

The National Curriculum Standards for Grade 3 and Grade 4 at Elementary School  
Chapter 4 Foreign Language Activities

I. OVERALL OBJECTIVE

To develop pupils' competencies that form the foundation of communication as outlined below through language activities of listening and speaking in a foreign language while activating the *Approaches*<sup>1</sup> in communication in foreign languages.

- (1) To develop the pupils' understanding of languages and cultures through various experiences involving the use of foreign languages, notice the differences between the sounds of the Japanese language and foreign languages and become familiar with the sounds and basic expressions of foreign languages.
- (2) To cultivate the pupils' foundation of the ability to communicate their own thoughts and feelings etc. by listening to and speaking about simple and familiar topics in foreign languages.
- (3) To deepen the pupils' understanding of languages and the underlying cultures through foreign languages and fostering an attitude toward attempting to proactively communicate in foreign languages while giving consideration to the person they are communicating with.

II. OBJECTIVES AND CONTENTS OF EACH LANGUAGE

English

1. Objectives

To develop the competencies specified in I. (1) and (2) in an integrated manner, through instruction that aims for realization of the goals set in the three skill areas of listening, speaking [interaction] and speaking [production] specified below, and to develop the competencies specified in I. (3) through this process, based on the characteristics of learning English.

(1) Listening

- a. To listen to and understand simple words and phrases about themselves and their surroundings when spoken to slowly and clearly.
- b. To understand the meanings of basic expressions regarding simple and familiar topics when spoken to slowly and clearly.
- c. To recognize the (alphabet) letters by listening to by listening to the names of the letters being pronounced.

<sup>1</sup>*Approaches* discipline-based epistemological approaches emphasizing the contextualizing of language

(2) Speaking [Interaction]

- a. To greet, thank and give simple instructions, and respond to such greetings, thanks and instructions.
- b. To exchange their own thoughts and feelings etc. regarding themselves and their surroundings by using simple words and phrases and basic expressions with gestures.
- c. To ask and answer questions about themselves, the person they are communicating with and their surroundings by using simple words and phrases and basic expressions while receiving support

(3) Speaking [Production]

- a. To talk about their surroundings in front of other people while showing real objects, etc. by using simple words and phrases and basic expressions.
- b. To talk about themselves in front of other people while showing real objects, etc. by using simple words and phrases and basic expressions.
- c. To talk about their own thoughts and feelings etc. regarding simple and familiar topics about everyday life in front of other people while showing real objects, etc. by using simple words and phrases and basic expressions.

2. Contents

[Grade 3 and Grade 4]

[Knowledge and skills]

(1) Items related to the characteristics of English

Give instruction to enable pupils to acquire the following items through various experiences in language activities using English.

- a. To experience the pleasure and value of proactively communicating through use of languages.
- b. To understand the languages and cultures of Japan and foreign countries.
  - (a) Becoming familiar with the sounds and rhythms of English, realizing the differences from the Japanese language and noticing how interesting and richness language are.
  - (b) Realizing the differences in lifestyles, customs and events, etc. between Japan and foreign countries and noticing that there are diverse ways of thinking.
  - (c) Deepening cultural understanding by experiencing exchanges with people from different cultures.

[Abilities to think, make decisions and express oneself]

- (2) Items related to forming thoughts while organizing information, expressing themselves and communicating .

By setting specific tasks, give instruction to enable pupils to acquire the following through expressing information and their own thoughts etc., in accordance with the purposes, scenes and situations in which the communication is taking place.

- a. Exchanging information about themselves and simple and familiar topics by using simple words and phrases and basic expressions while giving consideration to the person they are communicating with.
  - b. Coming up with ways to ask and answer questions in order to communicate their own thoughts and feelings etc. about simple and familiar topics.
- (3) Items related to language activities and language functions

- (i) Items related to language activities

Give instructions about the items specified in (2) by utilizing the items specified in (1), for example, through the following language activities.

- a. Listening
  - (a) Activities to listen to brief talks about simple and familiar topics and largely understand their contents.
  - (b) Activities to listen to simple words and phrases and basic expressions about familiar people and their surroundings and to match the phrases and expressions with illustrations and photographs, etc. representing them.
  - (c) Activities to listen to the names of pronounced letters and match the readings with letters written in block letters.
- b. Speaking [Interaction]
  - (a) Activities to exchange simple greetings with acquaintances, express gratitude, give simple instructions and make requests, and respond to them.
  - (b) Activities to exchange their own thoughts and feelings such as preferences and requests with gestures, regarding topics about themselves and their surroundings.
  - (c) Activities to ask and answer simple questions about each other's likes and wants, etc.
- c. Speaking [Production]
  - (a) Activities to talk about the numbers and figures, etc. of their surroundings while showing real objects, illustrations and photographs, etc. in front of other people.

(b) Activities to talk about their own likes and dislikes and the things they want, etc. while showing real objects, illustrations, and photographs, etc. in front of other people.

(c) Activities to talk about their own thoughts and feelings etc. regarding simple and familiar topics in everyday life such as times, days of the week and places, etc. while showing real objects, illustrations and photographs, etc. in front of other people.

(ii) Items related to language functions

Pick up language use situations and language functions mainly from the following items when engaging in language activities.

a. Examples of language use situations

(a) Situations related to pupils' everyday lives

- Life at home
- Learning and activities at school
- Local events
- Children's play etc.

(b) Situations where typical expressions are often used

- Greetings
- Self-introductions
- Shopping
- Having meals
- Asking and giving directions etc.

b. Examples of language functions

(a) Facilitating communication

- Greetings
- Giving agreeable responses etc.

(b) Communicating feelings

- Expressing gratitude
- Praising etc.

(c) Stating facts and information

- Explaining
- Answering etc.

(d) Communicating thoughts and intentions

- Offering
- Stating opinions etc.

(e) Encouraging someone to do something

- Asking questions
- Requesting
- Ordering etc.

3. Syllabus planning and lesson delivery

(1) In planning the syllabus, consideration should be given to the following while taking care to ensure connections between the instruction in Grade 5 and Grade 6 with junior high school and senior high school.

a. Anticipate the unity of contents and lessons such as units and aim for realization of the proactive, interactive and authentic learning of pupils

toward development of the competencies fostered in those contents and lessons. In working towards these goals, set specific tasks and aim for the enhancement of learning so that pupils carry out the activities with an awareness of the communication purposes, scenes and situations while also activating the *Approaches*<sup>1</sup> in communication using foreign languages, and utilize knowledge of English sounds, vocabulary, expressions, etc. in communication in the three skill areas.

- b. Properly set goals for each grade and aim for realization of the objectives of Foreign Language Activities through the two grades.
  - c. Give instruction as necessary for understanding and practicing the items specified in 2 (1) when actually engaging in language activities in English such as exchanging each other's thoughts and feelings etc. Furthermore, give consideration to the fact that pupils are learning English for the first time and organize language activities through various experiences that value interactions with friends while using simple words and phrases and basic expressions.
  - d. Come up with ways to ensure that the topics in the language activities match the interests of the pupils, utilize what the pupils have learned in other subjects such as Japanese language, music and arts and crafts, etc. and ensure connections with what pupils do at school events, etc.
  - e. Deepen the pupils' understanding not only of foreign languages and cultures, but also of Japanese language and culture through foreign language activities. The topics in the language activities should also be useful for cultivating pupils' increased interest in the culture of Japan and the underlying culture of the English language and for attempting to deepen understanding of those cultures.
  - f. For pupils with disabilities etc., come up with instruction contents and instruction methods in accordance with the difficulties that arise in the learning activities in a systematic and institutional way.
  - g. Homeroom teachers or teachers in charge of foreign language activities should develop teaching plans and enhance instruction formats, for example, by obtaining the cooperation of native speakers of English and local residents fluent in English, etc. to develop more effective instruction methods
- (2) Consideration should be given to the following items for teaching the contents

specified in 2.

- a. Giving consideration to the developmental stages of the pupils, select appropriate expressions and set communication situations familiar to them when giving them opportunities to experience communication in English.
- b. Treat letters as supplementary tools for oral communication, in an effort not to overburden the pupils.
- c. Since non-verbal communication is also an essential means of communication, focus on gestures, etc. and help pupils understand their functions.
- d. Come up with learning styles (or activities) such as pair-work, group work, etc. as needed so that pupils develop the ability to ask questions to their friends and answer questions from them regarding simple and familiar topics. In working towards these goals, with regard to pupils who have problems communicating with other people, come up with instruction contents and instruction methods in accordance with the characteristics of the individual pupil.
- e. Effectively utilize audio-visual teaching materials, computers, information and communication networks and teaching and learning devices, etc. to further increase the interests of the pupils, to streamline instruction and to further enhance the language activities, in accordance with the competencies to be acquired by the pupils, the circumstances of the pupils and the contents of the teaching materials, etc.
- f. Enable pupils to anticipate and reflect on the learning by clearly establishing the purposes, scenes and situations in which the communication is taking place and clearly specifying the competencies that should be developed through the language activities when engaging in the instruction of each unit and in each lesson.

### III. SYLLABUS PLANNING AND LESSON DELIVERY

1. In Foreign Language Activities, give instruction to have pupils deepen their understanding of the language and the underlying culture and, in principle, use English when engaging in the language activities of listening and speaking using foreign languages.
2. Give proper instruction, in accordance with the characteristics of Foreign Language

Activities, regarding the contents specified in Chapter 3 Special Subject Moral Studies, II. while also giving consideration to connection with the Morals lessons, etc., based on the objectives of moral education specified in Chapter 1, General Provisions, I. 2 (2).