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මහලුරු  
mi kr;RU  
Minister } 2784832  
Fax: 2784825

ආරාධනා  
nraylsu  
Secretary } 2784812

ආරාධනා  
mYt yfk;  
Office } 2785141 -50  
Fax: 2784846

විද්‍යාල - නිකායා E-mail: isurupaya@moe.gov.lk

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## Circular No 09/2014

To: Provincial Secretaries of Education,  
Provincial Directors of Education  
Provincial Coordinators of English,  
Provincial DDEs/ADEs of English,  
Zonal Directors of Education,  
Zonal DDEs/ADEs of English,  
Principals.

### English Language and Drama Competitions

This is further to my circular number 09/2014 and 19.03.2014 on the above subject. The instructions in conducting English Language and Drama Competitions have been revised as follows. You are kindly requested to take necessary actions accordingly.

National Level English Language and Drama Competitions are held annually at school, divisional/zonal, provincial and national levels, with the objective of promoting the use of English among school children through an enjoyable competition in an informal educational setting. The competitions must be organized in such a way that every student gets an opportunity to show his/her talents and creativity in the use of English from the classroom level to the national level.

This circular must be adhered to in planning, organizing and conducting the competitions so that they are held in a uniform, impartial and reasonable manner throughout the country.

The primary aim of the competitions is to encourage and motivate students to learn English by providing them with opportunities to use English. In this respect, the support and encouragement from the teachers, advisors and administrators will motivate students to use English effectively in everyday life, thus upgrading their fluency and command of English. Moreover, students will get an opportunity to develop their latent talents by participating in the competitions. In addition, the competitions will help to achieve the following objectives as well:

- to enable participation at all levels on an island-wide basis
- to give recognition to the child gifted in the language
- to give recognition to the dedicated teacher

School level competitions must be conducted in such a manner that

- a. they involve every child at school level
- b. they do not disrupt the normal school work
- c. they do not incur unnecessary expenses for the competitors, teachers, schools or parents

Students of government schools, government approved private schools and Pirivena Institutions are eligible to participate in the competitions.

The following schedule must be adhered to in conducting the competitions:

- School level competitions                      From 1<sup>st</sup> January to 15<sup>th</sup> March
- Divisional/Zonal level competitions      From 1<sup>st</sup> May to 31<sup>st</sup> May
- Provincial level competitions              From 1<sup>st</sup> June to 30<sup>th</sup> June
- National level competitions                From 15<sup>th</sup> September to 15<sup>th</sup> October

Officers concerned must make every effort to conduct the competitions according to the above schedule and submit the results in time, **as late entries may be rejected at all levels.**

Categories of competitions are listed in the following chart:

**Individual Events:**

Grade	Handwriting/ Print Script	Handwriting/ Cursive Script	Recitation	Dictation	Creative Writing	Oratory/ Prepared	Oratory/ Impromptu
3	☆		☆				
4	☆		☆				
5	☆		☆				
6	☆		☆	☆	☆		
7	☆		☆	☆	☆		
8	☆		☆	☆	☆		
9	☆		☆	☆	☆		
10	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆		
11	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆		
12	☆	☆		☆	☆	☆	☆
13	☆	☆		☆	☆	☆	☆

**Drama:**

- Primary                      Grade 3 - Grade 5
- Junior                        Grade 6 - Grade 9
- Senior Dialogue          Grade 10 - Grade 13
- Senior Poetic              Grade 10 - Grade 13

It is the responsibility of the Principals to ensure that the competitions are conducted at school level in a fair manner and applications for divisional/zonal level competitions are submitted on time.

A fair chance must be given to every eligible student to participate in the competitions, giving every student the necessary opportunity and encouragement to participate.

**It is essential that competitors for divisional/zonal level are selected on the results of the school level competitions, which must be conducted under the supervision of the Principal, who must certify that the competitions were conducted properly and impartially.**

Zonal authorities may decide whether to have Divisional level competitions after the school level or to have Zonal level competitions without conducting the Divisional level competitions, depending on factors such as the number of competitors involved, amount of time available etc.

Students who win the first and second places at one level are eligible to compete at the next (upper) level of the competitions. For example, students who win the first and second places in the school level competitions are eligible to participate in the divisional/zonal level competitions.

However, in the case of Drama Competitions, only the production that wins the first place is eligible to compete at the next upper level. In some Provinces competitions are first held at levels of school categories (schools are categorized on the school population the lowest - being below 500), and then winners in one category are required to compete with the winners of the other categories. When the competitions are organised in this way, it is necessary to call the first and second places of different categories for the provincial level competition, However competitors who win the first place only can participate at the national level competitions.

Competitions need to be conducted systematically and methodically at all levels. Answer scripts, task sheets, mark sheets, signature sheets and other relevant documents must be preserved for a period of at least three years so that they are available for scrutiny in case of an inquiry.

The maximum number of individual events a competitor can participate in is two, while he or she may participate in the Drama Competition in addition.

All competitors must be in basic school uniform for the individual events at divisional/zonal, provincial and national levels. In order to maintain the anonymity of the competitors during the competitions, arrangements must be made to cover up identifying features such as monograms, so that room for criticism of bias in the judgments can be minimized.

Only the competitors, judges and authorized officers must be allowed to enter the 'competition area' for individual items. Parents, teachers and students are allowed to watch the dramas on condition that they do not disturb the proceedings.

Wearing of make-up is allowed only for students participating in Drama Competitions.

Any grievance at any level - school / divisional/ zonal / provincial/ national should be submitted within 10 days after the completion of the competition at the particular level, to the relevant authorities: Divisional Director, Zonal Director, Provincial Director, National Director - English & Foreign Languages. All such grievances or complaints must be made in writing with responsibility, oral complaints and anonymous complaints will not be entertained.

Results of the Divisional, Zonal and Provincial level competitions should be informed to all the schools that participated in the competitions in writing as soon as the results are finalized.

Results of the National Level Competitions should be informed to the relevant provincial coordinators. It is the responsibility of the relevant provincial coordinator to communicate the said results in writing to the schools that participated in competitions as soon as on receipt. Further the National Level results should be made available at the Ministry of Education website ([www.moe.gov.lk](http://www.moe.gov.lk)) after the results are finalized.

The officers who organize the competitions are responsible for these tasks.

### **Panel of Judges:**

The following need to be taken into consideration.

1. A panel should consist of an indivisible number - minimum of three (3).
2. They should be knowledgeable, honest and impartial.
3. They should be punctual and available for the whole period of the competition.
4. There should be no conflict of interest.
5. There should be no use of mobile phones or contact with others outside.
6. Confidentiality should be maintained at all times.

### **Competitors**

What competitors need to bring for the competition.

1. A valid Identity Card (Postal /National / Passport).
2. A letter from the Principal certifying entries. In the absence of a valid identity card, a photograph certified by the Principal can be produced.
3. Pen / pencil
4. **Competitors need to be punctual as per the given timetable.**

Provincial level results must reach the Director/English and Foreign Languages, by 31<sup>st</sup> August. Results received after this date may be rejected, resulting in competitors from the Province that has not submitted the results on time getting no opportunity to participate in the National Level Competitions.

Detailed descriptions of each of the competitions are given below:

Two types of competitions are held:

1. Written Items - Handwriting, Dictation, Creative Writing
2. Performing Items - Recitation, Oratory, Drama

### **1 Written Items:**

#### **1.1 Handwriting: (Grade 3 - Grade 13)**

This competition is conducted under two categories:

**Handwriting/Print Script:** Students from Grade 3 to 13 can participate in this competition. Competitors must use block (disjoint) letters.

**Handwriting/Cursive Script:** Students from Grade 10 to 13 can participate in this competition. Joined-up writing must be used. Competitors must specifically use **Civil Service Script**. Other styles are not accepted. Civil Service Script is given in **Annex 1**.

Competitors are required to copy a given passage within a limited time. Texts are selected from the relevant text books except at national level, where unseen passages are used. The competitors will be given single ruled paper. Students in Grade 3 and 4 may write with either a pen or a pencil while students from Grade 5 to 13 must use a pen.

The time given for the Handwriting competition is 30 minutes. Text length for each Grade is given below:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Text Length</b>
3, 4, 5	25 to 35 words
6, 7	60 to 70 words
8, 9	80 to 90 words
10, 11	100 to 110 words
12, 13	110 to 120 words

The competitors must copy the whole passage within the given time, all competitors must submit their entries whether complete or incomplete. Competitors who finish the passage before the given time **MUST NOT** write the passage again. Incomplete work may not be considered at all.

Use of correction fluid is prohibited.

### **Hand Writing**

Competitors' work will be judged on the following criteria:

1. Accepted formation of letters	20 Marks
2. Stipulated size among letters	20 Marks
3. Legibility	20 Marks
4. Space between words	20 Marks
5. Punctuation	20 Marks
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 Marks</b>

- ❖ In addition errors in spelling or in missing out words may be accepted to a maximum of three (3). If there is anything above three (3) the entry should be rejected.

### **1.2 Dictation (Grade 6 - Grade 13)**

The Dictation passage is based on the relevant text books at all levels except the national level, where an unseen passage will be used.

The Dictation competition is administered as follows:

First, the whole text is read at normal conversational speed. Competitors must listen and try to understand it. They must not begin to write.

The competitors will be asked to write at the second reading. The text is read in chunks. After each chunk there will be a pause, during which time the competitors are expected to write down what they have heard.

After a pause of 1 minute, the text is read again at normal speaking speed. This provides an opportunity for proofreading.

After that there will be a pause of two minutes. Competitors must use this time to check spelling, capitalization and punctuation.

Instruct competitors to lay their pens down and the entry upside down on their desks. Each competitor will hand over his / her entry to the supervisor and walk out. They can walk in only after every entry has been collected.

Text length of Dictation passages for each Grade is given below:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Text Length</b>
6, 7	60 to 70 words
8, 9	70 to 80 words
10, 11	90 to 100 words
12, 13	100 to 110 words

Competitors' work will be judged on the following criteria:

1. Accuracy of spelling - Mark every error. Reject entries that carry over 7 errors.
2. Write the letter "R" to indicate that the script is rejected, date and sign.
3. Punctuation - Punctuation errors must be marked only in the unrejected entries.
4. In case of no error free entries errors up to three (3) may be acceptable for placing.
5. When two or more entries carry the same mark the same position is given. There will be no place following.  
(e.g.: You may have three 2<sup>nd</sup> places and no 3<sup>rd</sup> place at all.)

If the same word is misspelt several times in the text, it is counted as one error. If a word is omitted it is also counted as one error. Similarly, if a word is added, that too is counted as one error.

A minimum of two judges must be deployed for the administration of the dictation competition. While one judge delivers the text the other judge must make notes on any lapses on the part of the reader, and these notes must be made available to the judges who mark the answer scripts.

### **1.3 Creative Writing** (Grade 6 - Grade 13)

The competitors are required to write on a given topic, which should be selected carefully so that it is within the social, psychological, emotional and cognitive scope of the child. The topic need not be text-based, however, it must be within the experiences and interests of the children of the particular Grade. Particulars about the competition are given in the following chart:

<b>Grades</b>	<b>Time (Minutes)</b>	<b>Minimum Number of Words Expected</b>
6 - 9	20	150
10 - 11	30	200
12 - 13	40	250

A piece of writing that does not have the minimum number of words will be rejected.

Competitors' work will be judged on the following criteria:

1. Creativity/Originality	40 Marks
2. Grammar and Spelling	20 Marks
3. Adherence to topic	10 Marks
4. Organisation/ Coherence	30 Marks
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 Marks</b>

Marks given for each category must be clearly indicated at the bottom of the page.

$$\frac{\quad}{40} \quad , \quad \frac{\quad}{20} \quad , \quad \frac{\quad}{10} \quad , \quad \frac{\quad}{30} \quad = \quad \frac{\quad}{100}$$

## 2. Performing Items

### 2.1 Recitation (Grade 3 - Grade 11)

Poems for Recitation will be prescribed periodically by the English and Foreign Languages Branch of the Ministry of Education. The prescribed list of poems for 2016 and beyond is given in **Annex 2**.

The competitor must face the board of judges when reciting the poem. There should be a distance of about 3 metres between the competitor and the panel of judges.

Organisers must ensure a quiet atmosphere for the Recitation Competition. However, if interruptions occur during the Recitation; for example, barking of dogs or other external noises, then the competitor may be given a chance to recite the poem again from the beginning. If a competitor forgets the lines while reciting, marks will be deducted.

Criteria for judging the Recitation are given below:

1. The content, the tone, the mood, of the poem must be expressed through voice without resorting to action.	-	20 Marks.
2. Pronunciation	-	20 Marks
3. Posture/Eye Contact	-	20 Marks

4. Audibility / Pitch (Audibility and Pitch should not be at the sacrifice of meaning and expression)	-	20 Marks
5. Pace/Pause / Rhythm	-	20 Marks
<b>Total</b>	-	<b>100 Marks</b>

❖ **Reduce marks for lack of accuracy in recall. Give a grace mark of one (1) for lapses up to 2, reject beyond 3. This relates to item 1 of the criteria.**

## 2.2 Oratory (Grade 12 - Grade 13)

The competitor must face the board of judges when delivering the speech. There should be a distance of about 3 metres between the competitor and the judges.

There are two categories of oratorical competitions.

**Oratory/Prepared:** A speech delivered by a famous person is to be re-delivered by the competitor. Speech texts will be prescribed periodically by the English and Foreign Languages Branch of the Ministry of Education. Texts of prescribed speeches for 2016 and beyond are given in **Annex 3**.

The time allotted for a speech is approximately 5 minutes.

Criteria for Judging Oratory/Prepared:

1. Delivery/Fluency (Understanding of content)	-	20 Marks
2. Pronunciation	-	20 Marks
3. Posture/Eye Contact	-	20 Marks
4. Audibility / Pitch/ Clarity (Audibility and Pitch should not be at the sacrifice of meaning and expression)	-	20 Marks
5. Expression, Tone, Mood	-	20 Marks
<b>Total</b>	-	<b>100 Marks</b>

**Oratory/Impromptu:** The competitors will be given the topic ten minutes before they are due to present the speech. The time allowed for this competition is three minutes. A warning bell sounds at two minutes and a final bell at three minutes.

Criteria for Judging Oratory/Impromptu:

1. Content/ Relevance / Organization	20 Marks
2. Delivery/Fluency/Persuasion	20 Marks
3. Posture/Eye Contact	20 Marks
4. Audibility / Clarity	20 Marks
5. Pronunciation	20 Marks



- ❖ In all three (3) items Recitation and Oratory Prepared and Impromptu the content, the tone, the mood must be expressed through the voice without resorting to action.

### 2.3 Drama (Grade 3 - Grade 13)

The Drama Competition serves as a platform for students and teachers to promote and demonstrate creative ideas in their work. Drama motivates students to use English and therefore, their command of the language can be improved.

Each drama must incorporate one of the following themes:

Love	Socio-cultural	Environment	Humanity
Peace and harmony	Historical Events	Myth/Legend	Dynamism

This rule does not apply to the Poetic Drama category.

Select themes so that they will instill values amongst students to be more sensitive and appreciative of human beings - emotional, social and cultural issues.

There are four categories of Drama as given below.

Category	Group	Duration in Minutes
Primary	Grade 3 - 5	20
Junior	Grade 6 - 9	25
Senior/Dialogue	Grade 10 - 13	30
Senior/Poetic	Grade 10 - 13	30

The Dialogue Drama is taken to be characterized by the use of the language of day-to-day speech as related to everyday living. A drama written wholly or mainly in verse or in a heightened poetic form of prose is referred to as a Poetic Drama.

The duration of the dramas presented for the competitions must adhere to the specified times shown above. A drama five (5) minutes shorter or longer than the specified time will be disqualified. Five (5) marks will be deducted if the drama is three (3) minutes shorter or longer than the specified time.

All dramas presented for the competitions must be original productions. Any drama already presented on a previous occasion will be disqualified. The Principal must certify that the drama is an original production. Moreover, the script of the drama should be made available to the organisers in advance.

Competition

## **1 Number**

The number of students participating in a drama should not be less than six or more than twelve. Any competitors used as props are also counted as characters. Schools are advised not to use students as props for it will deprive them of an opportunity to display their talents.

## **2 Assistance:-**

Once the performance has started, school students or teachers as relevant can be allowed for any help behind the curtain. Competing teams can make arrangements to play a CD or a DVD as well. The organisers, however, are not responsible for any failure or breakdown in this respect. No outside professional assistance is acceptable.

**Please provide the names of persons from whom such assistance have been received if any.**

## **3 Certification from the Principal :-**

- I. Names of persons from whom professional assistance has been obtained.
  - ✓ Costumes
  - ✓ Music
  - ✓ Directing
  - ✓ Duration of professional support.
- II. The authenticity of the script.
- III. The authenticity of the production.

Presentations may not contain more than 10% singing.

Priority will be given to dramatic performance rather than to the use of props, music, expensive costumes etc.

Participants should wear costumes appropriate to the characters, with attention to period. (Elizabethan / Victorian / Modern and so on)

Each team is responsible for the setting up (5 Minutes) and clearing of sets and props (5 minutes). Timing of the presentation starts with the first movement, first word uttered or any sound effects, once the stage is cleared.

Service of a prompter is allowed. However, the prompter must do his/her part unobtrusively. The prompter must be one of the students from the competing school, and is not counted as a member of the cast.

Attempts at identifying one's team and addresses to the judges may only result in loss of time and effect.

What is creative innovative, effective and economical will be given preference over mere theatricality.

## **What is not acceptable**

1. Use of obscene words alcohol, sharp objects, fire, inflammable and dangerous chemical substances, items suggesting drugs, smoking.
2. Use of attire suggestive of immodesty.
  
3. Interpretation in terms of overt sexual behavior, violence and deliberate perversion of morality / values.
4. Use of non - English inputs.
5. Scripts with reference to sensitive issues regarding public sensitivity.
6. Scripts and adaptations that have already been presented. Substantial evidence of such earlier presentations - strongly reminiscent of previous shows - will lead to disqualification.

Criteria for judging the Drama competition are given below:

1. Creativity / Authenticity / Consistency (relevance of theme / message)	20 Marks
2. Audibility, clarity, accuracy (pronunciation)	20 Marks
3. Use of Stage space, involvement of all actors	20 Marks
4. Costumes / Makeup	10 Marks
5. Relevant / economical / effective use of stage props	10 Marks
6. Acting - appropriacy to the role	20 Marks
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 Marks</b>

As a step towards making use of the 'marks' allotted for each category please make use of the following general outline given below.

3 - 5	-	Weak
6 - 8, 9	-	Acceptable
10 - 15 -		Good
16 - 20 -		error free commendable

- ❖ **Productions that do not take up the allocated time or go over the allocated time will be penalized.**
- ❖ **For a difference of 3 minutes, 5 marks will be reduced.**
- ❖ **For a difference of 5 minutes, the entry will be disqualified.**

It is expected that all concerned adhere to this circular, the aim of which is to help improve the standard of English in the country.

W.M. Bandusena  
Secretary  
Ministry of Education