

Section 9 Foreign Languages

I. OVERALL OBJECTIVE

To develop students' basic communication abilities such as listening, speaking, reading and writing, deepening their understanding of language and culture and fostering a positive attitude toward communication through foreign languages.

II. OBJECTIVES AND CONTENTS FOR EACH LANGUAGE

English

1. Objectives

- (1) To enable students to understand the speaker's intentions when listening to English.
- (2) To enable students to talk about their own thoughts using English.
- (3) To accustom and familiarize students with reading English and to enable them to understand the writer's intentions when reading English.
- (4) To accustom and familiarize students with writing in English and to enable them to write about their own thoughts using English.

2. Contents

(1) Language Activities

The following language activities should be conducted over the period of three years in order to develop a practical command of English which would allow students to understand English and express themselves in English.

A. Listening

Instruction should be given mainly on the following items:

- (a) To follow the basic characteristics of English sounds such as stress, intonation and pauses and listen to English sounds correctly.
- (b) To listen to English, spoken or read in a natural tone, and accurately understand the information.
- (c) To listen to questions and requests and respond appropriately.
- (d) To understand the content, confirming what has been said by, for example, asking the speaker to repeat it.
- (e) To listen to coherent English and properly understand its outline or important points.

B. Speaking

Instruction should be given mainly on the following items:

- (a) To become familiar with the basic characteristics of English sounds such as

stress, intonation and pauses and pronounce English sounds correctly.

- (b) To speak accurately to the listener(s) about one's thoughts and feelings, or facts.
- (c) To carry on a dialogue or exchange views regarding what students have listened to or read.
- (d) To speak continuously using various techniques such as linking words.
- (e) To give a simple speech on a provided theme.

C. Reading

Instruction should be given mainly on the following items:

- (a) To distinguish letters or symbols and read English correctly.
- (b) To read silently while thinking about the written content, and read aloud so that the meaning of the content is expressed.
- (c) To accurately understand the general outline of stories or the important parts of descriptive texts.
- (d) To understand the writer's intentions in texts such as messages and letters and respond appropriately.
- (e) To grasp the written content or the writer's viewpoints so as to be able to express one's impressions or state agreement/disagreement and reasons for it with regard to the content or viewpoints.

D. Writing

Instruction should be given mainly on the following items:

- (a) To distinguish letters or symbols and write correctly with due attention to the spaces between words.
- (b) To correctly write a sentence with due attention to the connections between words.
- (c) To take notes or write one's impressions or statements of agreement/disagreement and reasons for it with regard to what students have listened to or read.
- (d) To write about one's thoughts and feelings with regard to issues like what has happened or what one has experienced in everyday situations.
- (e) To write a composition with due attention to the connections between sentences so as to accurately convey one's thoughts and feelings to the reader(s).

(2) Treatment of the Language Activities

- A. In instruction over the period of three school years, consideration should be given to the following points:

- (a) Activities in which, for example, students actually use language to share their thoughts and feelings with each other should be carried out. At the same time, teachers should undertake activities for students to understand and practice the language elements indicated in (3).
- (b) In activities in which, for example, students actually use language to share their thoughts and feelings with each other, they should be able to perform language activities in which they have to think about how to express themselves in a way appropriate to a specific situation and condition.
- (c) In conducting language activities, teachers should focus on the following language-use situations and functions of language.

[Examples of Language-use Situations]

a. Situations where fixed expressions are often used:

- Greetings
- Self-introductions
- Talking on the phone
- Shopping
- Asking and giving directions
- Traveling
- Having meals
- etc.

b. Situations that are likely to occur in students' lives:

- Home life
- Learning and activities at school
- Local events
- etc.

[Examples of Functions of Language]

a. Facilitating communication:

- Addressing
- Giving nods
- Asking for repetition
- Repeating
- etc.

b. Expressing emotions:

- Expressing gratitude
- Complaining
- Praising
- Apologizing
- etc.

c. Transmitting information:

- Explaining
- Reporting
- Presenting
- Describing
- etc.

d. Expressing opinions and intentions:

- Offering
- Promising
- Giving opinions
- Agreeing
- Disagreeing
- Accepting

- Refusing
- etc.
- e. Stimulating a communication partner into action:
 - Asking questions
 - Requesting
 - Inviting
 - etc.

B. In instruction to each grade, consideration should be given to the following points, with the students' level of learning taken into account:

(a) Language activities in Grade 1

A certain extent of the foundation of communication abilities, such as a positive attitude toward communication focusing on speech sounds, is formed through foreign language activities in elementary schools. In light of this, language activities should be carried out with familiar language-use situations and functions of language taken into account. At this stage of learning, topics should be taken up that draw on communication using simple expressions taken from students' own feelings and everyday events.

(b) Language activities in Grade 2

Language activities set with a wider range of language-use situations and functions of language should be carried out on the basis of what was learned in Grade 1. At this stage of learning, teachers should provide repeated instruction on what was learned in Grade 1 and have it take root in students' minds. In addition, such topics as those under which students are engaged in communication that involves conveying factual information or making judgments should be taken up.

(c) Language activities in Grade 3

Language activities set with an even wider range of language-use situations and functions of language should be carried out on the basis of what was learned in Grade 1 and 2. At this stage of learning, teachers should provide repeated instruction on what was learned in Grade 1 and 2 and have it take root in students' minds. In addition, such topics as those under which students are engaged in communication that involves expressing various thoughts and opinions should be taken up.

(3) Language Elements

In carrying out the language activities stated in (1), language elements suitable for the attainment of the objectives stated in "II.1. Objectives" should be chosen from among those indicated below.

A. Speech sounds

- (a) Contemporary standard pronunciation
- (b) Sound changes that result from the linking of words
- (c) Basic stresses in words, phrases and sentences
- (d) Basic sentence intonations
- (e) Basic pauses in sentences

B. Letters and symbols

- (a) Uppercase and lowercase printed letters of the alphabet
- (b) Basic symbols such as periods, question marks, commas, quotation marks, exclamation marks, etc.

C. Words, collocations and common expressions

- (a) Approximately 1,200 words
- (b) Collocations such as “in front of,” “a lot of,” “get up,” “look for,” etc.
- (c) Common expressions such as “excuse me,” “I see,” “I’m sorry,” “thank you,” “you’re welcome,” “for example,” etc.

D. Grammatical items

(a) Sentences

- i. Simple, compound and complex sentences
- ii. Affirmative and negative declarative sentences
- iii. Affirmative and negative imperative sentences
- iv. Interrogative sentences that begin with a verb or an auxiliary verb (such as “can,” “do,” “may,” etc.), that contain “or” and that begin with an interrogative (such as “how,” “what,” “when,” “where,” “which,” “who,” “whose” and “why”)

(b) Sentence structures

- i. [Subject + Verb]
- ii. [Subject + Verb + Complement]
 - noun
 - a Subject + *be* + pronoun
 - adjective
 - b Subject + non-*be* + noun
 - adjective
- iii. [Subject + Verb + Object]
 - noun
 - pronoun
 - a Subject + verb + gerund

to-infinitive

how (etc.) + *to*-infinitive

clause beginning with *that*

b Subject + verb + clause beginning with *what* etc.

iv. [Subject + Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object]

a Subject + verb + indirect object + noun

pronoun

b Subject + verb + indirect object + *how* (etc.) + *to*-infinitive

v. [Subject + Verb + Object + Complement]

a Subject + verb + object + noun

adjective

vi. Other sentence structures

a *There* + *be* + ~

b *It* + *be* + ~ (+ *for* ~) + *to*-infinitive

c Subject + *tell*, *want*, etc. + object + *to*-infinitive

(c) Pronouns

i. Personal, demonstrative, interrogative and quantitative pronouns

ii. Restrictive use of the relative pronouns “that,” “which” and “who” used in the nominative case, and “that” and “which” used in the objective case

(d) Verb tenses, etc.

Present, past, present progressive, past progressive, present perfect and future formed with, for example, auxiliary verbs

(e) Comparative forms of adjectives and adverbs

(f) *to*-infinitives

(g) Gerunds

(h) Adjectival use of present and past participles

(i) Passive voice

(4) Treatment of the Language Elements

A. For spelling instruction, both the letters and the corresponding pronunciation should be taken up.

B. Language activities should be conducted in such a way as grammar is effectively utilized for communication, based on the idea that grammar underpins communication.

C. For the treatment of “(3) D. Grammatical items,” consideration should be given so that instruction does not center on issues like explaining grammatical terms or differentiating between usage, but on actual use of grammatical items.

At the same time, instruction should be provided in the awareness of the differences between English and Japanese in terms of word order, modification relation and other aspects.

- D. Effective instruction should be devised in order to have students understand the unique features of English, such as organizing mutually related grammatical items in a cohesive manner.

3. Lesson Plan Design and Treatment of the Contents

- (1) In designing the syllabus, consideration should be given to the following points:
 - A. Taking into account the circumstances of students and the local community, each individual school should establish objectives of foreign languages for each grade in an appropriate manner and work to realize them over the period of three school years.
 - B. “II. (3) Language Elements” should be taught in a stepwise fashion from easy to difficult, according to the learning stage.
 - C. For pronunciation instruction, continuous instruction of the language elements indicated in “II. (3) A. Pronunciation” should be given through activities like pronunciation practice while taking heed of the differences between English and Japanese. Instruction using phonetic notation can also be provided as a supplement to pronunciation instruction as the need arises.
 - D. In teaching the alphabet, it is also possible to teach cursive writing, giving consideration to the students’ capacities so that they are not overburdened.
 - E. For instruction of words, collocations and common expressions, frequently-used items should be chosen so that they take root in students’ mind through being actually used.
 - F. Students should familiarize themselves with how to use dictionaries in order to make good use of them.
 - G. In accordance with the circumstances of students and the contents of teaching materials, tools like computers, communication networks and educational aids should be used effectively and the cooperation of native speakers of English should be sought. Teachers should innovate various learning formats, incorporating pair work, group work and so on as appropriate.
- (2) With regard to teaching materials, teachers should give sufficient consideration to actual language-use situations and functions of language in order to comprehensively cultivate communication abilities such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. Teachers should take up a variety of suitable topics in accordance with the level of students’ development, as well as their interest,

covering topics that relate to issues like the daily lives, manners and customs, stories, geography, history, traditional cultures and natural science of the people of the world, focusing on English-speaking people and the Japanese people. Consideration should be given to the following perspectives:

- A. Materials should be useful in enhancing the understanding of various ways of viewing and thinking, fostering the ability to make impartial judgments and cultivating a rich sensibility.
- B. Materials should be useful in deepening the understanding of the ways of life and cultures of foreign countries and Japan, raising interest in language and culture and developing respectful attitudes toward these.
- C. Materials should be useful in deepening the international understanding from a broad perspective, heightening students' awareness of being Japanese citizens living in a global community and cultivating a spirit of international cooperation.

Other Foreign Languages

Instruction for foreign languages other than English should follow the objectives and contents of English instruction.

III. LESSON PLAN DESIGN AND TREATMENT OF THE CONTENTS

1. The syllabus should be designed in an appropriate manner with due heed paid to the connection with Foreign Language Activities at elementary schools.
2. For foreign language instruction, English should be selected in principle.
3. Teachers should provide proper instruction suited to the special characteristics of foreign language classes based on the content indicated in “Chapter 3. Moral Education II.” while taking into consideration its connection with periods for Moral Education and the like. This is to be based on the objectives for Moral Education denoted in “Chapter 1. General Provisions I. 2.” and “Chapter 3. Moral Education I.”