access Teacher Toolkit of all the teaching activities, teaching strategies and assessment for learning suggestions referred to in the syllabus. The toolkit gives teachers a clear rationale for each activity and a procedure to follow.

What's in the Digital Catalogue syllabus?

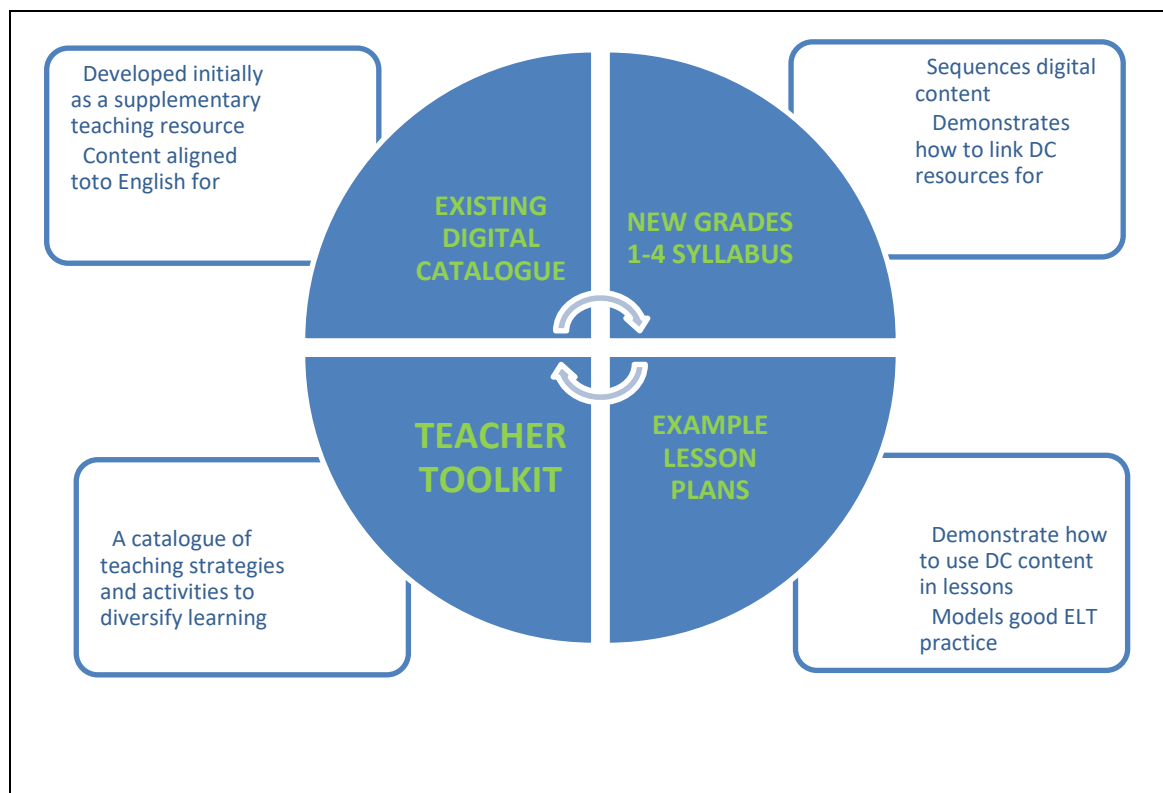


Figure 1: The Digital Catalogue Syllabus

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This user guide will:

- a. provide a brief overview of the design process.
- b. explain the teaching approach that underpins the syllabus and lessons.
- c. demonstrate what the syllabus contains.
- d. demonstrate what the lesson plans contain.
- e. explain how to use the Syllabus (FAQs) and how the Toolkit supports teaching and learning.

A. The design process

Figure 2 demonstrates how the syllabus has been developed to align with national standards.

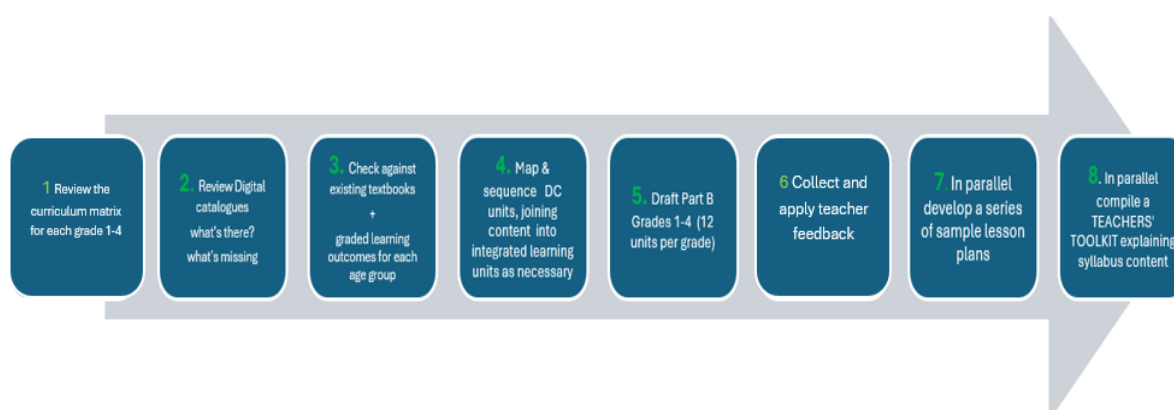


Figure 2: Step-by-step design

Research in stages 1-3, revealed important differences between learning units within each grade, so the new catalogue addresses those disparities, adding in thematically relevant learning resources wherever possible.

Early drafts were used to introduce a small team of teachers to the syllabus and to instruct them how to give feedback on each unit as it was produced.

Over the 3 months those seven teachers provided **detailed feedback** on all the units and lesson plans and updated versions were then produced. This was a key step in ensuring that the syllabus was a good fit for the realities of Palestinian classrooms.

The teacher TOOLKIT was developed alongside the syllabus and lesson plans to ensure that all recommended activities in them were clearly explained.

B. The teaching approach

The syllabus is led by **Learning Outcomes**, i.e. *what students will be better able to do as a result of the planned teaching*. Those outcomes are designed to involve students actively in the classroom, e.g. *Name and recall sports words*; *Ask and answer questions about their family*

The syllabus is based on good practice in English language teaching (ELT).

- It is student-centred
- It promotes teaching and learning strategies that will actively engage children in the content.
- It is divided thematically around topics that are meaningful to children and provide

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regular opportunities for speaking practice

- It incorporates mini-projects that involve students in producing something that engages
-
- their creativity and develops core life skills ¹
- It promotes *Assessment for Learning*² which nurtures reflective practice and personalised learning, e.g. collecting information, the strategic use of questioning, giving feedback, and introducing peer and self-assessment.³

Why student-centred?

It is widely recognised that providing students with opportunities for meaningful use and interaction in a lesson not only affects language learning progress, but many believe that there is a direct connection between the amount of interaction students are involved in and their language learning progress (Gass & Mackey, 2015)⁴. Swain argues that student language output (what they say or write while learning) is not only necessary for language learning but is actually a causal factor for second language development (Swain, 2005)⁵. We can therefore assume that English language lessons with only limited student practice, when students actively use the language with each other, will have limited success.

Related to this is the necessity to maximise student-to-student interaction time in English lessons, rather than limit student language practice only to answering questions posed by the teacher. In fact, research shows that peer interaction gives learners 'a context for experimenting with the language' (Philp et al. 2014) ⁶and, because students see it as less stressful than teacher-centred interaction, it seems to increase the amount of language they produce. These findings highlight the importance of creating a classroom environment where student-to-student interaction, using English, is encouraged and learners are trained to get the most out of that interaction.

How to actively engage students?

Since the '90s language teaching and learning has moved away from a rule-based approach towards a more active 'Task-based Learning' which focuses students' attention on completing a task together, using the language resources they have to do that. ELT researchers around the world agree that the main focus of an effective interactive task (activity) should be on communication and meaning not on language form or grammar (Samuda and Bygate 2008⁷;

¹ <https://www.unicef.org/mena/reports/measuring-life-skills>

² [Cambridge professional-development](#).

³ <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/teaching-resources/teaching-secondary/activities/assessment-learning-activities-0>

⁴ Mackey, A., & Gass, S.M. (2015). *Second Language Research: Methodology and Design* (2nd ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315750606>

⁵ Swain M. (2005) The Output Hypothesis Theory and Research, in Hinkel, E. (Ed.). (2005). *Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410612700>

⁶ Philp, J, Adams, R, Iwashita, N (2014) *Peer Interaction and Second Language Learning*, Routledge. <https://www.routledge.com/Peer-Interaction-and-Second-Language-Learning/Philp-Adams-Iwashita/p/book/9780415895729>

⁷ Samuda, V, Bygate, M (2008) *Tasks in Second Language Learning*, Palgrave Macmillan, <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1057/9780230596429>

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Loewen and Sato,2017)⁸. Helpful tasks encourage learners to use language to achieve a goal, for example to find four things they have in common, rather than to 'practice the present simple'.

Interactive language activities can be designed to focus on particular language items, for example teachers can use images and flashcards to set a simple pair work questioning task to check they know a vocabulary set (What's this? It's a/an....) and practice saying the words. That interactive task serves various purposes, namely repeated use of a question form, active listening and selection of appropriate answers from a set of images. More complex pair work activities, for example deciding on the order of a set of story images, will practice verb forms and linking words, as well as agreeing and disagreeing on the order during the process.

Providing regular, frequent practice

Using pair work in the language classroom gives students opportunities to use the language and simulate real life communication. There are many other advantages of pair work and small group work in language learning that make it more effective than continuously teaching the lesson as a whole group. The Grades 1 – 4 Syllabus and lesson plans frequently integrate pair work and small group work; this brings many advantages:

- It moves the learning focus onto the students, away from the teacher
- It gives learners much more speaking time than a lesson where the teacher addresses the whole group
- Every student has the chance to say something
- It allows the teacher to move around the class and really listen to the language that each pair or group is producing
- It gives students a sense of achievement when they are able to complete the activity together, learning from each other
- It is less stressful for the students than speaking out in front of the whole group to answer a teacher's question
- It builds confidence in using the language which in turn builds student engagement.

The Syllabus and Lesson Plans provide clear guidance on setting up pair and group work

Teachers may have doubts about using pair work or group work in their lessons, believing that their classrooms do not make it easy to do. There may be many students and the room itself may not be easy to move about in because the furniture is fixed or heavy and therefore difficult to move.

However, pair work is always possible. If students are sitting next to another student, which is usually the case, they can easily turn in their seats, to face their partners (instead of looking forward to the front of the class), and that is fine for oral interaction (sharing the learning resources between them).

The syllabus and lesson plans provide actionable advice on preparing students for pair and group work, for example to

- demonstrate what the students have to do, either yourself or with the help of a volunteer for example if it is a Q&A activity. This stage will also 'model' the language the pairs/groups will use during the activity.
- check that students have understood how the pair /group work activity works, by asking them if they remember what they have to do, eliciting it in numbered 'steps' and, as necessary, writing them up as a reminder on the board. These 'instruction checking questions' (ICQs) should be easy to follow, closed questions, for example, "Are you

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going to look at P11?" "Yes"; "Are you going to ask about the house?" "Yes", "Are you going to take it in turns to ask the questions?" "Yes".

- elicit or provide 'useful / process language' to help their pair/group work be really interactive and meaningful. For example, when students respond to ideas with "Yes, *that's right*" or "No, *try again*" it feels more like a game, especially if they can win points or if there is a time limit.
- Set a realistic time limit so that they can finish the activity, and you will have enough time in the lesson to 'respond' to what the students have done, even if only briefly. For example, "*Who got the most points?*" or "*Did you like that?*".
- If you predict that some students will find it easier than others, you can have 'another stage' for those quick finishers, for example, with the suggested 'Our house' pair work described above, ask them to draw and label a picture of their own home.
- Giving feedback after pair/group work is important so that you can gauge how successful that particular activity was, and to check student responses to pair or group work activities that require a solution or definitive answers. Such feedback can be done to individual pairs or groups as you monitor their interactive work or as 'round up' stage in the lesson.

C. What do the Syllabus guides look like?

Each Grade is split into two parts: Part A and Part B. Within each part there are 6 teaching units, so 12 units for each Grade for an academic year. Each teaching unit follows a central theme that provides a child-friendly context for learning, e.g. toys, hobbies, everyday habits etc.

The theme naturally promotes communication to practice vocabulary and core language (grammar), e.g. Ask about a favourite sport; describe a friend etc.

Teacher planning guidance in each syllabus consists of a project and a 3-to-4-week teaching and learning plan.

1. The unit project

Each unit guide starts with a suggested project⁹, that fits the unit theme. The key components are outlined in a box; there is an example below ([Figure 3](#)).

The projects are creative or communicative or both. They give children an opportunity to create something using the thematic language from the unit, e.g. a simple model, a simple poster, a storyboard etc. Students will use their project 'product' in Week 4, although they will start preparing it earlier (both in class and for homework).

Unit 11 Project: Introduce a friend

Goals: The students will prepare visuals and text to describe a friend to others (using a drawing or photo as a reference/support). After preparing, they will practice the description with a family member and then 'present' it to a group. Other students will listen and respond to the description.

Product: A poster which has an image plus a description of a friend (simple descriptive

⁹ <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/planning-lessons-and-courses/short-projects-get-them-talking>

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labels), displayed to others and summarized orally.

Life skills¹⁰: Creativity: translate what they know and feel about someone into a description; Communication: to explain what their friend is like and why s/he is their friend.

Cross curricular links: Art and Drama

Performance indicators: Students are able to describe a friend so that others can understand what he or she is like.

Figure 3: Syllabus Part 1: A sample project outline for Grade 1, Unit 11

2. The Teaching and Learning plan

The syllabus is written to directly inform lesson planning for the English classroom, so its four columns provide the teacher with what they need to know for a week's teaching (see Figure 4: extracted from Grade 1 syllabus below).

Each syllabus has enough content for up to 4 weeks, created around a theme, it is divided into 4 weekly parts, one part per week + one lesson for week 4.

WEEK 1			
Theme: Guess the furniture			
Learning Outcomes (SWBAT)	Learning Activities	Materials / links	Skills

Figure 4 : Syllabus Teaching and Learning plan

2.1 Unit aims and how to achieve them

Part 2 of the syllabus outlines what students are expected to do each week, it has the core content arranged into 4 columns (see [Figure 4](#))

- The Learning Outcomes** : What students will be better able to do as a result of a planned week of teaching, e.g name and recall items of furniture, listen for specific information in an animated song.
- Suggested Learning activities** that fit the theme, vocabulary and core language (grammar). These activities are arranged in an order that will support learning but teachers can adapt the order to fit the time they have available, their students' needs etc.
- The materials** for the classroom, are provided. Some with a reference to British Council online resources e.g. an Animated Story plus its link to the Digital resources,

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https://www.unicef.org/mena/media/6186/file/Twelve%20Core%20Life%20Skills%20for%20MENA_EN.pdf

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e.g. Snack time <https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/listen-watch/songs/snack-time> or a set of FLASHCARDS e.g. Describing FLASHCARDS – Set 1 <https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/print-make/flashcards/describing-flashcards>

There are also suggested materials, with examples, for gathering information, e.g. a thematic 'FIND SOMEONE WHO', e.g. Grade 3, Unit 3, to survey everyday activities.

Picture	Activity	Time	Name
	have a shower	in the morning	

Other suggestions guide speaking or writing activities, e.g. a Speaking Frame with key language for students to use or refer to, see Grade 4, Unit 4 guidance for a shopping role play.

Customer	Shop assistant
G--- (1) morning Yes, p---- (3) I'm looking for a T-shirt How m--- (5) is it? Here you a— (6). Thank you! Bye b— (8)	Can I h--- (2) you? H— (4) about this? It's 20 Have a n---- (7) day!

- d. The skills that will be practiced/developed that week** using the suggested activities and materials. These skills mirror the planned learning outcomes and correlate with the suggested learning activities and materials.

The Learning activities and materials should be spread across 2 or 3 40-minute lessons each week. You will need to add warmers (for revision of the previous lesson, to preview new content) as necessary to ensure learners are well-prepared for the lesson content.

2.2. An Overview of the Language developed in the Unit

See [Figure 5](#), below. Each week has a section referencing the language which will be activated and practiced in the lessons. There are 5 sections.

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Assessment for Learning: SMILEY FACE REACTION – students write or draw something they liked doing during Week 3.			
Vocabulary	Grammar	Interaction	Pronunciation
Birthday greeting: Happy Birthday Celebration words: party, balloons, cake etc	Receptive: Imperatives for instructions: <i>'Colour the balloons purple'</i> <i>Fold the paper in two.</i> Productive: <i>Happy Birthday Hala!</i>	Teacher to students Student to student 	Stress on Key words e.g. Fold the paper in two.

Figure 5: Language developed in Grade 4, Unit 8, Week 3

The first section: Assessment for Learning suggestions

The suggested *Assessment for Learning* activity is tailored to the unit theme and/ or learning activities.

Traditional approaches to assessment are generally based on assessment **of** learning. Assessment *of* learning is generally carried out by the teacher to collect information about students' progress towards curriculum objectives. It is usually done at the end of a course or school year and takes the form of an exam or test which is used to assign grades and report achievement or failure.

Assessment **for** learning (**AfL**), on the other hand, occurs at all stages of the learning process. Learners are encouraged to take an active role in it no matter how old they are.

Assessment for learning is also referred to as formative assessment, i.e. the process of collecting and interpreting evidence for use by teachers and learners to decide how they are doing in their learning journey. 'It is a process by which assessment information is used by teachers to adjust their teaching strategies and by learners to adjust their learning strategies.'¹¹ **AfL** promotes motivation by demonstrating progress.

These are suggestions only, teachers can adapt them.

If you would like to read more about **AfL** the [British Council article](#) referenced here is worth reading. Another British Council [resource for teachers](#) summarises many potential ways of using AfL with your learners, some of them are included in the Digital Catalogue syllabus.

Sections 2 to 5: Target language and interaction patterns

This is the blue section which breaks down language that will be activated or used in the unit into Vocabulary, Grammar and Pronunciation, and also shows the suggested interaction patterns for the learning activities.

- a. **The language in the vocabulary section** is a list of words that will be focused on that week, either presented, or represented in a listening or reading text or included in interactive activities. The given list is not exclusive; teachers can add other relevant thematic words that are particular to the Palestine context.

¹¹ <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/assessing-learning/assessment-learning>

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- b. **The language in the grammar section** is labelled *receptive* or *productive*, sometimes *receptive* and *productive*. Some of the grammar is 'receptive' because it refers to language that the teacher will use when presenting to students, or to language from a song or a story that students will listen to but not have to produce (say or remember). While language structures that students are expected to use in the lesson are called 'productive'.
- c. **The expected interaction** between the teacher and students and between students is also noted, highlighting where there are opportunities for pair work : student to student, and group work: student to students.
- e. **The pronunciation section** highlights language features that occur in the lesson content (sounds, stress and intonation patterns). They are included so that teachers can include them when using drills or other oral techniques, the features should not be presented or analysed when teaching Primary age students, rather the teacher should provide an accurate model that is for the students to copy, e.g. modelling a rising intonation on closed questions.

D. Type formatting to note in the syllabus

a. Links to the Teacher Toolkit

You will see that some syllabus content is typed in capital letters and in **[BOLD]** print, in square brackets, see Figure 6 below. This means you will find a corresponding entry in the *Teacher Toolkit* which accompanies the syllabus, e.g. in this extract from Grade 3, Unit 3, there are 2 activities highlighted: **[SUBSTITUTION DRILL]** and **[ANIMATED SONG]**, both of these are explained in the Teacher Toolkit.

WEEK 2

Theme: Clothes we like

Learning Outcomes (SWBAT)	Learning Activities	Materials	Skills
Name and recall daily activities Ask and answer questions about daily activities.	Nominate students to ask them about their daily activities, showing a FLASHCARD at the same time, e.g. <i>When do you have a shower/have breakfast? etc</i> [SUBSTITUTION DRILL] questions, with the FLASHCARDS. Nominate OPEN PAIRS, to use the questions (students answer '<i>in the morning/evening</i>') Students use their scenarios from Week 1 to ask and answer questions in pairs. Watch an [ANIMATED SONG] in stages	ANIMATED SONG https://learnenglishkid.s.britishcouncil.org/grammar-vocabulary/grammar-chants/out-play-ben-brad	Speak: name and recall daily activities; ask and answer questions about daily activities. Draw and write about an activity from a song

Figure 6: Syllabus extract with strategies and activities in BOLD PRINT

The Teacher Toolkit provides an explanation of learning and assessment activities, why they are useful for language learning, how to set them up and use them in the classroom.

b. Links to ‘Trauma Support Activities’

Some content in the syllabus is written in **blue font** – this means that the activity is taken from

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the British Council's 'Trauma Support Activities' which are teaching ideas for students who have been affected by traumatic experiences. They have been developed by Marie Delaney¹² who is a teacher and educational psychotherapist. She is also co-author of the British Council teachers' course materials on Inclusion and the Language for Resilience research report. The materials have been included where they fit the theme or the language objectives of a unit, e.g. **[SHAKE IT OUT]** is suggested as a **Warmer for a Grade 4 lesson**. See [Figure 7](#) below. It fits the lesson topic which is about being active in our free time. The activity helps children to release stress and hopefully improve their learning potential in the lesson.

WEEK 2

Theme: Let's play hopscotch

Learning Outcomes (SWBAT)	Learning Activities	Materials	Skills
Name and recall action verbs Listen to instructions for a game (hopscotch)	Use the 'grounding activity' [SHAKE IT OUT] to release stress. Ask students to follow simple body movement instructions, e.g. shake your left arm, shake your right foot etc		Speak name and recall action verbs Listen to instructions for a game

Figure 7: Syllabus extract with Trauma Support activity in [blue](#)

c. Teaching advice or 'tips'

Some content in the syllabus is written in green font, these are 'Teaching Tips'. They give a specific and contextualized piece of advice for a teaching activity or strategy that has been suggested, e.g. Grade 1 Unit 3: the **Teaching Tip** is about selecting relevant FLASHCARDS, see [Figure 8](#) below.

WEEK 1: 2 pizzas

Learning Outcomes (SWBAT)	Learning Activities	Materials / links	Skills
Name and recall food words. Name and recall number 1-3 Listen to a description of an image and follow the instructions to draw a similar picture.	Choose 8 [FLASHCARDS] from the food & fruit that are singular (e.g. a cake, an ice cream, an apple) Teaching tip: choose food that your students are familiar with, so that they are prepared to talk about what they eat. [CHORAL DRILL] the words, then nominate students to answer the question: 'What's this?'	Choose from 2 sets of FLASHCARDS: 1. Food FLASHCARDS https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/sites/kids/files/attachment/flashcards-food-set-1.pdf 2. Fruit FLASHCARDS https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/sites/kids/files/attachment/flashcards	Speak: name and recall food words and numbers (1-3). Listen to a description of an image and follow drawing instructions.

Figure 8: Syllabus extract with Teaching Tip in [green](#)

E. Lesson plans

Each unit syllabus is accompanied by an example lesson plan. There are a range of lesson plan types e.g. a focus on listening, using new words etc. The lesson plans demonstrate different teaching aims and teaching strategies, e.g. how to introduce new words using FLASHCARDS; how to use an ANIMATED STORY or SONG etc.

These lesson plans have been written to exemplify different ways that the digital resources can be used in the classroom, however teachers can adapt the plans for their learners, e.g. using one lesson plan over two lessons.

The lesson plans all use a standardised layout, **arranged in three parts**.

¹² marie@trauma-ed.com

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Part 1 Background to the lesson

This outlines the lesson aims, where it fits into the syllabus (Week 1, 2, 3 or 4) and assumptions about previous lesson(s) and how the new lesson relates to that prior learning. See Figure 8.

Grade 2 Unit 10 Clothes we wear
Aims • Name and recall language for describing clothes • Listen and match descriptions of clothes to pictures. • Make a clothes item and describe it in simple sentences
Syllabus fit This lesson is made for <u>Week 3, Unit 10</u>. Students have learnt shopping vocabulary (shops and what you can buy in them) and shown understanding with a shopping list activity, pair work and by following an ANIMATED SONG about shops. In this lesson they will revise clothes vocabulary (learnt in Grade 1), MATCH a descriptive sentence to one of several images of clothes and make a clothes item out of newspaper. In the next lesson in Week 3, students will use their T-shirts when they act out a simple role play in a shop.

Figure 9: Lesson background information

Part 2: Simple differentiation strategies

These are intended to highlight additional **support** for weaker students and suggest how more confident students can be **stretched**.

Part 3: Lists the lesson materials (plus URLs/ links where necessary).
Figure 10 below

See

Differentiation	
Support	Stretch
The images support recall of clothes vocabulary The limited options (10 images, the distinctive colours) help students identify what's being described.	Students who are confident have the opportunity to create a more complex clothes item, and to describe it in more detail. The pair work (without teacher scaffolding) gives stronger students an extra role - to help the 'problem solving' involved.
Teaching & Learning Materials Magazine pictures of people wearing distinctive clothes. Clothes worksheet https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/sites/kids/files/attachment/worksheets-clothes.pdf Washing line of clothes' activity – see explanation here String for a washing line (put up at the front of the class) + clothes pegs Old newspapers and scissors + coloured crayons or felt-tip pens	

Figure 10: Differentiation and Lesson Materials

Part 4: The Lesson Procedure (a series of lesson stages)

Each lesson is designed for 40 minutes with about 4 stages, starting with a 'Warmer' that links back to a previous lesson (e.g. checking how much vocabulary from the lesson before they can remember) or sets

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the context for new learning (e.g. to activate language with thematic pictures). The instructions describe what the teacher should do and/or say (e.g. 'Show ...; Elicit...; Ask etc) and what the students will do (e.g. share ...; ask a partner etc).

A suggested timing is given for each stage and the intended interaction patterns, **highlighted in blue font**. The timing is estimated; some activities may take longer if students are doing them for the first time. If students are used to an activity, it will be easier to set up and so may take less time.

The language the teacher or students will be using is shown in italics, e.g. '*It's yellow.*' '*That's the shirt*'

As in the syllabus, any activity that is explained in the Teacher Toolkit is highlighted in CAPITAL letters, in **BOLD PRINT** and in brackets. See Figure 7 below. NB- the second time a term is used in a lesson it will not be in bold, just in capitals.

Procedure	
Lesson Staging	
Stage	Teaching strategy & interaction pattern
1. 5 minutes	Warmer – [MEMORY GAME] Show a picture from a magazine showing someone wearing some distinctive clothes, or an image of clothes from around the world (pick 2 people/children) – they have 30 seconds to look at it. Take away the picture – students [PAIR SHARE] whatever they can remember. Repeat with a second magazine picture Teacher to students Students to student
2. 10 minutes	Show the 10 images from the clothes worksheet (10 clothes items) The teacher describes one item <i>'It's yellow – students identify / respond: It's the shirt.</i> Continue with other images. Elicit / write on the board speaking prompts <i>It's blue. That's the shirt.</i> <i>They're brown. That's the shoes</i> [CHORAL DRILL] then [SUBSTITUTION DRILL] with different colours. e.g. <i>It's yellow. red It's red. etc</i> Students practice in OPEN Pairs: one student chooses a clothing item (from the worksheet) and describes it – their partner identifies it. Teacher to students Student to student

Figure 7: Lesson Procedure and Stages

F. Additional Resources for teachers

1. The Teacher Toolkit

The 'Teacher Toolkit' accompanies the syllabus and lesson plans, it contains a wide range of teaching strategies and specific classroom activities. Each one is described, highlighting how it helps language learning, how teachers can set it up and then monitor it in the classroom.

For example, here is an extract

Animated story/video

The Digital Catalogue has many animated stories, using cartoon images, that introduce language in a comprehensible and meaningful way. Listening to stories can develop important skills such as prediction, guessing, hypothesising and message decoding. All cultures value storytelling and students

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find them fun and motivational, as they get to know the plot and the characters and they allow students to think creatively and imaginatively.

Animated stories can be used to practise oral fluency, and they can lead to rich creative activities, like re-telling in a different way, acting out a scene, making masks etc

2. Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

These FAQs are designed to help teachers understand how to use the new syllabus and lesson plans.

What does the digital catalogue include?

It includes a syllabus for each grade (Grades 1-4), sample lesson plans for every unit, and a 'Teacher Toolkit' containing teaching activities and assessment suggestions.

How does it align with Palestinian national requirements?

The syllabus was specifically developed to align with Palestine's National Curriculum for English for Primary Grades 1 to 4. It incorporates the National Curriculum themes, language and literacy objectives.

What is the 'Learning Outcomes' approach?

The curriculum is "outcome-led," meaning it focuses on what students will be able to do (e.g., "name and recall sports words") rather than just the content that is taught.

How is the school year structured in the syllabus?

Each grade is divided into Part A and Part B, with 6 thematic units per part, totaling 12 units for the academic year for each grade. Each unit is designed for up to 4 weeks of teaching and learning. The project 'presentation' to peers, in Week 4, completes the cycle. The language elements build on each other and include regular recycling of vocabulary and grammar.

What should I do if I find that an activity is written in **[BOLD CAPITAL LETTERS]**?

This indicates that there is a corresponding entry in the 'TEACHER TOOLKIT' that explains how to set up and use that specific activity or strategy in your classroom.

What does the blue text in the syllabus mean?

Blue font indicates that the activity is a Trauma Support Activity from the British Council, designed to help students who have experienced trauma express their feelings. These activities can be conducted in Arabic (L1). Teachers should use trauma-support activities sensitively to support rather than replace core learning.

What is the difference between 'receptive' and 'productive' language in the grammar section?

'Receptive' language refers to what students will listen to for example in a story or a song), while 'productive' language is what they are expected use themselves in a lesson (spoken or written language).

How long should each lesson be?

Lesson plans are designed for 40-minute sessions, typically divided into four stages and always starting with a 'warmer' that fits the lesson theme.

What do I do if I cannot access the digital links?

The digital materials can be downloaded ahead of time. Some of the content, e.g FLASHCARDS and/or pictures for colouring, can be copied onto cards, or drawn on the classroom board. The stories and songs/chants can also be told or sung by the teacher.

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How do I manage students with different ability levels?

Each lesson plan includes a 'differentiation' section explaining how shy or weaker students are supported and explaining 'stretch' activities for more confident learners. There are references to lesson activities and stages which will assist weaker students and provide additional challenge to stronger students.

What if my students have different literacy levels?

The syllabus and lesson plans provide plenty of oral activities for weaker readers, it also suggests [**AIR DRAWING**], word completion and matching visuals and words for emerging readers and writers

What should I do to keep my students focused?

The syllabus suggests planning a variety of activities and interaction patterns and including movement, e.g. [**TPR**], gestures, students moving to the board. Predictable routines (warmers, [**FLASHCARD**] activities, chants etc) will reduce student anxiety and help frequent transitions between activities within a lesson

How do I adapt lesson plans for large classes?

It is important to use clear and consistent signals to get students' attention, e.g. '3-2-1 look at me' and gestures to show approval, e.g. thumbs up. Train students to work in pairs or groups by giving them simple achievable activities at first, using similar interactive activities regularly will also reduce the time devoted to giving and checking instructions.

What if I run out of time during a week?

These are some suggestions to 'gain time', e.g. you can combine two short activities into a single longer one and/or skip optional extension activities. Some of the project work can be assigned for homework, outside lesson time

What are the Unit Projects?

Every unit includes a creative or communicative project (students will create a poster, a storyboard or make something in class, e.g. a paper clock) Students will learn related language in the unit and time will be dedicated to producing the project outcome. In Week 4 students will share their project with other students and get feedback.

How do I assess student progress?

In the syllabus there are suggestions at the end of each week for checking learning informally, using *Assessment for Learning* (AfL) techniques. Weekly AfL is meant to be quick and low preparation, to help teachers gauge how students are doing and inform the next lesson planning decisions. Formal Progress Tests are not included in the syllabus.

How can I involve parents?

The project box suggests that students share their project 'products' with their families and children can also show them simple homework activities, as many of them involve drawing alongside writing. If appropriate, parents can receive links to songs and stories, to watch with their children.

What is the Teacher Toolkit for?

It acts as a guide for the various strategies and activities suggested in the syllabus, references are in [**BOLD PRINT**], explaining why they are useful and providing step-by-step instructions for using them in the classroom.

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