

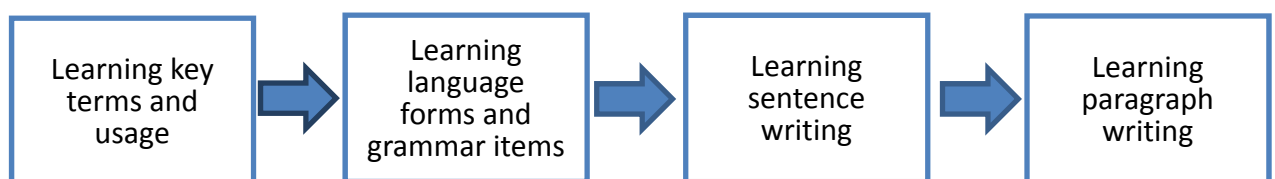
Adopting a whole-school approach to promote Language across the Curriculum at the junior secondary level

HK & KLN Kaifong Women's Association Sun Fong Chung College has adopted a whole-school approach to implement Language across the Curriculum (LaC). The school has set up a LaC Committee composed of teachers of English Language, Geography, History, Integrated Science and Computer and Information Technology. The committee aims to improve students' English language skills and familiarise them with the vocabulary and language patterns commonly used in the subjects mentioned previously. To achieve these aims, every junior secondary class is assigned one LaC lesson per week.

Teachers engage in the following steps to plan the LaC lessons.

1. They engage in a curriculum mapping process to identify how English language learning and subject content learning can be integrated to facilitate learning in the four subjects and enhance English language skills.
2. They determine the topics of interest to students and choose reading passages on those topics as learning and teaching resources for the lessons.
3. English Language teachers distinguish the common language patterns used in the four subjects and design the language forms and grammar items that will be taught.
4. They plan the teaching schedule to show when the topics will be taught.
5. They choose reading passages on extended topics from the four subjects to enrich learning.
6. They plan pre-lesson reading or video-watching activities to prepare students for the LaC lessons.

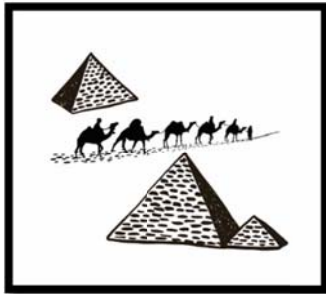
In general, learning activities in LaC lessons are ordered as follows:



An example from one of their reading materials: Egypt - Pyramids and tombs

Understand the key terms and the meaning of the passage through activities

Passage 7: Egypt – Pyramids and tombs



The Egyptians built their tombs on the western bank of the Nile. This is the Land of the Dead, where the sun god Amun-Ra sets over the desert every evening. The Sun's journey inspired the Egyptians. They believed that a person's spirit travels through the underworld after death, like the sun at night. If it survives in the dangerous journey, the spirit rises again, like the sun in the morning. To prepare for the next world, rich Egyptians were buried with valuable objects. Other objects that might be buried were clothing, tools, furniture, make-up, games, even loaves of bread, and fine wines. Their magnificent tombs were cut deep into the rock. The walls were painted with magic spells and pictures of the gods to help them on their way.

The passage contains key vocabularies commonly used in History.

Learn the vocabulary and usage

Part A – Vocabulary building

Fill in the blanks with the most suitable words.

Rich Egyptians
were buried
with

(1) _____
objects, such as treasures.

daily necessities, such as
(2) _____, tools,
(3) _____ and make-up.

food and drinks such as
(4) _____ and
(5) _____.

Students need to fill in the blanks with the appropriate vocabulary mentioned in the passage.

Learn the language form, grammar items and sentence pattern

Part B – Making sentences

Rewrite the following sentences by using the sentence pattern given below.

The passive voice: subject + be + past participle

	subject	be	past participle	preposition	more descriptions
e.g.	Rich Egyptians	were	buried	with	valuable objects.

1. The tombs of queens/ kings/ wealthy officials/ decorated/ wall paintings

Students learn the sentence pattern that is commonly used in History.

Paragraph writing

Part C – Writing a paragraph

With the help of the pictures and the sentence pattern, write a paragraph to describe how the Egyptians built pyramids.



With the help of the vocabulary and the sentence pattern learned, students have to write a paragraph to describe how the Egyptians built pyramids.

There are two different opinions about building the pyramids. Some historians said that _____ were _____ along a _____. Other historians believed that _____.

Various methods are used to assess student learning in LaC lessons. For instance, there is the “Thursday Dictation” of selected vocabulary, sentences and short paragraphs learned in the passages during LaC lessons, where tasks of different levels of difficulty are set for classes of different abilities. In the English Language examination, students are assessed on one of the reading passages used in the LaC lessons.

Other activities are used to promote LaC. Speaking activities based on LaC subjects are organised on English Speaking Day, which is every Tuesday. LaC Speaking Games are organised twice a week during lunchtime to help students practise the vocabulary and sentences learned in the LaC lessons.

Students are evaluated at the end of the school year. Student questionnaires are used to collect feedback on the topics and difficulty of the passages, while teacher questionnaires are used to collect class/LaC teachers’ comments on the content and pedagogy. Considering the evaluation from previous years, it is evident that students’ awareness of relevant language items has increased, their writing skills have improved and they are more interested in learning the subjects.

If you are interested in Language across the Curriculum, read also Examples 8, 24 and 25.
