

**Ministry of Education
Pedagogical Affairs
Department of Curricula Planning and Development**



Adapting the English Curriculum for Students with Disabilities

For Elementary and Secondary Schools
State, State Religious, Arab and Druze Schools

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Contents

Preface	5
Chapter 1	
Adapting the English Curriculum to Students with Disabilities	
Rationale	6
Introduction	6
Principles of Teaching English to Students with Disabilities	9
Target Population for Implementing the Program	9
Number of Teaching Hours	11
Chapter 2	
Characteristics of Specific Disabilities and Implications for Learning English	
Learning Disabilities	13
Visual Impairment	14
Auditory Impairment	15
Physical Disabilities	17
Behavioral Disabilities	17
Social/Emotional Disabilities	18
Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD)	19
Slight or Moderate Cognitive Developmental Delay	21
Chapter 3	
Specific Difficulties and Teaching Recommendations	
Limited Vocabulary	22
Reading Difficulties and Disabilities	23
Domain: Social Interaction	23
Domain: Access to Information from Written and Spoken Texts	26
Domain: Presentation	29
Domain: Appreciation of Literature and Culture, and Language	34
Appendix: Recommended Amendments to the English Curriculum for Visually-Impaired and Blind Students	36

Preface

The purpose of this booklet is to serve as a guide for the modification and implementation of the National English Curriculum (2001) for students with disabilities. The first chapter, *Adapting the English Curriculum to Students with Disabilities* provides the rationale for the modified program, principles of teaching English as a foreign language to students with disabilities, the target population for the program (teachers and students) and guidance in determining the recommended number of hours appropriate for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction for each population.

The second chapter, *Characteristics of Specific Disabilities and Implications for Learning English*, provides information about the different disabilities and describes typical behavior and performance of students with each disability. In addition, corresponding implications and teaching ideas are offered.

The booklet closes with a chapter entitled *Specific Difficulties and Teaching Recommendations*, which pinpoints the difficulties that can be expected in each domain of language acquisition (such as limited vocabulary and reading problems), along with recommendations for teaching in light of these difficulties. This chapter can assist teachers in adapting their teaching to the specific learning needs of their students.

Chapter 1

Adapting the English Curriculum to Students with Disabilities

Rationale

English is a language of international communication, essential for all fields of learning and useful in all aspects of life. Students with disabilities have the same right to learn English in school as does the general school population. With the appropriate professional support and teaching methods, students with disabilities are indeed capable of learning English. This assumption led to the adaptation of the English Curriculum for the benefit of students with disabilities who require adaptive teaching, whether in a special education framework or within the regular school system.

Introduction

This booklet offers guidance for adapting and implementing the English Curriculum (2001) for students with disabilities. The recommendations suggested here should not be implemented in isolation, but rather considered as an addendum to the English Curriculum. It is therefore necessary to be familiar with the English Curriculum prior to planning instruction for the students with disabilities.

The committee responsible for writing this booklet was appointed by the Division of Curriculum Planning and Development to adapt the English Curriculum for students with disabilities in the general school system – state schools, religious state schools and schools in the Arab *and Druze*

sectors. The booklet addresses the difficulties that challenge these students and suggests ways to adapt the English Curriculum and implement it appropriately and effectively in view of these difficulties. The program also provides recommendations for teaching all four domains as presented in the English Curriculum: social interaction; access to information from written and spoken texts; presentation; and appreciation of literature and culture, and language.

The program is adapted to a varied population of students with disabilities. It includes students with:

- learning disabilities
- visual impairments
- auditory impairments
- physical disabilities (cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy etc.)
- behavioral disabilities
- social/emotional disabilities
- communicative disorders (PDD spectrum)
- slight or moderate developmental delay

The booklet offers teachers practical recommendations for planning instruction, including guidelines for selecting the language domains to be taught and the benchmarks to be achieved, as are appropriate for students with disabilities. Such selection should take into consideration the characteristics of the students' disabilities, the difficulties of individual students and their implications for the teaching and learning process. It is desirable to strive, as much as possible, to teach all the domains and achieve most of the benchmarks outlined in the English Curriculum. A growing number of students with disabilities are capable of taking the Bagrut examinations when tested with the appropriate modifications, and this goal should be strived for. There are students with disabilities who are able to take the *Bagrut* (high school matriculation) examination if given the necessary modifications to which they are entitled. This should then be the goal. On the other hand, once it is decided to omit certain domains due

to severe difficulties, those domains in which students are able to succeed should be stressed. Selection of the skills to work on depends on the level of the student's reading and writing competence in their native language, as well as on the functional difficulties deriving from their specific disability.

The central factor in adapting the Curriculum is the students' overall ability to learn a foreign language, taking into consideration functional ability, skills and disabilities. This important aspect in implementing the guidelines described in this document requires cooperation between the English teacher and other members of the faculty: the homeroom teacher, the special education teacher, the guidance counselor and the school psychologist. This enables the English teacher to be a partner in planning an individual educational program (IEP). An IEP is an educational plan that is specifically designed to fit the student's abilities and learning needs in order to help him/her reach the long and short term goals identified by educators in his/her educational setting. Traditionally EFL has not been included in the IEP programming. Cooperation with other staff members is the cornerstone of the English teacher's ability to identify and properly define the student's level of performance. It is therefore imperative, at the very beginning of the school year, for the English teacher to obtain all the necessary and applicable information from the homeroom teacher and/or the professional team regarding the needs of each student and to plan instruction accordingly.

In conclusion, when designing a program for the individual student or group, the teacher should take into consideration the characteristics of the disorder, aptitude, capabilities, disabilities and difficulties of each student with disabilities as well as their implications for teaching English. Chapters Two and Three are devoted to the specific challenges faced by students with disabilities when learning EFL and offer recommendations for adaptive teaching methods.

Principles of Teaching English to Students with Disabilities

The same principles of teaching English that appear in the English Curriculum are valid for teaching students with disabilities. Nonetheless, language instruction to students with disabilities is more successful and effective when the following principles, which should be the basis of all teaching but which are especially important for teaching students with disabilities, are applied:

- Create a language-rich environment.
- Adjust teaching to the individual pace of each student.
- Offer success-oriented activities to the student.
- Plan instruction so as to include experiential activities.
- Break down the learning assignments into subtasks, in keeping with the student's needs.
- Vary activities within the lesson and from one lesson to another.
- Provide extensive drilling, memorization and repetition of the learning material.
- Include many visual and tactile aids, such as pictures and objects while teaching.

Target Population for Implementing the Program

Teachers

- **English teachers** of students with special disabilities in special education classes, integrated classes or regular classes.
- **Special education teachers** teaching English in special education schools and special education classes.
- **English teachers** of students with disabilities who have not been placed in special education classes or who are not entitled to support within the inclusion program, but who do require adaptive teaching methods.

Students

Students with disabilities commonly share learning difficulties, such as learning how to read and or write, processing information quickly and efficiently, as well as kinesthetic, emotional and social difficulties that can affect their learning. The assumption is that in spite of their difficulties in various learning domains – comprehension, abstract thinking, memory, retrieval, attention and concentration, as well as motivation for learning – these students need to acquire knowledge and skills in the English language and are capable of doing so.

Special education students study in *separate* as well as *integrated* settings. The following is a description of the two frameworks:

A. The separate settings are *special education schools* and *separate special education classes within regular schools*:

- In *special education schools*, which are elementary schools and junior high schools, the students generally continue learning until the age of 21. Classes are defined in those schools according to the types of disabilities, such as slight or moderate cognitive developmental delay, social/emotional disabilities, behavioral disabilities and physical disabilities.
- In *separate classes within regular schools*, consisting of students with varied types of disabilities, instruction is based on the regular curriculum for that age group, sometimes enriched by a special program. Teaching EFL should take into account the students' ability to function, constantly aiming for the level of achievement suited to their age group.

B. *Integrated settings* are regular classes that include students who have been diagnosed as requiring special attention, such as test modifications or differentiated teaching, and the school committee has found them eligible for the inclusion program. These students receive support and intervention based on decisions of the professional team, as stated in the IEP. Implementation of the IEP should take into consideration both the functioning of the student and the program of studies of the class. As

previously stated, there are students with disabilities who are capable of acquiring English up to the *Bagrut* level, provided the required modifications are made, and this should be the teacher's goal.

Number of Teaching Hours

A. In a special education school or a special education class in a regular school:

- For students with learning disabilities, behavioral disabilities, social/emotional disabilities and cognitive developmental delay, the number of recommended hours of English teaching is identical to the number in regular classes.
- For students with severe language disabilities in speech, language and communication in their native language, the hours may be reduced to a minimum of two hours per week. This will enable language teaching to focus on acquisition of the native language, yet provide exposure to English, mainly in the domain of social interaction.
- For those students who have acquired reading and writing skills in Hebrew/Arabic, it is recommended to add additional teaching hours in English, as they require more time to learn English than the average student.
- Students in the Arab sector and new immigrants, for whom English is a third language, will require more hours of instruction. However, in cases of severe difficulty, it is preferable to reinforce the first two languages rather than add the additional burden of a third one.
- For students on the spectrum of pervasive developmental disorders and students with cognitive developmental delay, the number of English hours is to be determined by the professional team, in keeping with the students' abilities. At any rate, the number of English hours in those classes should not be less than two.

B. In inclusion classrooms:

Students with disabilities who are included in a regular class are to receive the same number of hours of English instruction as their classmates. If necessary, the possibility of allotting additional hours of intervention for English for these students should be considered.

Chapter 2

Characteristics of Specific Disabilities and Implications for Learning English

This chapter describes the behavioral characteristics typical of various types of disabilities, as well as their implications for learning English. This description is mainly necessary for English teachers who have not been specifically trained in special education. The following will help teachers plan a course of instruction when teaching these special populations. Teachers are to adapt the material and teaching methods to the specific needs of the individual student, taking into account the benchmarks in the English Curriculum.

The disabilities described in this chapter are:

- learning disabilities
- visual impairments
- auditory impairments
- physical disabilities
- behavioral disabilities
- social/emotional disabilities
- pervasive developmental disorders
- slight or moderate cognitive developmental delay

Learning Disabilities

Characteristics

A learning disability is a disorder in basic psychological processes, which manifests itself in considerable difficulties acquiring and implementing

skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing, conceptualization and/or mathematical competence. The learning disability is unexpected with regard to age, level of education or IQ. It does not apply to learning difficulties resulting from visual or auditory impairment, kinesthetic deficiencies, cognitive developmental delay, emotional problems and/or external circumstances, such as environmental, cultural or socioeconomic deprivation, nor do they apply to deficiencies resulting from inadequate or deficient teaching.

Implications

Students with learning disabilities should be expected to meet the standards of the English Curriculum. They have been diagnosed by a psychologist or an educational specialist and their abilities and specific areas of disability have been identified. Recommendations for modifications and required instruction have been made. It is vital that the English teacher read the diagnosis and recommendations and apply them when teaching. It is strongly recommended that English teachers of students with learning disabilities, whether in an integrated or a separate class, receive appropriate training in order to be qualified to teach this student population. It is likewise recommended that the English teacher in a regular class consult with the special education teacher in the school or with another professional when designing the program of studies for this student population. In most cases, it is possible to integrate the goals of the English Curriculum within the framework of the IEP.

Visual Impairment

Characteristics

Visual impairment is caused by deficiencies in the visual system – the eye and its parts and/or the optic nerve. Such deficiency cannot be repaired or overcome with the help of regular eyeglasses or contact lenses. The deficiency is measured by visual acuity and the field of vision. Blindness,

according to entitlement to a certificate for the blind, is determined by the following parameters: total absence of sight, and maximum sharpness of vision of 3/60 in the healthier eye; namely, the person can identify an object from a distance of 3 meters, which a person with normal sight can identify from a distance of 60 meters; or a field of vision limited to 20 degrees with the healthier eye (the standard rate being 180 degrees).

Implications

Totally blind or visually-impaired students require adaptation of the English Curriculum (see Appendix). Those in the latter category require enlarged or bold type texts. The totally blind require the written text in Braille. It is also important to make optimal use of auditory and kinesthetic modalities. In addition, some students may use assistive technology, listening to books on cassettes, special aids for enlarging the written text, such as a magnifying glass and closed circuit television or a computer with a Braille screen.

When adapting material, the professional teacher for the blind or the visually impaired must be consulted. Once given the required modifications, these students meet the goals of the English Curriculum, similarly to their classmates.

Auditory Impairment

Characteristics

Deaf students and students who are hard of hearing (hearing impairment exceeding 30DB in both ears) are typically limited in their ability to acquire language aurally, even when using a hearing aid. Owing to the auditory damage, the spoken language is only grasped in part and much is missed. In a noisy environment, such as the average classroom, the problem is more severe, as the noise blocks out the sounds of speech.

Implications

Aural exposure of students with auditory impairment to the English

language is extremely limited or nonexistent. Lip reading does not offer a solution, as it requires extensive knowledge of the language, including its vocabulary and grammatical structure, which is obviously lacking in the first stages of language acquisition. The only means of full exposure to the language and acquiring that knowledge is through reading. Reading should therefore be taught at the very first stages of instruction, exposing students to the vocabulary and structure of the language as they are learning to read it. It is not possible to give these students lessons based on listening and speaking as an introduction to reading – the procedure used for students with normal hearing ability – as some auditory-impaired students are unable to communicate orally in a foreign language

Students with auditory impairment should thus be taught decoding skills, reading skills and language skills simultaneously.

In the process of teaching, additional steps should be taken:

- Use visual teaching aids extensively.
- Resort to Hebrew/Arabic/the native language as a teaching aid more extensively than the normal practice with students who are not hearing impaired.
- Use the dictionary at all stages of learning, since hearing impairment strongly inhibits acquisition of vocabulary.
- Be in contact with the teacher for hearing-impaired/special education students for mutual consultation.

In the process of teaching, the following rules should be adhered to:

- Speak clearly, slowly and, if necessary, paraphrase.
- Address the student directly. The student must see the teacher's face him/her while he/she is speaking.
- Speak in a normal tone. Do not shout into the student's ear or hearing aid.
- Make sure the student knows the subject of the conversation and encourage him/her to participate.
- When there is laughter in the presence of a hearing-impaired student, explain the reason for the laughter to the student.

Physical Disabilities

Characteristics

Students with physical disabilities are limited in the functioning of parts of their body. These disabilities include cerebral palsy and muscular degeneration (hypertonus and hypotonus). Physical disabilities exist independently or appear together with other disabilities, such as cognitive delay and learning disabilities. These students are often restricted in their daily independent functioning, their mobility and in their balance and motor control.

Implications

Cognitively, students who only have physical disabilities have average to above average intelligence and their learning potential in English is age appropriate. With the appropriate modifications these students can and do reach the benchmarks of the English Curriculum.

Students with physical disabilities can use assistive technology or other technological facilities. The teacher must take this into consideration when planning the lesson. When the lesson includes activities that require movement, the student or homeroom teacher should be consulted as to the student's capability to take part in the activity and whether special assistance is required. In cases where there are additional disabilities, teaching should be adapted to the nature of the specific disability.

Behavioral Disabilities

Characteristics

Students with behavioral disabilities are generally characterized by difficulties in self-control, hyperactivity or hyper-introversion, deficits in attention and concentration and problems with organization. Not all students necessarily reveal all these symptoms. Very often these disabilities

occur in conjunction with learning disabilities and, in some cases, with social/emotional disabilities, such as anxiety, sharp mood swings and lack of impulse control.

Implications

Students with behavioral disabilities have average to above average intelligence. Their experiences in learning English will therefore be similar to those of students without behavioral disabilities, unless they suffer from Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD/HD), learning disabilities or social/emotional disabilities, or if gaps have widened due to absence from lessons. In those cases, these gaps should be taken into consideration and subsequent lessons should be planned accordingly. Students with behavioral disabilities are capable of achieving all the benchmarks in the English Curriculum.

Social/Emotional Disabilities

Characteristics

Students with social/emotional disabilities have average to above average intelligence. The disability is reflected in difficulties in complex psychological functioning relating to impulse control, emotional control and reality testing. Some common symptoms include hallucinations, anxiety, depression and difficulties in distinguishing between self and non-self. In addition, the emotional disturbances may be accompanied by difficult or unexpected behaviors, such as difficulties in comprehending social cues and setting, attention deficits and difficulties in expressing emotions. In addition, extreme mood swings, resistance, compulsive behavior and self-injury may occur. Not all manifestations of the above necessarily appear in every case.

Implications

The cognitive ability of students with emotional disabilities is normative. Nevertheless, their English learning potential depends on the extent of their

cooperation, their willingness to learn, their motivation and their overall learning capacity. The teacher must be sensitive and alert to the needs of the student and should select assignments and subject matter that suit the student's abilities and interests.

Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD)

Characteristics

Students on the PDD spectrum of disabilities have difficulty in developing interpersonal relationships and in understanding social cues and situations. These students may have gaps in their level of performance in various areas, as well as learning disabilities and attention and concentration deficits. The term Pervasive Developmental Disorders includes the following characteristics: impairments in social interaction, imaginative activity, verbal and nonverbal communication skills, and a limited number of interests and activities that tend to be repetitive.

This category includes students with Asperger's syndrome. Many students with Asperger's syndrome study in typical educational settings, can reach the benchmarks in the English Curriculum, and take the four- or five-point level *Bagrut* examinations, provided that the required modifications are provided.

Three areas of development are affected among students on the PDD spectrum of disabilities: social, communicative and behavioral. In social development, students have difficulty establishing contact with their peers, lack initiative to form interpersonal relationships, prefer individual play over group play, have difficulty participating in role-play activities, have trouble understanding the needs and distress of others and find it difficult to grasp physical and non-verbal messages.

With regard to the communicative aspect, there is a delay in acquisition of speech and language often accompanied by repetitions (echolalia) or excessive use of linguistic patterns.

Behaviorally, these specific disabilities are reflected in a compulsive need to maintain a fixed pattern of behavior and resistance to change. These students are typified by compulsive movements, such as rocking, hand motions, excessive handling of objects, tantrums and mood disturbances.

Implications

These students require individual language programs. Language abilities must be assessed by a speech therapist. The IEP should be jointly drawn up by the speech therapist, the homeroom teacher, the student and the parents. If the student has difficulties in one language, he/she will encounter difficulties in the second language as well. It is therefore recommended to consult with all the professionals involved in treatment before initiating EFL instruction. In many cases, the decision not to teach a specific student English should be reevaluated annually by the professional team.

Teachers should be aware of difficulties that might arise in tasks requiring social interaction, such as role play, group or pair discussions and activities involving expression of feelings. Difficulties may arise when such students are required to establish eye contact with the speaker (the teacher or another student) and in assignments requiring oral presentation, identification of the writer's or reader's opinion, stance and emotions. In spite of these difficulties, students on the PDD spectrum can participate in the English class. It should be kept in mind that visual processing of information is easier for most of these students, and it is therefore advisable to integrate visual aids in the lessons.

Slight or Moderate Cognitive Developmental Delay

Characteristics

The intelligence of students with developmental or cognitive delays is below the norm. These students also often have difficulties in areas such as communication and developing independent learning and decision making. Their social skills are generally similar to those of their peers, but they may encounter difficulty in making judgments.

Implications

Students with slight or moderate cognitive or developmental delays can learn functional English when special methods and teaching aids are employed. Ability to achieve the benchmarks depends on the level of cognitive developmental delay. Students with slight cognitive developmental delay can achieve the benchmarks at the foundation level. For those with moderate delays, if taught English, students can achieve many of the benchmarks. If the decision is made to teach them English, the benchmarks at the foundation level can only be partially achieved, and even then, mainly in the domain of social interaction.

Chapter 3

Specific Difficulties and Teaching Recommendations

In this chapter, two major areas of difficulty in learning English will be addressed: those of limited vocabulary and difficulties in acquiring literacy skills, both of which appear in each of the four domains of the English Curriculum (social interaction; access to information; presentation; appreciation of literature and culture, and language). This is followed by a description of the difficulties specific to each domain and then by a presentation of relevant teaching recommendations. The difficulties and recommendations are also presented in table form, emphasizing the specific domain of language and offering further elaboration

Limited Vocabulary

A good vocabulary is essential for acquiring the English language in all four domains. Since the vocabulary of a considerable proportion of students with disabilities is rather limited, development and enrichment of vocabulary should be emphasized throughout the process of teaching. The following are several recommendations for teaching vocabulary:

- Draw awareness to foreign words in English that are in everyday use in Hebrew/Arabic.
- Teach vocabulary in context.
- Employ multi-sensory means, e.g., pictures, objects, songs and chants.
- Drill vocabulary repeatedly by means of word games and flash cards (see Appendix for adjustments for learners with visual impairment).
- Teach word families using word maps.
- Teach students to create associations that help them memorize words.

Reading Difficulties and Disabilities

Reading difficulties may stem from several sources. Identifying the type of difficulty and severity will help the teacher plan instruction.

- For students who have acquired pre-reading skills in their native language (e.g. phonological awareness, isolation of sounds, breaking a word into syllables, identifying opening and closing sounds, rhyming, distinguishing between identical and different words, visual distinction and distinguishing between graphic shapes), it is necessary to teach these skills in English as well.
- For those students who have not yet acquired reading skills in their native language teaching should focus on varied means of exposure to the English language, such as listening, conversations and songs.
- In severe cases, teaching beyond social interaction should be seriously considered. In extreme cases, the question of whether to teach English at all should be raised.

Domain: Social Interaction

General Teaching Recommendations

1. To facilitate social interaction in the classroom in the English language, teachers should:
 - establish an accepting, supportive atmosphere.
 - create occasions for social interaction.
 - serve as a role model for use of the language.
2. Present opportunities for conversation in every lesson.
3. Drill all topics taught through conversation.
4. Teach and practice structured interactive patterns.
5. Vary types of interaction such as pair work and group work.
6. Use role-play activities suited to the topic being taught, and simulate social situations, such as welcoming a guest, ordering a meal in a restaurant and shopping.

Notes:

- Among certain populations, such as those students on the PDD spectrum and students with communication disabilities, there may be severe lapses of conversation, difficulty or a lack of establishing eye contact and in identifying feelings and preferences. The homeroom teacher or the special education teacher in the school should be consulted about teaching strategies suited to the special needs of these students.
- For auditory-impaired and deaf students, it is recommended to consult a specialist regarding the extent of oral communication in teaching English that the student is capable of, as well as its timing.
- Students should be seated in class in such a way that the teacher's face can be easily seen.

Domain: Social Interaction

Type of Difficulty	Teaching Recommendation	Elaboration
Fear of speaking in front of others and/or face-to-face with another	Drill interactive language patterns. First demonstrate the pattern, and then have the class, a group and/or the individual repeat it.	Divide class into two groups and practice, with one group facing the other. Gradually reduce the number of students in one or both groups.
	Practice with aids, e.g., microphone (real or pretend), face mask.	Use such aids as overhead projector, flash cards and posters.
	Encourage transfer of patterns acquired in specific contexts to other contexts.	
Auditory impairment	Present language patterns visually.	

Type of Difficulty	Teaching Recommendation	Elaboration
Difficulty creating eye contact	<p>Encourage conversation despite lack of eye contact.</p> <p>Direct student to establish eye contact during the conversation.</p> <p>Give approval both for speech and for eye contact.</p>	
Limited vocabulary	<p>Supply a vocabulary bank relevant to the subject.</p> <p>Increase vocabulary by integrating alternative vocabulary items within the same pattern.</p>	
Difficulty expressing preferences, feelings and emotions	<p>Provide occasions to express preferences, feelings and emotions.</p> <p>Practice situations requiring simple preferences and suitable use of "like" or "don't like."</p> <p>Teach adjectives related to feelings and states (hungry, sad, happy).</p>	Encourage expression of feelings using pictures, cartoons and cassettes.
Difficulty asking questions and making requests	<p>Teach the interrogative and request patterns and drill them in everyday situations.</p> <p>Encourage transfer of patterns acquired in a certain context to other contexts.</p>	<p>Use role play extensively.</p> <p>Drill conversation models.</p>

Type of Difficulty	Teaching Recommendation	Elaboration
Difficulty reading and writing short messages, letters, invitations, shopping lists, notes and e-mail messages	Teach each text type separately.	Use sorting games to identify the type of text.
	Explain and demonstrate the differences between the types of texts in a gradual and distinctive way.	Use authentic texts and change items in the text gradually (begin with one item).

Domain: Access to Information from Written and Spoken Texts

General Teaching Recommendations

1. Enrich the classroom environment with posters, timetables, maps, articles, students' projects, current events, cassettes, films, etc.
2. As students with disabilities sometimes have a limited command of vocabulary, it is necessary to enrich vocabulary when working on this domain (see "Limited Vocabulary", p. 22).
3. To help students understand the information, ask lead-in questions and teach reading strategies relevant to the text prior to actually reading it. Such strategies include:
 - identifying text type.
 - using the title to think about the possible content.
 - thinking about content based on pictures and other visual cues that accompany the text.
 - pointing out capital letters, numbers and familiar words. in order to go from the known to the unknown and to begin to use visual clues in the text to discover possible meaning
4. Direct students to find and mark words they are familiar with in order to help them understand the ideas in the text.

5. Use students' knowledge of grammar and syntax as an aid in understanding the text.
6. Give students a variety of texts and assignments, even when they are at the level of merely recognizing familiar words.
7. Explain the assignment clearly to students in advance, so as to direct them in their reading and help them focus on the main issues.
8. For those students who have difficulty focusing on a text with too many stimuli, such as pictures or text frames, isolate the text, e.g., by presenting it in a window, formatted on the computer, enlarged, etc.
9. Train students to ask themselves questions in order to help them monitor their comprehension.

Note: Read the text aloud to students with visual impairments and /or learning disabilities while they follow in the written text if possible.

Domain: Access to Information from Written and Spoken Texts

Type of Difficulty	Teaching Recommendation	Elaboration
Limited vocabulary	Provide preliminary exposure to keywords required to understand the text.	Ask students for familiar words related to the text. Teach words relating to the text.
	Teach use of the dictionary.	Teach the ABCs. Teach the basic parts of speech, how they appear in the dictionary, and their function in finding the appropriate meaning.
	Teach students to identify the meaning and function of prefixes and suffixes (e.g., using the words <i>un</i> happy and happi <i>ness</i>).	

Type of Difficulty	Teaching Recommendation	Elaboration
Difficulty identifying text genres	Present a variety of authentic text genres and teach each genre separately.	
	Explain and demonstrate structures typical of various genres and the use of these genres.	
Difficulty distinguishing between main and supporting ideas	Explain and demonstrate the internal and external structure of the text.	<p>Teach both external elements (e.g., title, pictures and paragraphs) and internal elements (e.g. general idea vs. details, cause and effect).</p> <p>Teach signal words (for example, such as) marking the distinction between main and supporting ideas.</p> <p>Guide students to mark the key sentences reflecting the main idea.</p> <p>Teach students how to ask questions about the text (e.g., “wh” questions).</p>

Type of Difficulty	Teaching Recommendation	Elaboration
Difficulty grasping sequences	Practice telling a story according to a sequence of pictures.	
	Teach words that mark time sequences.	Practice words like “then,” “after,” “first,” “second,” “finally.”
	Practice arranging sentences in sequence.	
	Practice arranging paragraphs in sequence.	
	Practice organizing information graphically according to text type.	Use graphic organizers.

Domain: Presentation

General Recommendations

It is advisable to vary the mode in which information and ideas are presented. There are short, focused presentations, such as a brief description, as well as presentations that require greater investment of time and effort. For every assignment, it is important to ensure that the student has the basic tools needed to present the information, both linguistically (an adequate vocabulary) and in terms of means of presentation (such as visual aids and computer programs). Students should be allowed to present papers in groups or pairs. Extensive guidance should be given for difficult assignments.

Recommendations for short presentations

1. Choose topics from among the subjects studied in English lessons (the family, sports, music, etc.) or other topics that offer the student familiar vocabulary from other subjects he/she is acquainted with.

2. Choose topics from the student's environment, relevant to his/her fields of interest and level of emotional and cognitive performance.

Recommendations for presentations that require a long-term process

1. Provide help in choosing the topic, collecting and sorting material and organizing the material by means of ready-made templates, such as computer copying devices and graphic organizers. Provide detailed written instructions as well.
2. Treat more complex assignments as a multi-phase process, involving such stages as brainstorming, choosing a topic, collecting material, writing drafts and developing the paper.
3. Provide detailed written instructions.
4. Draw up a list of criteria for assessment with the students. These criteria will then be used for the student's self-evaluation and for the teacher's assessment. Examples of criteria include:
 - a. Quality of presentation
 - Is the presentation tidy and organized?
 - Was the paper presented on time?
 - Is the structure of the paper correct – title page, table of contents, list of references?
 - b. Content
 - Does the content suit the subject?
 - c. Correct use of language
 - Is capitalization correct?
 - Is punctuation correct?
 - Is spelling accurate?
 - Is syntax correct?
5. Guide students throughout all stages of the assignment.
6. In the initial stages of guidance, focus on the expressed ideas rather than the accuracy of language. The final version, however, should be presented correctly.
 - a. Quality of presentation
 - Is the presentation tidy and organized?
 - Was the paper presented on time?

- Is the structure of the paper correct – title page, table of contents, list of references?
- b. Content
- Does the content fit the subject?
- c. Correct use of language
- Is capitalization correct?
 - Is punctuation correct?
 - Is spelling accurate?
 - Is syntax correct?
7. Organize an exhibition of the assignments and invite parents, students and teachers to view them.

Domain: Presentation

Type of Difficulty	Teaching Recommendation	Elaboration
Limited vocabulary	In the first stage of preparing the presentation, use brainstorming techniques.	
	Supply a word bank relevant to the subject.	
	Use semantic maps.	
	Teach and practice use of a bilingual dictionary.	
Difficulty constructing a sentence (syntax)	Present many sentences with the same structure and establish common rules (capital letters, position of the verb, etc.).	
	Compare the structure of the sentence with that of the native language.	
	Teach students to build sentences out of single words following a model.	

Type of Difficulty	Teaching Recommendation	Elaboration
Difficulty constructing a paragraph	Teach classification of different sentences into categories, according to their relevance to the topic of the paragraph.	
	Teach sequence words and arrange the sentences in the paragraph according to sequence (first, then, after, etc.).	
	Use a model to teach construction of a paragraph from given sentences.	Cut out the sentences from which to build a paragraph or use a computer.
Difficulty organizing the assignment	<p>Teach accepted structures in various formats, e.g., posters and essays.</p> <p>Teach according to structures of graphic organizers, such as flow charts or comparison tables.</p>	
Difficulty understanding the reader's viewpoint and/or addressing the target reader	Draw attention to the reader by prompting and asking questions.	Ask questions such as : Who did you write to? What did you want to tell him/her?
Difficulty in realistically assessing their assignment	Use a checklist.	Include questions such as: Did I use capitals at the beginning of sentences or for names? Did I use punctuation marks correctly? Is the title suitable for the passage?

Type of Difficulty	Teaching Recommendation	Elaboration
Grapho- Motor difficulties	Use aids.	Encourage use of a computer or writing instruments suitable for dealing with the problem, e.g., suitable pencils.
Spelling errors	Teach and practice basic spelling rules.	
Low self-image	Suggest success-oriented assignments.	
	Encourage use of aids.	Use aids, such as transparencies, PowerPoint presentations, pictures, objects, tape recorders.
	<p>Create a supportive atmosphere in the classroom.</p> <p>Include encouraging remarks in the feedback.</p> <p>Guide the class to find and express positive elements in their peers' presentations.</p> <p>Allow the student to present to the teacher prior to the class presentation.</p>	
Difficulty speaking	Use alternative means of communicating.	Consult a speech therapist and the homeroom teacher.

Domain: Appreciation of Literature and Culture, and Language

General Recommendations

English lessons present an opportunity to introduce students to the culture of English-speaking countries and enrich their knowledge of the world. Use a variety of instructional methods to present and discuss the features of a culture.

Recommendations for enhancing world knowledge and developing sensitivity and empathy towards other cultures

1. Expose students to a variety of types of text.
2. Present video clips featuring different cultures and customs.
3. Develop sensitivity and empathy towards other cultures by acquainting students with their characteristics (through interviews, films, objects), and use this as a basis for discussion.
4. Teach expressions of etiquette in different contexts.

Language appreciation requires high levels of abstraction and is therefore suitable only for those students who will be taking the *Bagrut* examination. As for everyday expressions that are frequent in the language, these should be discussed with all students. When comparing the local culture to a foreign one, attention should be drawn to differences between the languages that stem from cultural differences.

Domain: Appreciation of Literature and Culture, and Language

Type of Difficulty	Teaching Recommendations	Elaboration
Lack of world knowledge	<p>Provide world knowledge in a graded manner, from the closer environment to the wider environment.</p> <p>Compare the local culture with the learned culture.</p>	
Difficulty understanding a literary text: identifying the main character, place/time of event, central conflict and its resolution	<p>Prepare a list of characters and present them to students prior to reading the text.</p> <p>Create suitable templates (e.g., graphic organizers) to facilitate comprehension of the text.</p>	Pictures, movies, videos, drawings

Appendix: Recommended Amendments to the English Curriculum for Visually-Impaired and Blind Students

Since lack of sight hinders the direct intake of information from the environment and makes communication difficult, blind and visually-impaired students need modifications to help them cope with the social and academic demands within the educational framework. The following is a list of modifications. The assisting teacher should select the modifications relevant to each student.

Setting up the study area

- Hang dark curtains in the classroom to prevent excess light.
- Use a thick, black felt-tipped pen on a white board.
- Seat the student in the first row, facing the blackboard.
- Adapt the strength and angle of lighting fixtures to the student's needs.
- Adapt the height of the desk and chair to the student's needs.

Presentation of texts

- Present texts learned in class orally (by audio cassette, or have a peer or tutor read them aloud).
- Submit texts to the assisting teacher in advance, so they can be printed in Braille.
- Enlarge the texts.
- Assistive technology

Autonomous work on assignments

- Keep an accurate journal, recording homework, exam schedules and social activities.
- Keep an aural journal (mini-tape recorder).

Technological aids

- Use closed-circuit television to enlarge texts.
- Use an enlarging program on a computer.
- Use a technological kit for blind students.

Optic aids

- Use optical aids recommended by an optometrist /institute for visual impairment, such as eyeglasses, magnifiers, telescopic glasses.

Non-optic aids

- Use a line window.
- Use a yellow transparency.
- Use a bookstand to prop up the text.
- Use real models.

Verbalizing

- When writing on the blackboard, say what you are writing.
- Describe and explain pictures or other visual aids you are using during the lesson.
- Describe and explain what is going on in the classroom.

Testing

- Read instructions, texts, and questions aloud.
- Read into a tape.
- Write and print exams in Braille.
- Enlarge print for exams and worksheets.
- Use assistive technology.