Twinkle Twinkle

English 1–4

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English 1–4

4th edition

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Introduction

Twinkle Twinkle started life twenty years ago as a do-it-yourself in-service course for teachers of English in school years 1–4. The response was so positive that we continued developing the material, and published it as a book, in order to reach even more students and teachers. There are almost a quarter of a million pupils in Years 1–4 in Norway today, so how well they are taught English is a matter of considerable importance.

in-service course – etterutdanningskurs

publish – utgi

Twinkle Twinkle has now been on the market since 2002, and we are delighted that it is widely used in colleges and universities. The book has been revised three times, making this the fourth edition. Teacher educators have encouraged us to include central theoretical perspectives and research findings, and we have taken this advice on board. Students usually tell us that they like the book being simple and practical, so we have tried our best to keep *Twinkle Twinkle's* plain-speaking style, and to combine theoretical perspectives with a focus on practical advice and concrete suggestions.

So what are 'theoretical perspectives'? Theory can be defined in different ways, but one definition sees theory as a systematic way of understanding complex processes. Teaching and learning English are, without a doubt, complex processes. This means that theory is not an irrelevant abstraction, but something that enables us to make informed choices about what we do in the classroom, and to talk about these choices in an informed way. Though we may not always realise it, we all have ideas about how children learn and how one should teach. So we need to raise these ideas, and the values and beliefs that underpin them, to a level of conscious awareness. Knowing about other people's ideas, values and beliefs, other people's

theories, helps us to become aware of our own. Theory enables us to explain, justify or change how we teach. Theory can empower us to resist changes that others might try to impose, but that we find ill-judged or unacceptable.

impose – påtvinge

ill-judged – uklok

Since the third edition in 2015, there has been a revision of the national curriculum, with a focus on in-depth learning and core elements. We have therefore largely rewritten the chapter on *Kunnskapsløftet*, and revised all the other chapters too. We have expanded our discussions of research and theory, and added new teaching ideas and resources. All the pictures in the book are made by pupils in Years 1–4. We hope you enjoy them. We hope, too, that they help make the point that this is a book about **children** – their curiosity, their creativity, their energy and their huge capacity to learn.

We realise that many of you are asked to teach English without being formally qualified to do so, for it is still the case that many teachers who are responsible for English lessons in the first years of primary school have little or no specialised training in teaching English. Not everybody has had the chance to attend in-service courses such as *Kompetanse for Kvalitet*, or school-based development courses such as *DEKOMP*, in subject English.

We hope that both those of you who are already teaching and those of you who are training to become teachers will continue to find support and useful ideas in this new edition. We hope that it can function as a practical handbook and as an inspiration in your daily work, by helping you to put what you already know into the context of the national curriculum, and in showing you new ways of doing so. We know that life as a primary school teacher is loaded with challenges and hard work, and that Super Teachers and Super Pupils are few and far between. For most of us, some small daily successes are what we can achieve.

similar to – lik

To make *Twinkle Twinkle* as similar to face-to-face teaching as possible, we have several ways of getting you involved. We don't want you to just read and try to remember what you have read. We want you to think about what it means for you as an English teacher. So at the beginning of each chapter we present a very short summary of what the chapter is about, and ask a **kick-off question**. You will find



kick-off symbol

think bubbles here and there, with questions we would like you to think through or discuss before reading on. To guide you as you read, we have put key words in **bold type**. We have translated less familiar words in the margin next to the text where they appear.



think symbol

achieve – oppnå

Each chapter helps students achieve the learning outcomes in the national plan for teacher education for Years 1–7 (2016). Even this short chapter is intended to help you "critically reflect over your own learning and practices". At the end of each chapter, we suggest **tasks** you can do. Perhaps you could form a group that can work together on these tasks. By doing so, GLU students would be working towards the learning outcome in the national curriculum for GLU which stipulates that they should "work independently and with others to map and adapt in order to promote pupils' learning and development".



task symbol

Now a word about the language in the book. We have chosen to write in English and have tried to keep the language quite simple, because

- We try to practise what we preach. It would be giving the wrong signal if we told you to use English as much as possible with your pupils without doing so ourselves.
- We see this as a chance for you to develop your English so that you can use it with confidence in the classroom.
- There are many resource books and websites for the teaching of English to young learners. Reading *Twinkle Twinkle* may make it easier for you to make good use of these resources.
- We have chosen a relatively informal style, using shortened forms such as 'don't' and 'let's', in the hope that this makes reading the book a more friendly experience than it would have been if we had used a more formal style.

preach – preke

We have translated all quotations from the curriculum from Norwegian into English. We have collected a fairly long list of picturebooks suitable for learners in Years 1-4. You will find them on pp. 222–224. We would also like to point out that the reference list on pp. 218–221 is in APA format, so that you can, if you wish, use it as a model when you write references for your own academic texts.

We would like to thank the editor of this fourth edition, Maria R. Braadland, for her many constructive suggestions, and Richard Peel for his attention to detail and his sensitive reading in order to make the language as clear and correct as we can make it. We thank our colleagues for their encouragement and their willingness to discuss questions, large and small. Last but not least, we thank the hundreds of students and primary teachers we have talked with and learnt from over the years.

Juliet Munden and Astrid Myhre

Hamar, Spring 2020

CHAPTER 1

English and the national curriculum

This chapter is about the curriculum, in theory and in practice. We start by looking at how the renewed ***Kunnskapsløftet* of 2020** is put together, and the guidelines it sets for education in Norway. In particular, we look at the curriculum for subject English in Years 1–4. You will also read about how the curriculum is interpreted: in national tests, mapping tools, and in textbooks and other learning resources. The last part of the chapter reviews the various roles that the English language plays in education around the world. When you have read this chapter, you will be on your way to achieving the following aims for teacher education for Years 1–7:

- know about the curriculum, national tests, mapping tools and learning resources in subject English
- can use formative assessment to guide pupils in learning English
- know about English as a world language and what that means for the development of linguistic, communicative and intercultural competence

curriculum – læreplan





consider – tenke over
committed – dedikert

Kick-off activity As a way in to thinking about the English curriculum, consider the following four factors. Then decide which of them you think is **most** important for successful learning in Years 1–4.

A. a committed teacher who speaks good English
B. the individual pupil's learning capacity and motivation

allocated – satt av til

C. the total amount of teaching time allocated to English
D. the national curriculum

Label the four corners of the room A, B, C and D, and walk to the corner which represents what you think is the most important factor. Now talk with the other people who have chosen the same corner as you, and gather arguments to support your choice.

The next stage is that a representative from each corner explains to everybody in the room why the factor they have chosen is the most important. People can change corners if they find the arguments convincing enough.

convincing – overbevisende

Why the national curriculum is important

We wonder how many of you thought that the national curriculum was the most important factor? Having done the kick-off activity, you perhaps want to know what is, in fact, most important for successful English learning in Years 1–4. However, as with so many issues related to teaching, it is not possible to give a definitive answer, but the researcher John Hattie has tried to do so (2008). After reviewing great quantities of research based on students of all ages in all sorts of subjects, Hattie and his team found strong evidence that the skill and commitment of the teacher was the most important single factor.

review – se over og vurdere

Perhaps not many of you thought the national curriculum was the most important factor? All the same, the national curriculum is important, because it is our **job description** as teachers. Obviously, you know a lot about the job already. Not least, you saw how it was done when you yourself learnt English at school. The official document that makes up what is called the **formal curriculum** says how the job is **supposed** to be done, which is not quite the same thing as the operational curriculum – what teachers actually do – or the experiential curriculum – what pupils actually experience and learn in the classroom (Klein, Tye & Wright, 1979).

The process of drafting the national curriculum involved many people, with different competences, experience and priorities. Teachers and other stakeholders were encouraged to comment on the various drafts, and their comments were taken into account, before politicians had the final say. Indeed, it is a teacher's lot, every ten years or so, to have to relate to a new curriculum: M-87, then L-97, then **Kunnskapsløftet** in 2006, the revised version of 2013, and most recently the renewal in 2020. The present curriculum is sometimes called *Fagfornyelsen*, which is the name of the White Paper on which the renewal was based. To distinguish it from previous versions of *Kunnskapsløftet*, we will refer to the present curriculum as ***LK20***.

draft – utkast

take into account – ta til etterretning

lot – lodd

White Paper – utredning

So, do teachers now have to cast aside all the work they have invested in the previous plans and start all over again with new competence aims and new teaching methods? Definitely not. The curriculum of 2020 was meant to revise and improve *Kunnskapsløftet*, not to change it radically. Most of the values and ambitions remain the same. Furthermore, the competence aims are formulated in such general terms that it is still up to teachers to plan how to achieve them, and it is even more open than previous curricula as to which topics and which texts learners should work with.

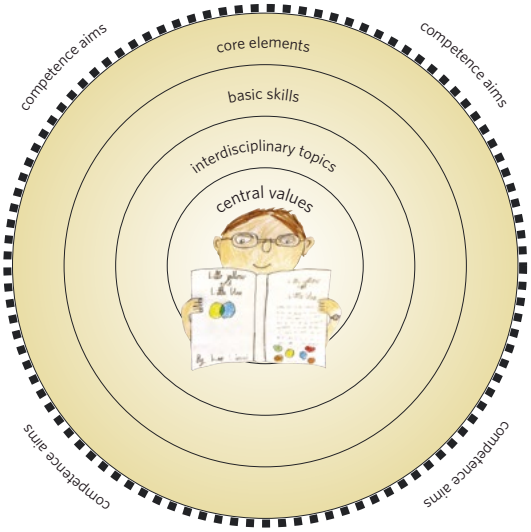
How *LK20* is organised

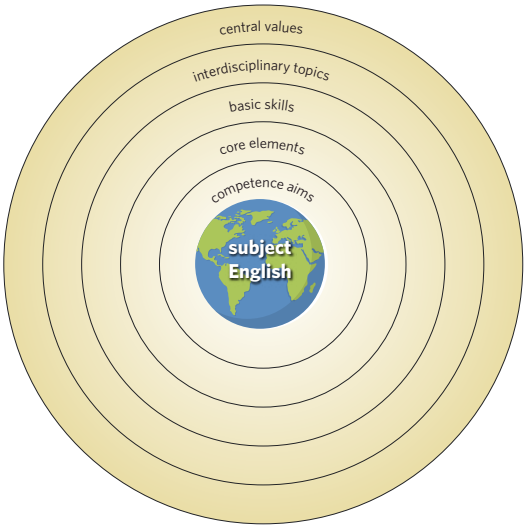
One of the key ideas in the revision is **in-depth learning**, which we will return to in the next chapter. In order to make it easier for pupils to learn things in depth, *LK20* intends to

- Slim subjects down to their core elements
- Make clearer connections between subjects
- Ensure continuity from year to year
- Integrate the central values of Norwegian education in every subject

LK20 seeks to adjust the way we organise learning, and the way we think about it. We can picture English and *LK20* in different ways. One way is with the learner at the centre, in line with the Directorate of Education and Training's principle that the pupils' learning and development should be at the heart of their schooling. Another way is with subject English at the centre, as it is in school timetables.

adjust – justere







Which model do you find most helpful?

As well as making these models come to life in the classroom, we need to keep in mind the central principles of in-depth learning, social inclusion and formative assessment. This means that as professional English teachers, we cannot simply base our lessons on the textbook, or on the competence aims. Far from it. We need to look systematically at all the circles in the models above: relevance and central values, core elements, interdisciplinary topics, basic skills, competence aims and formative assessment.

Relevance and central values

The curriculum for English, and indeed for all subjects, starts with a section on the subject's relevance and central values. It answers the question of why children should study English, by saying that it promotes:

- the ability to communicate with different people
- respect for people with languages and cultural practices different to one's own
- the learners' sense of their own identity

Core elements

The revision of *Kunnskapsløftet* started by asking people to identify the big ideas of each subject, the so-called core elements. Thinking this through was an interesting experience for many people. After much discussion, a consensus was reached, that the core elements in subject English are: **communication, language learning** and **encounters with texts**. These core elements are meant to underpin all the competence aims. We will say a little more about each of them.

consensus – enighet

underpin – ligge til grunn for

Communication. Right from the start, says the curriculum, learners are to experience English, use it and explore it. During the first four years, pupils focus on discovering what English sounds like and looks like. Little by little, they start using the language themselves. It is important at this early stage that their first steps in English should be something they can enjoy and feel proud of. So teachers must encourage communication, and give learners the opportunity to use English in a meaningful way. It is, for example, not very meaningful just to repeat words and sentences after the teacher. Communication means passing on real messages to each other: identifying pictures, asking for things, guessing what is missing or hidden, and so on. We use language because we have something we want to say. Our mission is to promote pleasure in communicating. A focus on communication implies that teachers and other pupils should respond to *what* the learners say more than *how* they say it.

Language learning. This involves several things: knowing about English as a language system, learning how to learn a language, and, more specifically, knowing how to make use of the diversity of languages that learners know. We elaborate on the last point in Chapter 3. Here we will say a few words about the other two: learning about English as a language system, and learning how to learn.

elaborate – drøfte

A first step in language learning is the development of what is called **metalinguistic awareness**. Young learners need to understand that one can say both 'stjerne' and 'star' while referring to the same object, and that these two words belong to two different languages. Once this metalinguistic awareness is established, children can begin to learn about English as a language system. One can show that we know Eng-

lish as a language system in two ways: by analysing the language, and by using it to communicate effectively. The curriculum asks learners to do both, although the main focus is still on **understanding, exploring and using English**. This is the approach to language learning that you will find in *Twinkle Twinkle*. There are not many young children who learn English best by listening to a teacher talking about grammar, even if that teacher has amazing hair and a gorgeous dress.



require – pålegge

From 2020, however, nine-year-old pupils are required to recognise parts of speech in simplified texts, and follow simple rules for sentence structure. We suggest that children learn to identify the same three parts of speech that the competence aim for subject Norwegian stipulates: nouns, adjectives and verbs. Making this connection between the two subjects is something that the curriculum encourages. There is an example of an activity involving parts of speech on pp. 185–187. A discussion of what may be meant by 'rules for sentence structure' can be found on p. 163.

part of speech – ordklasser

Learning how to learn. This core element is not explicitly articulated in the competence aims for Years 1–4, apart from the aim that pupils should explore different dictionaries. This aim is further discussed on p. 190. In the section on formative assessment, on the other hand, there are guidelines for how the teacher is to organise learning. These include encouraging pupils to talk about their development as English learners, because putting one's experience into words is part

of learning how to learn. Otherwise in the first years of school it is primarily the teacher who should use strategies that the pupils, in later years, can make use of themselves. These can include showing pupils how to remember words and phrases, talking with them about similarities and differences between English and other languages, and encouraging them to use contextual clues to guess meaning.

Encounters with texts. The idea that communication is about understanding, exploring and using language applies to the pupils' encounters with texts, too. The term 'text' is very broad. It refers to much more than a page in a textbook, or a story that a pupil writes. Here is how *LK20* describes what a text is:

> The term 'text' is used in a broad sense: oral and written, printed and digital, graphic and artistic, formal and informal, literary, and factual, from the present and the past. Texts can include writing, pictures, sound, drawings, graphs, numbers and other forms of expression that together […] communicate a message. (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2019)

We try to make the same point in this illustration.



comprehension – forståelse

In this broad definition, a text is, quite simply, English in use. So 'encounters with texts' should not be primarily about the teacher reading aloud and then checking whether the pupils can answer comprehension questions. Part of exploring the text is trying to make sense of it, and seeing what is special about it. What makes a poem different from prose? (The rhymes, the rhythm etc.) How do we know whether this story is true or not? (The animals talk, there is a dragon, the story starts with 'Once upon a time' etc.). Why do you think the boy in the picture is sitting alone in the corner? The core element 'encounters with texts' is also about pupils creating their own texts in English: written, spoken and multimedial.

It takes quite some time – well, a lifetime in fact – to develop text competence. And it takes time, skill and patience to learn how to create good encounters with texts that engage as many pupils as possible. We need an early start if the pupils are to reach the ambitious goals set for them at the end of Year 10. We offer advice and examples about how to work with texts in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

Interdisciplinary topics

Subject English has been allocated two interdisciplinary topics: **democracy and citizenship**, and **health** (*folkehelse*) **and life skills**.[1] The third interdisciplinary theme – **sustainable development** – can also be part of English but learners are not *required* to engage with this theme (unless they study International English in Vg2). Previously the three themes lived a quiet life in the core curriculum (*Generell del*). One of the ambitions of *LK20* was to bring them centre stage, so that pupils would encounter them in everyday classroom practices. This is one of the ways in which the curriculum emphasises the cultural and social dimensions of learning English.

So what do these interdisciplinary topics mean for Years 1–4? There seem to be two main ideas, which we need to bear in mind. Firstly, the theme 'health and life skills' requires a clearer focus on developing the ability to express ideas, feelings, experiences and opin-

1 *Folkehelse* is not easy to translate into English: 'health' is more general than *'folkehelse'*.

ions in English. Secondly, and this relates to both of the themes, there is a continued focus on developing curiosity about and respect for cultural diversity. Cultural understanding is a goal in itself, because it stimulates our interest in the world and our ability to interact with other people. Taking these themes seriously means that it is part of our job as English teachers to empower children to value and take part in a democratic society. It also means that as English teachers we help children to gradually learn to see themselves from the outside, and develop an awareness of their own cultural identity.

In English in Years 1–4, according to the curriculum, culture should primarily be presented through texts and cultural expressions that allow pupils to become curious about and identify with children in the English-speaking world. Interestingly, this phrase 'the English-speaking world' has replaced 'English-speaking countries', the phrase used in *Kunnskapsløftet* of 2006 and 2013. Pointing out this difference in wording might seem like splitting hairs, but it does indicate a significant shift. Where previously subject English was concerned with countries where English is the first language, the focus now is more clearly on using English in any situations, in any country, including Norway, where we need to communicate with other people. We will come back to this point on p. 36. What it means in terms of classroom practice is that, while pupils may still learn about Halloween and Thanksgiving and famous places in London and New York, they are not *required* to do so. To be prepared to meet and interact with people from all over the world, they must not only know something about the world, they also need to learn how to ask questions in a way that shows interest and respect, and how to use simple phrases such as 'Excuse me' and 'Could you say that again?'

splitting hairs – flisspikkeri

Basic skills

The concept of basic skills was introduced in 2006, the idea being that they should be a part of all school subjects. In the reform of 2013, the five basic skills were better integrated in the competence aims for each subject. In the reform of 2020, the number of basic skills in English was reduced from five to the following four:

Oral skills: being able to listen, talk and communicate

Written skills: being able to express ideas and opinions in writing

Reading skills: being able to make sense of different types of texts

Digital skills: being able to use digital tools and resources as an integrated part of language learning

Knowing how to help pupils develop basic skills is a very large part of what English teaching is about. Oral communication, reading and writing are basic to English teaching, and we suggest ways of developing these skills throughout this book. Working with digital tools has over the last twenty years or so become an increasingly integrated part of most language learning classrooms. From the predominance of pilot schools that marked the previous edition of *Twinkle Twinkle*, it is now likely that the next few years will see most pupils in Years 1–4 having a one-to-one relationship with a learning tablet (Gilje, 2017). We will discuss what this means for the youngest English learners, and for their teachers, later in this chapter.

stock – lager

sum – regneoppgave

One change in *LK20* is that **the basic skill of numeracy** (*å kunne regne*) has been taken out of subject English, as part of the slimming down of the curriculum. All the same, numeracy remains an important part of text competence in English. Texts involving numbers and everyday mathematical terms can and should still be used in English lessons. Young learners can learn 'plus' and 'minus', 'divided by' and 'times' (as in 'seven times five is thirty-five'), as well as the geometrical terms 'square', 'circle' 'triangle' and 'straight line'. Learners also need to count, and to communicate in simple English about price, quantity, weight and size. Doing everyday maths in English is one way to break down the boundaries between subjects, and create variety in the classroom, so that pupils develop in-depth learning by using knowledge in new contexts.

Digital skills

This section is about digital skills in education, and in English and Years 1–4 in particular. Throughout this book, we recommend digital resources where we believe that they can contribute to in-depth learn-