



Department of Curriculum Management

Tel: 2598 2478 / 2598 2480

Email: gaetano.bugeja@ilearn.edu.mt

LETTER CIRCULAR

Information: X

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Action Required: X

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To: All Heads of State Primary Schools and Sections

From: Tony Pace – Education Officer, Primary

Subject: Changes in the Primary Social Studies Syllabus Years 1 to 6

Heads of Primary Schools and teachers are kindly asked to note changes in the syllabus of Social Studies that apply as from the scholastic year 2014-2015. The changes being conducted for Social Studies are guided by the successful piloting of SSAR (Social Studies Assessment Reorganization) in all Year five State School classes during scholastic year 2013-2014. Feedback received from Year five teachers was mainly positive (available at: <http://primarysocialstudies.skola.edu.mt/?p=2397>).

1. Syllabi

The syllabus content to be covered as from September 2014 will be divided as follows:

- a. **Core content:** Teaching Blocks (Units of teaching) indicated as ‘core’, were identified and schools will be expected to cover the core content by the end of the scholastic year. In the case of Years 4, 5 and 6, the national End-of-Year written exam will be based solely and entirely on this core content.
- b. **Elective content:** Schools will be expected to choose and cover at least three teaching blocks from a given list of at least six.

In Year Three, there are no formal assessments. Thus teachers will cover the three teaching blocks identified as ‘core’ and choose any other three teaching blocks from the other six constituting the ‘elective’ content.

Years One and Two are encouraged to cover the entire suggested content.

As regards the elective content, schools shall present their proposal of what they intend to cover to the College Principal, who shall formally endorse. The Education Officer for Social Studies (Primary) shall act as curriculum advisor to the College Principals if so requested.

2. Assessment

Assessment/s will be as follows:

- a. The Mid-Year written examination for Years 4, 5 and 6 will continue to be College-based but on an 80 marks basis, covering the learning during the first semester (September 2014 – January 2015).
- b. The Annual examination will continue to be national (issued by the Educational Assessment Unit) but on 80 marks basis, covering the core content of the syllabus.
- c. Throughout the year, two fieldwork trips or a fieldwork trip and a project will be undertaken; these will be assessed by the class teacher as part of the normal class-based assessment, each on a 20-mark basis.

The mark scored for the first (compulsory) fieldwork exercise (out of a maximum of 20) will feature in the Mid-Year report while the mark scored for either the fieldwork or the project (also out of a maximum of 20) will feature as part of the End-of-Year school report.

3. Fieldwork trips and/or Project

A minimum of one Fieldwork Exercise will be carried out by every primary school class from Year three to Year six between October 2014 and the end of January 2015.

A set of work directives (fieldwork notes) will be made available by the Department of Curriculum Management; the work directives will be distributed to all schools by the end of September 2014.

During the last term teachers in charge of Years 4, 5 and 6 can choose one of the following to form part of their students' Annual Social Studies assessment: either (a) a second fieldwork trip, or (b) a project.

Work directives (fieldwork notes) in connection with the (optional) second fieldwork will be made available online and schools can download and print their own copies.

Students opting in favour of the Project will select a title from a list of topics that constitute half of all the topics in the respective year list. Projects should be completed by students and assessed by their teacher by the 15th of May. The Projects' list will change from year to year so that all the topics are addressed in a two-year cycle. This annual list will be determined by the Department of Curriculum Management and communicated to schools by the end of June of each scholastic year.

4. Support for Implementation

Supporting documents as well as assessment criteria for the project and fieldwork exercises can be found on **Social Studies Primary – A Handbook: Years One to Six** – available online (FRONTER) at EOs' Subject Rooms – Social Studies Primary, and on the website at: <http://primarysocialstudies.skola.edu.mt/>.

Any queries and/or requests for support are to be addressed to: tony.pace.2@ilearn.edu.mt (Tel: 25982906).

Thank you for your collaboration.

Gaetano Bugeja
Director, Curriculum Management