

TEACHER NOTES

Learner background

1. Although it is not essential, learners will benefit from having achieved Signature Level 1 Award in Deaf Awareness and Communication.
2. A qualification showing sound knowledge and command of English will be a distinct advantage. These could include:
 - GCSE or IGCSE English – Grade C or above.
 - Key Skills Communication Level 2.
 - O Level English Language.
 - AS Level English Language.
 - A Level English Language.
 - Communications Unit at Level 2 or 3 in a kitemarked Access to Higher Education course.
 - Scottish Certificate of Education – Standard Grade English – Grade C or above.
 - Scottish Certificate of Education – Higher Grade English – Grade D or above.
 - Irish Leaving Certificate – Ordinary Level English – Grade C or above.
 - Irish Leaving Certificate – Higher Level English – Grade D or above.

If an applicant has an English qualification other than the above, or no formal qualification in English, s/he could be offered the opportunity to take the Functional Skills English at Level 2 assessment. Further information is available on the OCR website:

http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/type/fs_2010/english/.

It is the responsibility of the centre to ensure that these requirements are met before accepting a candidate for this qualification.



3. An important aim of this unit is to allow learners to become familiar with relevant concepts in language for a better understanding of how deaf people access English. Candidates will not be expected to be able to use the specified grammatical features of English without error. Rather, they will be expected to have an awareness of the main structures and discourse features of English.

Teacher background

Individuals with a good knowledge of English language are likely to have the necessary knowledge and background to teach this unit.

It would be an advantage if the teacher was a:

- teacher of the Deaf
- deaf teacher
- teacher with a Certificate for Adult Literacy
- teacher of English Language.

Delivery strategies

1. It may be useful to provide potential learners with a pre-course task, for example reading and practical exercises, to confirm their ability to cope with the course.
2. A diverse range of texts will be needed – text and web-based.
3. Although the information in this unit is mainly theoretical, opportunities should be given for learners to relate knowledge about language to their own experiences as language users, and to the situation of deaf and deafblind people.
4. This unit will also benefit from case study materials that can act as prompts for discussions about different strategies that can be used with a wide range of deaf and deafblind people in different settings. It may also be useful to look at some of the written material that deaf and deafblind people need to access.



A. Concepts and structures for describing and analysing English

Learning outcome: Know the key concepts, structures and discourse features used to describe/analyse English

Background general knowledge about language

This background general knowledge will not be tested in the assessment.

- **Equal complexity** – There are no ‘simple’ or ‘primitive’ languages. All languages have complex grammatical or phonological rules. Each language’s grammar can create an infinite range of utterances and sentences. No language is linguistically superior to any other, though some languages may have more social prestige, e.g. due to the political or economic status/influence of their speakers/signers.
- **Equal potential to express meaning** – All languages can express the range of meanings required by their users/speakers, e.g. different languages have specialist vocabulary for areas of particular relevance to their culture and way of life.
- **Language use is always interactive** – When speaking/signing/writing we have an ‘audience’ in mind, even if we are not addressing them face to face. We alter our language to match the reader/listener and our purpose (e.g. report, essay, story, letter; formal or informal).
- **Language reflects cultural values** – Language use reflects cultural values, and the immediate social situation. Different cultures may have different kinds of writing and different ways of speaking, e.g. there are ‘ground rules’ about when people can talk, who has the right to talk the most and what kinds of topics are considered relevant.

Some languages/dialects/accents have a dominant position (socially and legally) e.g. some English accents are more prestigious than others. People who use the dominant language/dialect/accent often have high social status.

Attitudes to different languages/varieties (e.g. accents and dialects) depend on the status of the group who use them, e.g. if a group of people have high status, then we assume their language is ‘good’ and ‘high status’ as well.



- **Arbitrary relationship between sound and meaning** – Generally sounds and meanings are not related, however there are some onomatopoeic words (though even these vary between languages).

Language variation and change

- **Dialect** – grammar and vocabulary – can be regional (e.g. West Country, Scottish), or social (e.g. Standard English).
- **Accent** – pronunciation – can be regional (e.g. West Country, Scottish) or social (e.g. Received Pronunciation).
- **Register and style** e.g. formal, informal, technical, academic, colloquial, intimate, humorous, religious, scientific, legal, journalistic.
- **Change** over time and changes in word meanings.
- **New words** e.g. from other languages, or new inventions.

Key structures and discourse features of English

NB This section underpins the issues around English described in Parts B & C.

- **Phonetics** – How the speech movements of English are produced (place and manner of articulation, voiced/voiceless).
(NB students only need to know enough about phonetics to enable them to understand why some sounds are difficult to access, as described in Part B)
- **Phonology** – How sounds are used to make meaning; phonemes; which sounds make a different word, e.g. big and pig.
- **Syntax/grammar** – How words are combined into written sentences and spoken utterances in a certain order, e.g. in English, subjects usually come before verbs, except in questions.



- Word categories:
 - noun
 - verb
 - pronoun

- Verbs:
 - active and passive

- Different kinds of sentences:
 - simple
 - compound
 - complex sentences + main clauses and subordinate clauses

- **Semantics** – The study of meaning in language. How meanings of words relate to each other:
 - synonyms, antonyms,
 - hyponyms (superordinates), hypernyms.

- **Discourse/text** – A piece of connected speech or writing that is longer than a conventional sentence, e.g. conversation, lecture, interview, a notice, essay, letter.

- **Cohesion** – how links are created across a text between utterances/sentences:
 - reference words (e.g. pronouns)
 - synonyms
 - connectives.

- **Language modes** – spoken and written.
 - Differences between written and spoken language; each has its own different kind of complexity:
 - vocabulary
 - grammatical differences
 - style and register.



B. Issues around access to spoken English. Ways of making spoken English more accessible for deaf and deafblind people

Learning outcome: Know reasons and techniques for making spoken English accessible for deaf and deafblind people.

Conditions under which children learn spoken language effectively

- Children are conversationalists, even if they are not yet talking. Children learn very early about how conversations work (taking turns, looking attentively, using facial expressions, etc) as long as they have experiences with conversing adults.
- Parents, caregivers, teachers and guardians are the chief resources in language development. Strategies which may help language development include expansion and extension of child's utterances; semantic contingency of adult's language, language used in the context of joint activity, child initiated topics.
- Interaction between children is very important - peer learning is an important part of language development.

As children learn language they also learn their culture, and ways of doing things within their culture. The way we acquire and use language affects the way we think and remember information.

Development of spoken language and communication in deaf and deafblind children

- Deaf, deafblind and hearing people's different experiences in acquiring spoken English, e.g.
 - reduced access to speech and language around them, effect of deafness on interactional patterns with family and peers
 - deaf children may have less frequent interactions with peers than hearing children do and their conversations may be briefer with difficulties in maintaining joint attention
 - deaf children often have to shift attention between their activities and their language partners in order to obtain information about what is going on around them and about language itself. So they receive the input from these two sources sequentially, which can make the link between language and meaning less obvious.



- Possible implications of this, e.g. reduced access to spoken language with which to work out more rules often results in delays in acquiring English vocabulary, grammar, knowledge of the world.
- Indicators of favourable language outcomes for deaf and deafblind children:
 - Early identification of deafness
 - Higher nonverbal cognitive ability
 - Higher socio-economic position of the family
 - Degree/type of hearing/dual sensory loss (from second year of life)
 - Regular use of hearing aids/cochlear implants/low vision aids
 - No other language/learning difficulty
 - Parents' use of eye contact with fluent language.

Speech movements/sounds which may present difficulties for deaf and deafblind lipreaders/speechreaders

- Sounds which are not visible on the lips, e.g. /s/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /g.
- Sounds which look similar on the lips, e.g. /p/, /b/, /m/ or /f/, /v.
- Low frequency and high frequency sounds:
 - High frequency sounds for deaf people with a high frequency loss
 - Low frequency sounds for deaf people with a low frequency loss.
- Homophones – words which sound the same and have the same lip patterns, e.g. world and whirled.
- Homophenes – words which sound different but have the same lip patterns, e.g. bale, pale, male.
- Substitutions – words with slightly different lip patterns, but which are likely to be confused with each other, e.g. driving licence, traffic lights.

Ways of making spoken language accessible for deaf and deafblind people

- Environmental – e.g. Good lighting, facial expression, faces and distractions, plain background, improving the listening environment.
- Use of language/making lipreading easier – e.g. complete sentences, regular breaks, context first, explaining homophones, differentiating words that look the same on the lips,



pausing at utterance ends, less emphasis on voiced stress, clear lip patterns, clearer speech movements than normal from speaker, delivery at a more measured pace.

- Maximising use of residual hearing – e.g. hearing aids, cochlear implants, radio aids.
- Use of signs with spoken language:
 - What is SSE/SEE/SE?
 - Advantages and benefits
 - Limitations – e.g. signing and speaking at the same time can slow down and distort speech
 - Strategies for effective use – e.g. importance of having a large and wide range of BSL vocabulary, maintaining speech rhythms, use of English grammatical markers/signs for function words.
- Use of cued speech:
 - What is cued speech?
 - Advantages and benefits – e.g. the role of cued speech in disambiguating the lip patterns of spoken English, importance of giving access to natural and full language used fluently in 'real-time' rather than a filtered or pared down version of language
 - Limitations
 - Strategies for effective use – importance of having clear, accurate hand-shapes and positions in combination with lip patterns of natural speech to give unambiguous access, matching speech rhythms/dialects/style, giving access to everyday environmental sounds.
- Deafblind Manual Alphabet to communicate spoken English:
 - What is DMA?
 - Advantages and benefits
 - Limitations
 - Strategies for effective use – making word, phrase and clause boundaries clear, speed, use of abbreviations and some braille contractions.



C. Issues around access to written English. Ways of making written English more accessible for deaf and deafblind people

Learning outcome: Know reasons and techniques for making written English accessible for deaf and deafblind people.

Development of written language in deaf and deafblind children

- Deaf, deafblind and hearing people's different experiences in acquiring written English, e.g:
 - Hearing children are able to 'map' their knowledge of spoken language onto the written form; deaf children may have less access to spoken language to base this process on
 - Learning English as a second language – when hearing people learn a second language they are often able to transfer vocabulary or cognates or even grammatical patterns. For deaf and deafblind people with BSL learning English literacy, there is no obvious link between the word and sign
 - Factors that affect the deaf or deafblind person's access to written English, e.g. educational, environmental, family/support, level of hearing/sight loss, access to technology.
- Possible implications of this for deaf and deafblind children:
 - Deaf and deafblind children may find it more difficult to understand written texts, with less knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, world knowledge, and different kinds of texts.

Features of written English which may present difficulties for deaf and deafblind people

- Poor presentation - unclear/cluttered layout or font.
- Less frequent vocabulary, e.g. subject specific terms, new words, words that have changed their meaning, familiar words with a specialist meaning.
- Idioms.
- Complex grammar, e.g. lengthy sentences, complex sentences, some passive verbs.
- Cohesive links unclear, e.g. unclear use of pronouns, synonyms, connectives.



Ways of making written language accessible for deaf and deafblind people

Modifying written English texts:

- Improve presentation (e.g. subheadings, spacing, diagrams, font size, left justified text, avoid writing text in capitals)
- Vocabulary – use more frequent words where appropriate (co-build dictionary indicates the frequency of words), include glossary
- Rewrite idioms where appropriate, or explain them
- Grammar – use grammatically correct English, and simpler sentence structures. Change passive verbs to active where appropriate
- Cohesion – ensure that cohesive links are clear.

Advantages and limitations of modifying texts

Advantages may include:

- Many deaf readers have difficulty understanding texts they need to read, so modifying the texts makes them accessible
- Learners need lots of practice with texts which match their level to enable them to improve their English literacy.

Limitations may include:

- Sometimes simplifying texts can reduce cohesion and give the reader fewer clues
- If deaf learners always read modified texts they may not develop strategies for reading more challenging texts.

