



Languages Other Than English

Checkpoint C

Resource Guide

The University of the State of New York



The State Education Department

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Dear Colleague:


..... has been developed to assist New York State teachers in developing curricula that will engage students and prepare them to meet the higher learning standards.

This document incorporates the foundations for second language acquisition as presented in earlier State Education Department publications such as the syllabus and It follows the November 2001 publication, , but focuses on Checkpoint C, where proficiency corresponds to a more advanced level of performance that can be attained by students on an elective basis.

A group of experienced language teachers worked with New York State Education Department staff in preparing this resource guide. They also received advice and comments from many other practitioners. The funding for the development of this document initially came from a Goals 2000 grant administered by the Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery BOCES.

Sincerely,

Jean Stevens



The Language Resource Center (LRC) was created to assist all teachers of languages other than English (LOTE) in developing local curricula and assessments that are aligned with the New York State standards.

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Attaining Checkpoint



Language is our connection to our community and to the world. Through language, we identify the world around us, express our concerns and dreams, and share our thoughts, ideas, and experiences.

The ability to communicate in languages other than English (LOTE) increases the opportunities to interact with other people and to understand other cultures. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent, it is important for every person to acquire the skills for communication with others, and to attain appreciation of other cultures. These skills and understandings are the basis for the two New York State LOTE learning standards:

Standard 1: Students will be able to use a language other than English for communication.

Standard 2: Students will develop cross-cultural skills and understandings.

Both of the New York State learning standards are emphasized in all three LOTE checkpoints (A, B, and C). There is a greater focus on Learning Standard 1: Communication in the Checkpoints A and B classroom, although most learning activities will be embedded in a cultural context. In Checkpoints A and B, teachers strive to create learning situations that will enhance the ability to function in everyday situations in a target culture, using the target language.

Checkpoint C language study, offered to students who have successfully completed Checkpoint B, usually occurs toward the end of high school. Representing a more advanced and serious study of the language and cultures, it is seen as a bridge to further language studies that might occur in the community college, university, language school, or workplace. It is an important stepping-stone for students as they leave high school and begin to participate in the global community.

Checkpoint C is not intended to produce fluency, but to enhance target language skills beyond those attained at the end of Checkpoint B and the Comprehensive Regents Examinations. The emphasis at the Checkpoint C level is on the further development of written and oral communication, and on refinement of grammatical accuracy.


The most significant difference between Checkpoint B and Checkpoint C is that the learning and instructional activities are mostly derived from the target culture, thus providing a greater focus on Standard 2: Culture. Since students possess some language fluency at this point, the teacher often uses materials based on the target culture as the source for in-depth communicative language studies.

Focusing on Standard 2 allows the teacher to provide instruction that builds cultural appreciation and enriches linguistic growth in the target language. Checkpoint C level units, while based on elements of a target culture, serve as a springboard for further development of all of the LOTE skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Although Checkpoint C is usually achieved after the Comprehensive Regents Examinations, and is an advanced level attained on an elective basis, there will be a wide range of skills in a Checkpoint C classroom. For example, teachers may have students with disabilities, English language learners (ELLs), gifted students, and educationally disadvantaged students in their Checkpoint C classrooms.

The New York State Board of Regents has made a strong commitment to integrating the education of all students into the total school program. The New York State learning standards apply to all students, regardless of their experiential background, capabilities, developmental and learning differences, interests, and ambitions. A classroom typically includes students with a wide range of abilities who may pursue multiple pathways to learn effectively, participate meaningfully, and work toward attaining higher levels of achievement.

Students with diverse learning needs may need accommodations or adaptations of instructional strategies and materials to enhance their learning experiences. This is relevant to all LOTE classes, including those at the Checkpoint C level.



The Checkpoint C level classroom focuses on the two LOTE standards and all of the LOTE performance indicators. Classroom activities are created with all of the performance indicators in mind. Using materials in the target language, Checkpoint C students will use all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) as they interact, and will integrate these skills with a deepening cultural awareness.

Standard 1: Students will be able to use a language other than English for communication.

Reading and writing are used in languages other than English for the purposes of socializing, providing and acquiring information, expressing personal feelings and opinions, and getting others to adopt a course of action.

Students can...

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Instruction in LOTE classrooms involves the combination of four key components: functions, proficiencies, situations, and topics.

Functions denote the purpose of communication, such as asking for help, issuing a warning, or trying to convince someone to do something. The following are general examples that can be applied to any situation or topic, at any LOTE Checkpoint:

- | | |
|----------------|--------------|
| ☞ greeting | ☞ facts |
| ☞ leave taking | ☞ events |
| ☞ introducing | ☞ opinions |
| ☞ thanking | ☞ attitudes |
| ☞ apologizing | |
| | ☞ suggesting |
| ☞ facts | ☞ requesting |
| ☞ events | ☞ directing |
| ☞ needs | ☞ advising |
| ☞ opinions | ☞ warning |
| ☞ attitudes | ☞ convincing |
| ☞ feelings | ☞ praising |

Proficiencies in languages other than English (LOTE) refer to the level of knowledge and skill in using a language when reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Proficiencies are specifically defined as the performance indicators in the New York State learning standards. Students at the Checkpoint C level have developed a more thorough competence from classroom experiences and practice, so they have proficiencies that are more advanced than those at the Checkpoint B level. Students will vary in their competency levels, with some students adept at speaking, and others more confident with reading and writing.

Situations indicate the context in which communication occurs. Situations refer to communicative partners, their roles, and channels of communication (oral or written).

Situations establish the parameters for the negotiation of meaning between two or more people, or between an individual and oral/written samples of language. The situations listed below are organized according to the primary skill students must use: listening, speaking, reading, or writing. Several skills may be involved in any act of communication, and situations will be related to functions, topics, and student proficiencies. The age, ability, and experience of the students should be taken into consideration when teachers are establishing situations.

- ¥ Information and announcements from providers of common public services (sales personnel, bank tellers, ticket agents, police, hotel personnel, and others, in face-to-face communications)
- ¥ Information (bulletins/announcements) provided over loudspeakers, radio, and television
- ¥ Short presentations of interest to the general public given in person, on radio, or on television
- ¥ Songs, live and recorded
- ¥ Feature programs on television, in the movies, and on the radio

- ¥ Interactions with providers of common public services in face-to-face communications
- ¥ Informal everyday conversations with individuals, peers, and adults
- ¥ Informal conversations with peers and familiar adults
- ¥ Interaction with providers of common public services by telephone
- ¥ Group conversations among peers and familiar adults
- ¥ Group discussions with peers
- ¥ Informal presentations to groups of peers and familiar adults

- ¥ Information provided to the general public on forms, signs, billboards and posters, labels, programs, timetables, maps, plans, menus, materials from the Internet, etc.
- ¥ Announcements, advertisements, and short reports of general interest in newspapers, magazines, and other publications; short, informal notes
- ¥ Simple business correspondence and pamphlets
- ¥ Facts, opinions, feelings, and attitudes in correspondence from acquaintances and friends (peers and adults)
- ¥ Letters to the editor and feature articles from general-interest publications
- ¥ Excerpts from poetry and prose for cultural appreciation

- ¥ Forms to be filled out for the use of common public services

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¥ Types of food and drink
Everyday family fare, regional and national specialties, fast food, food and drink preparation, special occasion menus

¥ Mealtime interaction
Regular family meals, eating with friends and relatives, eating out, ...

¥ Parts of the body
Identification and care

¥ Illness and accidents
Symptoms of illness, medical services and treatment, ...

¥ Secondary school organizations
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- ¥ Shopping facilities and products
 Shopping centers, specialty shops, neighborhood merchants, department stores, markets, mail-order companies
- ¥ Shopping patterns
 Time (store hours), currency, interaction with sales staff, staples and everyday purchases, modes of payment, weights, measures, sizes
- ¥ Shopper information
 Prices, advertisements,
- ¥ Transportation
 Means of transportation, maps, timetables and fares, signs and instructions, interactions at ticket counters, advertisements/promotional information, itineraries, interaction at travel agencies,
- ¥ Lodging
 Youth hostels, camping/caravanning, hotels and pensions, private guest arrangements
- ¥ Holiday travel patterns
 Destinations and activities
- ¥ Political, social, and economic aspects
 Miscellaneous news, political parties, present governments, current political issues, current economic issues, general description of society,
- ¥ Cultural aspects
 Arts (theatre/music/cinema), people in the arts, special events, institutions/facilities, historical and artistic sites, folklore,
- ¥ Relations between United States and target language countries
 Opportunities for exchange,

It is in the Checkpoint C classroom that students experience units that are based on multiple topics, functions, and situations, and that challenge them to further build language proficiencies.


TheCheckpoint@ Classroom

- ¥° Use folktales of the target language as an entry point to understanding the culture better.
- ¥ Take classroom time to read aloud.
- ¥° Check for understanding in the target language and in English.
- ¥° Ask for written and oral summaries of texts to check for comprehension.
- ¥° Allow student choice in reading material.
- ¥° Give the students an opportunity to work together to determine the meaning of new text. Have them read aloud, alternating lines or paragraphs. (Note that reading aloud represents the ability to articulate sound-symbol relationships, but should not imply comprehension of the text.)
- ¥° Ask students to underline, circle, or highlight the key ideas in the text.
- ¥° Ask students to summarize the text in their own words, in English.
- ¥° Ask students to share, in their own words, their understanding of a passage.
- ¥° Ask students to read the text again, perhaps with side glosses, for new vocabulary and expressions. This rereading will assist with reading comprehension and will demonstrate to students that reading may require several tries in order to fully grasp meaning and details.

Writing allows students to reinforce reading and listening skills, to develop grammar, spelling, and vocabulary, and to express factual information and personal reactions to reading material and classroom conversations.

Checkpoint C writing differs from writing activities in other checkpoints. Writing assignments are frequently given after the reading of an authentic text. For example, students may be asked to read an editorial and then respond in writing to the comments made by the author; or, upon completing a play, students may be asked to write a critique, a summary, or even a new act to the play.

- ¥° Use rubrics that are explained to students and parents in advance.
- ¥° Show students a finished product before they begin to work on their own.
- ¥° Stand closer to the students with the greatest needs, as directions are given or as transitions are made from one activity to the next.
- ¥° Praise all students.
- ¥° Modify assignment tasks without changing the content or vocabulary. For example, some students can read a story and write a two-page essay. Others can read the same story and answer a few short questions, while others can be responsible for reading the story and verbally discussing it.
- ¥ Teach students how to use a glossary.
- ¥° Provide activities that teach students about the textbook they are using (e.g., activities that show where the glossary is, where the maps are, how to use the charts, how and when to use the index, etc.).
- ¥° Use readable fonts (serif types) and keep the pages free from unnecessary distractions.
- ¥° When students are copying information from the overhead or computer screen, be sure to check the spelling immediately. Use large, black serif fonts so that students can read the material easily (colors are often difficult to see on an overhead), with a minimal amount of information on the overhead. Block out written material that may not be relevant.
- ¥° Check Internet sites as students are using them, not only to comply with the school district's Internet policy, but to ensure that the site is accurate and appropriate for Checkpoint C studies. Online translators should not be used, but online dictionaries may be used. Students should not reveal any personal information on the Internet, even with "key pals."
- ¥° Allow student to use glossaries in textbooks, vocabulary sheets, or instructional materials posted in the room for all activities.
- ¥° Make sure each handout has a clearly stated title.
- ¥° Use different colors (not bright ones) for each handout used during a class period and be sure each one is labeled.
- ¥ Try to provide handouts that are either typed or word-processed instead of handwritten.
- ¥° Use textbooks with easily understood directions and clear models.
- ¥° Allow extra time for tests and quizzes.
- ¥° Make sure students know ahead of time what the test and/or quiz will look like.
- ¥° Use rubrics that have been explained to the students and are in the students' possession as they work on assignments.
- ¥° Do less testing on discrete items and more testing on items in contexts, being careful to use contexts and scenarios with which students are familiar.
- ¥° Apply appropriate techniques in rating the papers of students with spelling exemptions. Be sure to look at the written task holistically. Did the student communicate thoughts in the target language? Can native speakers understand the text in spite of the spelling errors? This does not mean that all spellings are acceptable but rather that they should be reasonable, understandable, and recognizable to the reader within the context of the written response.



Technology has taken on a whole new meaning in the 21st century. Although tried-and-true technological methods such as cassette recorders, videos, and overhead projectors are still used in the classroom and continue to serve a purpose, the computer brings with it endless possibilities for teachers of LOTE.

As with more traditional technology, the computer does not stand alone. No technology can provide the kind of interaction required of a truly communicative classroom that is guided by teacher enthusiasm and competence and active student participation. However, computers provide the teacher with new ways to access information and enrich the classroom experience for both the students and the teacher.

The Internet can provide valuable resources for the teacher. Information can be obtained by accessing the many sites that are related to second language acquisition theories, foreign languages in general, learning styles and strategies, and instructional materials. The following sites are often monitored by the sponsoring organizations and can provide teachers with a good start in exploring possibilities on the Internet:

☞ <http://www.actfl.org>

Presented by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages; includes information such as upcoming workshops and special projects.

☞ <http://www.nysafll.org>

A useful website of the New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers.

☞ <http://www.nysed.gov>

The official website of the New York State Education Department; provides access to the latest information regarding State policies and practices.

☞ <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/ciai/lote.html>

The New York State Education Department site for languages other than English.

☞ <http://www.cortland.edu/flteach/>

Used to find out about the FLTEACH discussion list and ancillaries; another way for teachers to keep updated regarding current methodologies and classroom ideas.

☞ <http://www.nysatl.nysed.gov>

A website that houses a collection of standards-based learning experiences that have been validated by New York State teachers through the statewide peer review process.

It is important to note that the Internet also serves as a professional development tool for teachers of LOTE. A difficult and time-consuming endeavor for any LOTE teacher is to visit and interact personally with the target culture of the language taught. Through the Internet, however, it is possible to read daily papers from many target cultures and keep up to date with a country's culture, history, and language.

Print material from the Internet can be more current than published textbooks, and can be chosen to meet the needs and interests of students. Scans can be made and information and vocabulary can be deleted and/or highlighted. The teacher can use print material to develop cross-cultural awareness by comparing and contrasting key points of one culture with another. Such materials can be used to enhance and develop reading comprehension and to give students the opportunity to see the language in print exactly as the people in the target culture see it. Print materials serve to heighten student interest and to increase motivation, as well as to develop vocabulary and certain linguistic skills such as analyzing and studying grammar in context.

However, it should be noted that none of the above uses of technology can ever replace the presence of a certified teacher of LOTE. The teacher's use of technology can enrich classroom practice and bring learning experiences for the students to a new level. Alone, these technologies are a poor substitute for the spontaneous interactions that are needed in a communicative classroom. They do, however, provide an important tool for teaching and learning for our students in the 21st century.

The use of the Internet can also provide the learner with the opportunity to connect directly with the target culture and its people. (It is important to remind students that they are not to share personal information on the Internet.) Through correspondence with key pals, students can enhance their own writing skills and reduce their fear of using the target language in real-life situations. There are many organizations that sponsor key pals, and schools may set up key pal programs as well. Such programs can significantly enhance and enrich the experience of learning a second language.

Current technologies can enable students to use traditional equipment in new ways. For instance, they may create PowerPoint presentations or use word processing or drawing programs to fulfill class assignments—and they are usually enthusiastic about doing so. In addition, with the aid of the computer, students are now able to take tests online.

Technology provides countless opportunities for students to broaden their use of language and their knowledge of world culture. Adhering to school district policies related to computer use, technology should be an integral part of the Checkpoint C classroom, allowing students to enhance skills, explore the globe, and build in-depth knowledge of the target language.

