

**FOUNDATION COURSE IN ENGLISH FOR UNDERGRADUATE
PROGRAMMES**

(Common to all UG Programmes in Arts, Science, Commerce, Education, Business and Computer Science in Colleges affiliated to Pondicherry University)

1. Introduction

In view of the rapid changes taking place in life in general, corresponding need-based changes are likely to get reflected at the level of undergraduate education too. Such changes inevitably get reflected in the curricula of teaching language and literature as well. More so, in the fields of teaching and learning language on account of it being the medium of transacting knowledge in all forms

Since, in our Universities and affiliated colleges, English is the medium of instruction in general at the tertiary level, we feel compelled to rework the framework of teaching and learning as it is practiced in the present, in view of the context of changes called for.

The Board of Studies in English (Under Graduate) of Pondicherry University which met on 29 June 2010 in the Chairman's chamber, with external subject experts, representatives of teachers teaching at the under-graduate level and other members nominated by the Vice-chancellor as members, discussed the current syllabus in detail, made the following observations and arrived at a few conclusions, which are listed below.

- (a) The existing syllabus has been in use without some changes for the last seven years.
- (b) The revision of the syllabus has been thus very much over due.
- (c) A new syllabus which incorporates the current trends in second language instruction through literature must be framed.
- (d) Accordingly, new learning-teaching materials are to be introduced.
- (e) Changes must be made in the existing system of testing and evaluation, as well.

2. Objectives

The revised syllabus for the Foundation Course in English for Under Graduate programmes aims at developing the following skills and competencies in English.

(A) General

- (i) Learners are expected to express themselves in English when they communicate with speakers of languages other than their mother tongue.
- (ii) Learners are expected to listen to English spoken by others and comprehend the contents and nuances of the spoken language.
- (iii) Learners are expected to read texts from *real life* such as newspapers, magazines, posters, bills, vouchers, advertisements, fliers, publicity materials, brochures and so on and comprehend the messages in them.

- (iv) Learners are expected to express themselves through writing, in real life situations such as filling in forms related to various fields of life, preparing brochures, publicity materials, writing short personal/informal letters and so on.

(B) Academic

- (i) Learners are expected to listen to lectures, seminar presentations and such formal discourses.
- (ii) Learners are expected to take down notes on listening to spoken discourse and convert them into texts over again.
- (iii) Learners should be able to reframe the texts into more coherent ones, all over again
- (iv) They should be able to read and understand learning materials prescribed for study and make notes out of them in their own words.
- (v) They are expected to reproduce the contents of the reference materials in their own language.
- (vi) Learners should be able to consult reference materials—print and online—using the guidance provided in the content page, index page, and the references/bibliographies with help and aid from the teachers and also on their own.

3. Language Content

The four-semester course spread over the two years is expected to have the following contents:

Semester I Paper 1

Study Skills: Part A. Listening and Note Taking
Oral Communication Part A: Group Discussion and Debate
Functional Grammar Part A
Communicative Writing Part A
Extensive Reading.

Semester II Paper 2

Study Skills Part B. Reading and Note Making
Oral Communication Part B: Interpersonal Communication
Functional Grammar Part B
Communicative Writing Part B
Applied Phonetics (Basics)

Semester III Paper 3

Critical Thinking
Critical Reading
Reference Skills
Academic Writing Part A

Semester IV Paper 4

Reading and Writing about Literature

Academic Writing Part B

Presentation Skills

Project (Written Account & Oral Presentation)

4. Course materials

It is desired that one/two main course books and parts of one/two course books will be prescribed for each semester.

Semester I

1. ***Impressions: A Multi-skill Course in English*** by Geetha Rajeevan and G. Radhakrishna Pillai New Delhi: Cambridge UP. Foundation Books, 2010.

(The contents of the course book is given at the end of the Syllabus under the title *Map of the Book*)

2. ***Form and Function: A Communicative Grammar for Colleges*** (2003) by V. Sasikumar and V. Syamala. Chennai: Emerald Publishers, 2010. The following Chapters are prescribed:

- i. Seeking and giving information—*Statements and questions*
- ii. Talking about the present—*The simple present and the present continuous*
- iii. Talking about the past—*The past tenses, the present perfect, etc.*
- iv. Talking about the future—*The future tenses and other verb forms*
- v. Being informal—*Phrasal Verbs.*

3. ***Strengthen your Writing*** (Third Edition) by V.R. Narayanaswami. Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 2009.

The following topics are prescribed:

- i. Paragraph Writing
- ii. Description and Narration
- iii. Note Making.

Semester II

1. ***Impressions II: A Multi-skill Course in English*** by Nandini Nayar, P. Kiranmai Dutt and Geetha Rajeevan. New Delhi: Cambridge UP. Foundation Books, 2011.

(The contents of the course book is given at the end of the Syllabus under the title *Map of the Book*)

2. ***Form and Function: A Communicative Grammar for Colleges*** (2003) by V. Sasikumar and V. Syamala. Chennai: Emerald Publishers, 2010. The following Chapters are prescribed:

Chapter 6: Expressing ability, possibility, etc.—Modals and other devices.

Chapter 7: Expressing conditions—Conditional clauses and other devices.

3. ***Strengthen your Writing*** (Third Edition) by V.R. Narayanaswami. Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 2009. The following topics are prescribed:

Chapter 4: Letter Writing

- i. Personal letters
- ii. Business letters
- iii. Letters of application
- iv. Letters to the editor
- v. Letters for some common social situations
- vi. E-mail and the internet.

Semester III

Under the Greenwood Tree: Reading for Pleasure and Comprehension

Compiled and Edited by the Members of the Board of Studies, Pondicherry University. Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 2011.

The First EIGHT lessons—4 Poems and 4 Prose Extracts

Semester IV

Under the Greenwood Tree: Reading for Pleasure and Comprehension

Compiled and Edited by the Members of the Board of Studies, Pondicherry University. Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 2011.

The remaining EIGHT lessons: 5 Prose Extracts and 3 Poems

5. Suggested teaching methodology

Lecture method is expected to be partly replaced by encouraging learners to work

- i. independently/individually,
- ii. in pairs, and also
- iii. in small groups.

Lectures are expected to be supplemented by guidance and help offered by multimedia.

The syllabus has been devised with a view to enhancing all the four skills—Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. And it has been set forth as progressing from lighter reading materials to little more complex ones. Poetry, fictional and non-fictional prose, and conversational pieces are all included with the purpose of extending the learner's experience of language and literature.

6. Learning strategies

The scope for memorizing the contents of the course materials will be minimal. Therefore, students must be given guidance in learning through thinking rather than memorizing, rote-learning and reproducing the contents. Language is more important than the contents of the course materials. This does not demean the importance of the literary.

7. It is hoped that the new syllabus for the **Foundation Course** would make teaching as well as learning interesting and enterprising. The major point to be borne in the minds of the teachers would be to teach language in use and operation in the contexts of the literary as well as everyday experiences—with the help of the texts. Of course reading literature in the English language can certainly also help in broadening the imagination of the young people. After all, what we learn depends a great deal on how we learn.

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