



NCCA

An Chomhairle Náisiúnta
Curacláim agus Measúnachta
National Council for
Curriculum and Assessment

Junior Cycle Level 2 History short course

Guidance for the Classroom-Based
Assessments

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Introduction

This document, Junior Cycle Level 2 short course, History : Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessment, provides:

- General information on Classroom-Based Assessment.
- Detail of the nature and scope of the Classroom-Based Assessment described in the specification for the Junior Cycle History short course.
- The Features of Quality used to describe the level of achievement in the Classroom-Based Assessment.
- Guidelines for schools, teachers and students on completing the Classroom-Based Assessment

These guidelines should be used in conjunction with the specification for the Junior Cycle History short course and [Focus on Learning toolkit for Junior Cycle](#). A detailed outline of assessment in Junior Cycle can be found in the Framework for Junior Cycle 2015, which can be accessed at: <https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/framework-for-junior-cycle-2015.pdf>

In Junior Cycle short courses there will be a range of assessment approaches to complement learning. These will include ongoing assessments, including routine teacher-designed tasks and tests; ongoing assessment for students undertaking priority learning units at Level 2; and one classroom-based assessment

Classroom-Based Assessments: General Information

Classroom-Based Assessments are best described as the occasions when the teacher assesses the students using the specific task(s) set out in the NCCA short course specification or in the school developed short course specification. The tasks are described and the Features of Quality, which support teacher judgement, are set out in these guidelines.

Although the assessment is similar to the ongoing assessment that occurs every day in class, in the case of classroom-based assessment the teacher's judgement is used in the school's reporting to parents and students. Students prepare for the Classroom-Based Assessment over a suggested period of time in second or third year. The results of other projects, homework or tests undertaken by the students in the course of their normal classwork do not add up to the award of a descriptor for the Classroom-Based Assessment.

Deciding on the level of achievement in Classroom-Based Assessments

Classroom-Based Assessments are Common Level assessments. The teacher bases the level achieved by the student in the Classroom-Based Assessment on the Features of Quality set out in these guidelines. At Level 2 there one descriptor – Achieved. The evidence of work for the award of Achieved should closely match all or nearly all the criteria for that level within the Features of Quality and the teacher's 'on-balance' judgement should be that the student's work is deserving of the Descriptor.

Time for Classroom-Based Assessments

Classroom-Based Assessment is included within the time allocated for short courses, which is approximately 100 hours. This Classroom-Based Assessment is the culmination of the work undertaken in the three strands of the History short course. The Classroom-Based Assessment should begin after work in the four strands has been completed. It is envisaged that preparation for and completion of this Classroom-Based Assessment take place over approximately 6-8 hours of class time. However, this is a guideline only. Teachers draw upon their own professional judgement to decide how much time is needed to complete the assessment, depending on the individual needs of the student(s). Whilst the timing of Classroom-Based Assessment in short courses may vary from school to school, Classroom-Based assessments for reporting purposes in the JCPA cannot be conducted in first year.

School autonomy in preparing for the Classroom-Based Assessment

These guidelines set out a range of options for the Classroom-Based Assessment so that it can suit the particular needs and circumstances of students and the school. A variety of possibilities are presented as to how the final Classroom-Based Assessment can be conducted and the role the teacher plays in facilitating students' needs. Within the parameters set by the guidelines, the range of themes and topics for the assessment can be determined independently by the school, teachers and students.

Schools have the flexibility to adapt any NCCA 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.

How the school supports the completion of the assessments

The school supports the completion of the assessments by:

- Ensuring that the NCCA Specification and Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessment are provided to teachers
- Supporting teachers in recording the level Descriptor awarded to each student
- Ensuring accessibility of assessment for all students.
- Reporting the outcomes of the Classroom-Based Assessment to students and their parents/guardians as part of the school's reporting procedures and through the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

In gathering evidence for assessment purposes within the Junior Cycle Short Courses, it is important that teachers use approaches which are sustainable and proportionate. As assessment is about empowering teachers to improve outcomes for students, it is important to ensure that too much paperwork and overly complex processes do not get in the way of learning and teaching. Any paperwork needs to support learning rather than becoming an end in itself.

While assessment judgements should be based on evidence drawn mainly from day-to-day learning and teaching there is no need to collect large folios of evidence to support this. In sharing learning intentions and success criteria or the features of quality for the Classroom-Based Assessment, where feasible, teachers should highlight the role students can play in identifying quality evidence from their own work to be used for assessment purposes.

An efficient planning process which identifies when and how key aspects of learning will be captured as evidence for assessment is one way to ensure that assessment in short courses remains manageable and sustainable. This approach avoids excessive and inappropriate evidence being collected about student performance. It also avoids the pressure at the end of the course to search for and identify evidence to support judgements about overall performance.

To facilitate providing feedback to students during their engagement with assessment, the process of completing the Classroom-Based Assessment should be viewed as part of teaching and

learning, and not solely for assessment purposes. It is envisaged that teachers will guide, support and supervise throughout the process.

Supports may include:

- Clarifying the requirements of the task.
- Using annotated examples of student work to clarify the meaning and interpretation of the Features of Quality to students.
- Providing instructions at strategic intervals to facilitate the timely completion of the final project.

Classroom-Based Assessment in L2 History

Assessment in L2 History will be classroom-based. There is one Classroom-Based Assessment, which is the culmination of work undertaken in the three strands of the short course. The Classroom-Based Assessment should begin after the work in the three strands has been completed. It is important to note that work completed in year one of Junior Cycle cannot be included for reporting in the JCPA.

Classroom-Based Assessment: Looking at my Learning in History

This Classroom-Based Assessment is a reflection task based on the participation and learning of the individual student throughout their study of history in this short course. For example, students may reflect on one or more of the following:

- key moment (s) of learning
- particular experience(s) they enjoyed
- their contribution to a specific task(s)
- personal achievements gained from their participation in this short course

Students will capture their various experiences through a learning log that will be presented on completion of the short course. The learning log can be produced in any format that is appropriate for capturing the reflections of the students. For example:

- in written form, such as a short report
- in digital form, such as a short blog, a video or slide presentation
- in visual form, such as a graphic presentation, a model, or a display
- in audio form, such as an oral presentation or audio recording.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive but serves to offer suggestions as to the possible choices in developing the learning log. Students may choose to use a combination of approaches in presenting their learning log.

The learning outcomes assessed through Looking at my Learning in History will, to an extent, depend on the chosen format. Some that may be particularly relevant are:

Classroom-based Assessment: Looking at my Learning in L2 History
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1.8, 1.12,2.4,2.5,2.7,3.1,3.2,3.3,3.6,3.7,3.8

The Classroom-Based Assessment promotes student engagement through:

- choice in assessment formats
- the possibilities for student collaboration in preparation for the assessment.

Completing the Classroom-Based Assessment: Looking at my Learning in History

The student will engage in reflection on and review of the learning engaged in throughout the course - if necessary, with guidance from the teacher. This will include reflections on what they have learned in this history short course and what interested them in particular. Students may explore connections between history and their own world as a way of understanding why such times in the past have an interest for them.

Students may work in pairs or groups (to discuss for example visits they may have made during the course or events from the past that meant something to them. They may share photos and /or other documents to aid the reflection on their learning) but it will be the student's individual reflection on their learning in regard to what they have discovered and what interests them that will be the focus of reporting in the JCPA.

If the student chooses to present something in digital or audio form, then length of time spent on the presentation should reflect the student's capacity. As a guideline, it should not exceed three to four minutes, unless this time limit would prevent the student from demonstrating their reflections in a meaningful way. Likewise, the three/four-minute guideline should be interpreted judiciously for pair or group work. It should not follow that the time for pairs should be six minutes or nine minutes for a group of three. The teacher adjusts the time to allow each student to make a significant contribution to the overall Classroom-Based activity. If the student decides to use a written format to demonstrate their reflections the length should reflect the students' learning capacity

Depending on the format chosen, students may make use of illustrations, photographs, digital devices, special effects or props where appropriate.

If students are going to be assessed on a presentation it may be in the presence of peers or on their own, depending on the confidence level of the student, and on whether presenting alone or as part of a group. Teachers may find it helpful to record the student's presentation if possible as this practice supports the processes of review and reflection.

Students may work individually or in pairs/groups in producing a report, but they will be assessed individually which means that their individual reflections are clearly identifiable in the report.

Preparation

Students studying this short course have many opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills as well as to converse and work with others. They learn where and who to go to when they need to

find out information. They may discuss events or discoveries with their peers or others at various times throughout the course. They become accustomed to recalling what they have learned from various stages of the short course and developing techniques for finding relevant information. This ongoing engagement, hands-on activity and reinforcement of learning provides the best preparation for the Classroom-Based Assessment. If the student decides to do a presentation, then it would be important that they practice this by recounting aspects of their learning to others prior to presenting their piece of work on the day of the CBA.

Preparation might involve some collation of the student's work undertaken at different phases of the short course. The student may need support in organising the material into a format suitable for presenting a small number of central messages using key vocabulary. Preparation for their looking at my learning in history might include gathering relevant documents, photographs and/or other illustrations to aid memory of the process they have undergone.

If the student intends to give a presentation for their CBA, preparation for the communication of the information is important. Developing awareness among students of the need to communicate clearly using the chosen medium e.g. oral, digital, dramatic arts or Irish Sign Language (ISL) is important. Students need to recognise the significance of making a connection with one's audience/communicative partner e.g. through eye contact, gestures, the use of humour or choice of props

Advice for students

- You will tell the story of events that you have enjoyed learning about in history.
- Your teacher can give you hints or use pictures, photographs etc to help you remember important details.
- You can prepare with your classmates, but you will be assessed separately from them.
- The more of the work you can do on your own the better.
- You can ask your teacher how much time you have to do the assessment. .
- If you are presenting your piece of work choose the way that is best for you to present what you have learned. You can present your work by speaking, recording your voice and/or by using video and photographs
- If you are producing a report for your piece of work, it can be typed or handwritten, or a collection of visual prompts that show your reflection on learning in history.
- Ask questions if there is anything you don't understand or are no sure about.

Deciding on the level of achievement:

Features of Quality

Classroom-Based Assessments are Common Level assessments. There is one Descriptor at Level 2: **Achieved**.

The teacher's judgement on whether the student's work in the Classroom-Based Assessment is awarded the Achieved Descriptor is based on the Features of Quality for Looking at My Learning in L2 History set out in these Guidelines.

The features of quality are the criteria used to assess the student work

Features of Quality: Classroom-Based Assessment

Achieved

- The students Looking at my Learning in History reflection log demonstrates
- An awareness of the nature of history and/or the impact of change over time.
- Active engagement in the local and wider community. A capacity to reflect on their learning in history.

The decision about whether the student's work is allocated the 'Achieved' Descriptor is based on the teacher coming to a judgement that the student's work on balance matches the Features of Quality as set out above.

Using feedback

Providing effective feedback is a crucial step to support learning. Students will be informed about whether or not they have been awarded the 'Achieved' Descriptor once the teacher's judgement has been reached. However, effective feedback goes beyond the naming of the Descriptor awarded. Feedback on the strengths of the student's work, and on areas for improvement can be used to support their future learning. Further information on the use of feedback can be found at [Focus on Learning | NCCA](#)

Querying a result

Queries in relation to the awarding of the Descriptor for the Classroom-Based Assessment, where they arise, will be dealt with by the school.

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