



Junior Cycle Level 1 Short Course

Around the World in Eighty Days

Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessment

First Edition

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Introduction

This document, *Junior Cycle Level 1 Short Course—Around the World in Eighty Days: Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessment*, provides:

- general information on Classroom-Based Assessments
- detail of the nature and scope of the Classroom-Based Assessment described in the specification for the junior cycle Around the world in eighty days 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 Around the world in eighty days short course and the *Assessment 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://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/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 1 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

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 1 there are two descriptors—*Successfully Completed* and *Progress Achieved*. The evidence of work for the award of Successfully Completed 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. In the case of awarding the Progress Achieved descriptor, the student will have benefited from accessing some learning outcomes in the short course and there will be evidence to support this award.

Time for the Classroom-Based Assessment

The 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 four strands of the Around the world in eighty days 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 10 hours of class time (allowing a minimum of 3 hours for the excursion). 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 Assessments 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 Classroom-Based Assessment can be conducted and the role the teacher plays in facilitating students' needs.

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 assessment

The school supports the completion of the assessment 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.

Support 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 Around the world in eighty days

Assessment in Around the world in eighty days will be classroom-based. There is one Classroom-Based Assessment, which is the culmination of work undertaken in the four strands of the Around the world in eighty days short course. The Classroom-Based Assessment should begin after the work in the four 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: An excursion

This Classroom-Based Assessment is the culmination of the work undertaken in the four strands of the Around the world in eighty days short course. The Classroom-Based Assessment should begin after work in the four strands has been completed.

The planning and preparing for an actual trip to an area of the local or wider community will give the student the opportunity to use the skills they have learned throughout the short course. The choice of destination will be an area of interest the student has chosen from strand 1. The student will research and decide on modes of transport, calculate the cost involved and identify essential items required for the excursion. It may require collaboration with others to research, find information, plan and organise the excursion. It builds confidence and encourages social interaction with others. It may also provide an opportunity to demonstrate skills in working with digital technology. The student will be encouraged to reflect on the trip afterwards, focusing on their emotional reactions to the excursion, the highlights and any difficulties they encountered and their ability to generalise the skills they learned to plan future excursions.

Some learning outcomes that may be particularly relevant are:

Classroom-Based Assessment: An excursion
1.13, 1.14, 1.15, 3.11, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5

Completing the Classroom-Based Assessment in Around the world in eighty days

The student will identify a suitable place for an excursion—if necessary with guidance from the teacher. Student interest should guide the choice as well as perhaps places learned about during the course.

Possible options might include¹:

- choosing a place or amenity in the locality that is of interest to the student
- a local forest park
- a local tourist attraction
- a movie in a local cinema
- a sports event
- a musical/dance/dramatic event.

The student finds out information about the location and uses the skills they have learned to plan and prepare for the excursion.

Students may work in pairs or groups but it should be clear that each student has made a meaningful contribution to the preparatory work; it will be the student's individual role, contribution and reaction to the excursion that is the focus of reporting in the JCPA.

¹ This list is by no means exhaustive.

Preparation

Students studying this short course have many opportunities to acquire knowledge and to interact with others. They learn where and who to go to when they need to find out information. They collaborate with their peers or others at various times throughout the course, e.g. to choose a location to visit, collecting data about transportation, researching costs involved. They practise (in real or role-play situations) travelling further afield and learning about new countries and cultures. They become aware of the practicalities of public transport and overcoming the obstacles they encounter. This ongoing engagement and communication with others provides the best preparation for the Classroom-Based Assessment. The day of the Classroom-Based Assessment should be the student's first experience of the location they have chosen.

Preparation might involve some original elementary investigative work by the student, e.g. researching locations and accessibility, calculating costs, surveys or emailing. Internet sources might provide information as well as hand outs and information provided by the teacher and/or other adults in a learning environment inside or outside of the classroom. The student may need support in organising the information they have gathered and communicating effectively with members of the community.

The student may have examined photographic evidence or social stories of the destination prior to the excursion, in preparation of what to expect when they arrive. The teacher may also need to discuss appropriate acceptable behaviours that are expected at the location.

Advice for students

- Pick a location that is easily accessible and of interest to you.
- You can prepare and do research with your classmates.
- Ensure you have all relevant information prior to the excursion.
- Be aware of opening times, costs and ticket requirements to avoid obstacles on the day.
- Ask questions if there is anything you don't understand or aren't sure about.

Deciding on the level of achievement: Features of Quality

Classroom-Based Assessments are common level assessments. There are two descriptors at Level 1: **Successfully Completed** and **Progress Achieved**.

The teacher's judgement on whether the student's work in the Classroom-Based Assessment is awarded the Successfully Completed descriptor is based on the Features of Quality set out in these guidelines. The evidence of work for the award of Successfully Completed should closely match all or nearly all the criteria for that level within the Features of Quality for An excursion set out in these guidelines, and the teacher's judgement should be that the student's work is 'on balance' deserving of the descriptor.

The Features of Quality are the criteria used to assess the student's work.

Features of Quality: An excursion
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Successfully Completed

- | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is evidence of participation in the planning and preparing of An excursion.• During the excursion, an awareness of the environment and appropriate behaviours are demonstrated.• There is evidence of engagement with the people and surroundings of the excursion.• There is evidence of reflection on the excursion using any form of expression. |
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In the case of awarding the Progress Achieved descriptor, the student will have benefited from accessing some learning outcomes in the short course and there will be evidence to support this award.

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 Successfully Completed or Progress 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 <http://juniorcycle.ie/Assessment>.

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.