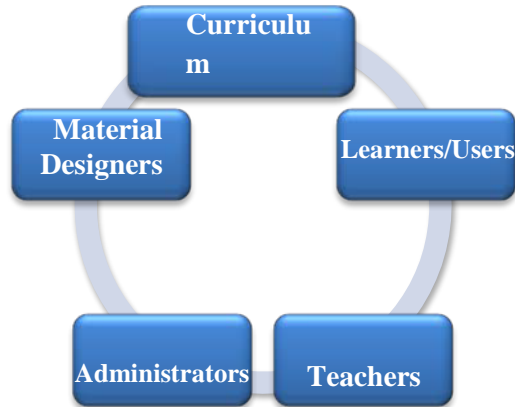


1. FOREWORD

9th-12th Grades English Curriculum

This curriculum has been designed in accordance with the descriptive and pedagogical principals of **The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)**. Therefore, the language proficiency levels are reflected as A1, A2 (Basic Users) and B1, B2 (Independent Users). The approach adapted is an action-oriented approach since in this program, the target language (English) is seen as a vehicle for communication rather than a lesson to study. The main goal of the new 9th-12th grades English Curriculum is to engage learners of English in stimulating, motivating, and enjoyable learning environments so that they become effective, fluent, and self-directed users of English. In order to achieve the goals of the curriculum and for successful implementation, it's of great importance that all the leading stakeholders (learners/users, teachers, administrators, material designers) in education collaborate.



2. MAJOR PHILOSOPHY AND GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF THE 9th-12th GRADES ENGLISH CURRICULUM

The teaching program for English has been prepared in line with the general goals of Turkish National Education as defined in the Basic Law of the National Education No. 1739, along with the Main Principles of Turkish National Education.

The updates and revisions done in the new 2nd – 8th Grades English Curriculum (MEB-TTKB, 2017) have called for an update in the 9th-12th Grades English Curriculum. In this sense, the 9th-12th Grades English Curriculum can be seen as a continuum of the 2nd-8th Grades English Curriculum. Following the same communicative focus in the 2nd-8th Grades English Curriculum, the curriculum designed for the 9th-12th Graders is intended to foster communicative skills in English among learners. However, due to the different age ranges and language needs of students in the 9th-12th Grades, gradually increasing emphasis on the integration of four language skills is incorporated in this program. Students in the 9th-12th Grades English classes also have several academic English needs. In addition, students at this age are expected to be more conscious about the language learning process in their native language which can be transferred to the second language learning experience. Therefore, limited study of some complex language structures are dispersed within the curriculum. In addition, considering the real-life experiences of learners, more instructional technology tools are used across all grades in the 9th-12th grades English curriculum.

There are several interdependent language teaching and language principles reoccurring in the 9th-12th Grades English Curriculum. First of all, English is seen as **a lingua franca** and **international language** used in today's global world. As travel has become more common in the last decade, different cultures are in constant contact and use of English as an international language “involves crossing borders literally and figuratively” (McKay, 2002, p. 81). English is also used mostly as the language of science and technology. In order to share their ideas and culture with other people from different cultures and countries, our learners need to use English actively, productively, and communicatively. **Communicative competence** has four main aspects: a) grammatical competence, b) discourse competence, c) sociolinguistic competence, and d) strategic competence. (Canale & Swain, 1980). It has been over four decades since Dell Hymes (1972) coined the term “Communicative Competence” and more than three decades since Canale and Swain (1980) elaborated it. Nevertheless, lack of effective communicative competence has remained to be the problem of many learners in English language classes in Turkey. It is often stated that in Turkish EFL education context, priority has been given to grammatical competence with too much focus on teaching and assessing grammatical structures in English. To take a step in overcoming this problem, the new 9th-12th Grades English Curriculum was designed to take all aspects of communicative competence into consideration in English classes by addressing **functions** and **four skills of language** in an **integrated** way and focusing on “How” and “Why?” in language rather than merely on “What?”.

In addition, in the 9th-12th Grades English Curriculum **collaboration** among students is encouraged more than competition because collaborative activities are more in line with the natural process of language learning in which learners have to interact with each other to negotiate meaning and practice interpersonal skills that are necessary to become effective communicators (Crawford, 2007). Collaboration also meets the affective needs of **adolescent learners** more than

competition as adolescents are generally more reliant on their peers and “see their friends as more trusted confidants compared to the adults in their lives” (Powell, 2010, p.114). Adolescents go through significant physical, cognitive, and emotional change and they are in pursuit of forming their own identities (Brown, 2000) as well as independence. Crawford (2007) also states that “young adolescents crave for exploration, peer interaction, and personal autonomy” (p.17). Therefore, fostering **learner autonomy** is an important principle adopted in the new 9th-12th grades English curriculum. As Powell (2010) points out “*alone* is not synonymous with *autonomous*” (p. 105). In the curriculum students of English are intended to get support and guidance from their teachers, peers, learning materials, and learning tasks so that there is a gradual increase in learner autonomy through collaboration, interaction, and communication in a safe learning environment. In addition, learners are encouraged to be reflective in their own learning by recognizing and assessing their own needs, strengths, weaknesses as effective managers of their own learning (Penaflorida, 2002). Another way to increase autonomy among learners is to include them in the decision making process, especially in providing supplementary language learning materials, which can also increase learner motivation in the classroom (McCrath, 2013). Throughout the 9th-12th grades English curriculum students are encouraged to be involved in **task-based**, collaborative, and **project-based** language activities that would empower learners by increasing their self-esteem, autonomy, and language skills (Stoller, 2002).

In order to sustain such a productive, communicative, and dynamic language learning environment, the assessment techniques used should also reflect the language teaching and learning methods. One of the significant causes of lack of communicative competence among most Turkish learners of English is that in general there has been a mismatch between the nature of language learning process and language assessment types and tools in English classes. In other words, even if we teach communicatively, this does not guarantee the development of communicative competence among learners because learners’ output in language is not being assessed communicatively. Therefore, **authentic assessment** tools that give way to communicative assessment are included in the new 9th-12th grades English programs. Throughout the curriculum, in line with the alternative assessment principles, learners are asked to show what they can do and produce rather than what they are able to recall and reproduce (Huerta-Macias, 2002).

Considering the realities of language classes with overpopulated classrooms, some authentic assessment tasks can be impractical and/or too subjective to handle. However, another reality of the education is that assessment plays an important role in determining the success of learners that is mostly associated with getting high grades. Administrators, teachers, parents, and learners like in any field of study still consider high grades as great motivational tools. In other words, if a topic or skill is not assessed, it is unlikely to be given priority in the classroom to be improved. Overcoming this backwash effect of assessment is especially required in language classes in which traditional assessment techniques are no longer relevant to evaluate the communicative output of learners. Therefore, in the 9th-12th grades English curriculum authentic assessment techniques that reflect the tasks students will encounter outside schools are used (Marsh, 2009). To reflect the real-life experiences of learners, echo the multisensory nature of language learning, and increase the level of practicality as well as management of data in assessment, the use of instructional technology is extensively used throughout the grades and units in the curriculum.