

What is meant by literacy?

In defining literacy for the 21st century we must consider the changing forms of language which our children and young people will experience and use. Within *Curriculum for Excellence*, therefore, literacy is defined as:

the set of skills which allows an individual to engage fully in society and in learning, through the different forms of language, and the range of texts, which society values and finds useful.

The literacy experiences and outcomes promote the development of skills in using language, particularly those that are used regularly by everyone in their everyday lives. These include the ability to apply knowledge about language. They reflect the need for young people to be able to communicate effectively both face-to-face and in writing through an increasing range of media. They take account of national and international research and of other skills frameworks. They recognise the importance of listening and talking and of effective collaborative working in the development of thinking and in learning.

In particular, the experiences and outcomes address the important skills of critical literacy. Children and young people not only need to be able to read for information: they also need to be able to work out what trust they should place on the information and to identify when and how people are aiming to persuade or influence them.

It follows that the definition of 'texts' also needs to be broad and future proof. Therefore, within *Curriculum for Excellence*:

a text is the medium through which ideas, experiences, opinions and information can be communicated.

Reading and responding to literature and other texts play a central role in the development of learners' knowledge and understanding. Texts not only include those presented in traditional written or print form, but also orally, electronically or on film. Texts can be in continuous form, including traditional formal prose, or non-continuous, for example charts and graphs. The literacy framework reflects the increased use of multimodal texts, digital communication, social networking and the other forms of electronic communication encountered by children and young people in their daily lives. It recognises that the skills which children and young people need to learn to read these texts differ from the skills they need for reading continuous prose.

Examples of texts
novels, short stories, plays, poems reference texts the spoken word charts, maps, graphs and timetables advertisements, promotional leaflets comics, newspapers and magazines CVs, letters and emails films, games and TV programmes labels, signs and posters recipes, manuals and instructions reports and reviews text messages, blogs and social networking sites web pages, catalogues and directories