

English SBA update: April 2006

As of the HKEAA press release of 11 April 2006, there are some modifications to the English Language SBA. These will come into effect immediately, so it is important that you are aware of the impact these changes will have on you and your students.

The relevant material from the *SBA Kit* has been revised to reflect these modifications. Please use the checklist below to ensure you have all the necessary documents to update your current teaching materials.

Checklist of revised materials for *SBA Kit*

| Revised document | What to do with it | Changes addressed |
|---|---|--|
| <i>SBA Kit</i> Teaching Resources: Frequently asked questions, pp. 6a–b | This is an additional two-page insert. Insert between pages 6 and 7. | This insert includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the changes to English SBA • Timeline of implementation of SBA • Reasons for recent changes to SBA • What these changes mean for you and your students |
| <i>SBA Kit</i> Teaching Resources: Frequently asked questions, p. 7 | This is a replacement page for page 7. Remove the original page and replace it with this one. | In 'How is the final mark decided?': 'Three of these marks will go towards the student's final SBA mark' has been replaced with: 'Two of these marks will go towards the student's final SBA mark' |
| <i>SBA Kit</i> Student Book: Frequently asked questions, p. 1 | This is a replacement page for page 1. Remove the original page and replace it with this one. | In the first paragraph: 'You have to read and view four texts' has been replaced with: 'You have to read and view three texts'. There is a new breakdown of marks. This illustrates that there are only two assessed tasks, each worth 7.5% of the final mark for English. The following changes can be found in the new flowchart: 'Read 2 books' and 'View 2 films/documentaries' has been replaced with: 'Read/view 3 texts (books, films, documentaries) from three of the following four categories': 'Participate in 2 group interactions' has been replaced with: 'Carry out 1 task, either group interaction or individual presentation, in the second semester'. 'Participate in 1 group interaction and give 1 individual presentation' has been replaced with: 'Carry out 1 task, either group interaction or individual presentation'. |
| <i>SBA Kit</i> Student Book: Frequently asked questions, p. 2 | This is a replacement page for page 2. Remove the original page and replace it with this one. | In 'How do I choose what texts to read/view?': 'You need to choose at least two titles from the list. For the other two, you can choose any texts that you like. For these two remaining titles, you should choose ones that you are interested in and which are not too hard for you.' has been replaced with: 'However, you may choose any three titles that you like, are interested in and which are not too hard for you'. In 'How will I be assessed?': 'You will be assessed on your performance in the assessment tasks. That is, how you do in the group interaction and individual presentation.' has been replaced with: 'You will be assessed on your performance, or how well you do, in the assessment tasks'. In 'Group interactions': 'You will be assessed on three speaking tasks with at least one other classmate.' has been replaced with: 'In the group interaction, you will be assessed on a speaking task with at least one other classmate'. |

What changes have been made to English Language SBA?

Overview

Compare this overview to the previous version on page 5.

| | Overall | Form 4 | Form 5 |
|---|--|---|--|
| What texts do students use? | Three, from three of the following four categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • print fiction • print non-fiction • non-print fiction • non-print non-fiction | One or two texts. | One or two texts. |
| How are students assessed? | They do two tasks, each on a text from a different category. | They do one task in the second semester. This can be either group interaction or individual presentation. | They do one task at any time. This can be either group interaction or individual presentation. |
| How much of the total English mark is SBA worth? | 15% of the total English mark. | 7.5%. | 7.5%. |

The use of texts

There are fewer compulsory texts: down from 4 to 3.

You no longer have to use two texts from the HKEAA-recommended list.

“After the modification the list will be for reference only. The recommended texts may still be used but any other texts can be chosen according to the text selection criteria provided on page 1 of the document ‘Recommended Texts for the SBA Component’. The updated version of the document can be accessed on the HKEAA website: www.hkeaa.edu.hk starting from 29 April 2006.”

Hong Kong Examination and Assessment Authority, 25 April 2006

Assessment

There are fewer assessment tasks: down from 4 to 2.

In both assessment tasks, schools can choose the type of task (group interaction or individual presentation).

Timeline for implementation

SBA must start in 2007, but inclusion of students' marks can be deferred until 2009.

2007

Each school selects one of the following options:

Option 1

Submit SBA marks for feedback from HKEAA and contribute 15% of the final English result.

OR

Option 2

Submit SBA marks for feedback from HKEAA. Examination results to contribute 100% of English result.

OR

Option 3

Not submit SBA marks of students. Examination results to contribute 100% of English result.

2008

Each school selects one of the following options:

Option 1

Submit SBA marks for feedback from HKEAA and contribute 15% of the final English result.

OR

Option 2

Submit SBA marks for feedback from HKEAA to the school on the outcomes of statistic moderation. Examination results to contribute 100% of English result.

2009

All schools must:

Submit SBA marks for feedback from HKEAA and contribute 15% of the final English result.

What's the reason behind these changes?

The concept of SBA was generally well-received amongst schools. However, as with any major educational reform, it is a big adjustment for all concerned. Research suggested that many teachers felt overwhelmed or ill-prepared for the English Language SBA.

The HKEAA listed the following aims for the recent modifications:

1 To simplify the design of SBA

Teachers felt that the system was unnecessarily complicated. This has been made more straightforward, with the workload and weighting in Form 4 the same as that of Form 5.

2 To give schools time to adjust to SBA

With such a fundamental change to the assessment system, it was felt that teachers and students should be given adequate time to adjust. In 2007 and 2008, schools can choose for their students' SBA marks to not count towards their final marks. This gives schools two years to get used to SBA without being assessed on it. From 2009 onwards, however, SBA marks must count.

3 To allow for variation between schools

The new SBA component involves not only speaking but also reading and/or viewing texts. While many students will excel at this

type of examination, for others this will be challenging. With this in mind, the minimum number of texts has been reduced, as has the number of assessment tasks. Stronger students will be able to do more than the required minimum, however.

What do these changes mean for me and my students?

Your workload will be more manageable

SBA is now streamlined and the requirements simplified, with students doing one text and one assessment task per year. This also means that the compulsory workload has been reduced, so teachers and students alike have time to adjust to the demands of the new curriculum.

You will have more control over your students' workload

The modifications also give schools greater flexibility. The workload will be sufficiently challenging for less able students, yet teachers are free to do more texts and/or tasks if students need stretching.

You must decide if you plan to submit your students' SBA marks in 2007

Each school must decide if they plan to submit students' SBA marks in 2007, and if these marks should count towards their final English result. The HKEAA will contact schools with further information.

Can I talk to my students during the assessment?

Remember you are a facilitator during the assessments, so this means you can help the task go smoothly. However, remember to help only when necessary. In the group interactions, students should be encouraged to demonstrate communicative strategies by controlling the discussion and involving one another. You should not interrupt a student giving an individual presentation, but you may use follow-up questions to give him/her the chance to extend on or clarify the content.

For further guidance, see the suggestions for suitable questions for each relevant text type.

How do I record the marks?

Each time a student does a task, you complete an assessment record. This covers the specifics of the task and the final mark. It is signed by you and the student.

You will also keep a class record, which is cumulative, listing all the marks for each student in the class. It is signed by you, the Principal and the SBA coordinator.

How is the final mark decided?

Students will do a formative (practice) task followed by a summative task. As these two tasks must be similar, the formative one is valuable preparation for the real thing. Students receive feedback, rather than a mark, from the formative task. The mark from the summative task will count towards the final mark if it is reported.

For each summative task, students are given a mark from 0 to 6 on four speaking domains, the maximum total being 24 marks. Two of these marks will go towards the student's final SBA mark (15% of the total English mark).

Should I share the assessment criteria with my students?

Yes. The Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) guidelines stress that students should have read and understood the criteria. See Booklet 7 for various versions to use with your students.

Is it necessary to videotape the task? Won't it make students more nervous?

A recording of a task is an accurate record of it, which is needed for SBA quality assurance. Although video is preferred, audio is also acceptable.

The benefit of using video is that you can watch the recording together and give feedback to your students. This will help them get used to the camera's presence.

How will the HKEAA ensure marking is fair amongst schools?

Training teachers, familiarizing them with the anchor levels and giving them practice of marking students will all help ensure fairness. Standardization serves the same purpose.

Do students get any feedback on their tasks?

Yes. You should give feedback after each task, in particular the formative ones. You can give some general group pointers but also individual comments so that each student knows what to aim for next time. In addition, you should encourage students to self or peer assess.

Further information

For up-to-date information, including downloadable samples of tasks and criteria, see the following websites:

The Education and Manpower Bureau SBA website:

www.emb.gov.hk/index.aspx?nodeID=2&langno=1

HKed City: <http://ec.hkedcity.net/sba>

Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority:

http://eant01.hkeaa.edu.hk/hkea/new_look_home.asp

Hong Kong University's School-based Assessment Project website:

<http://web.hku.hk/~sbapro/index.html>

Oxford University Press New HKCEE Centre:

www.oupchina.com.hk/elt/newhkcee/