Lesson 1: Welcome to English and Comms: Portfolio Setup and Anchor Text

60 minutes · kickoff lesson

WHAT THE CLASS SHOULD LEAVE ABLE TO DO

- Set up a Communication Portfolio folder and a Reflective Journal document
- Record the class anchor text and three personal goals for the two-year course
- See where the portfolio, Key Assignments, oral exam and written exam sit across the two-year arc

TERMS THE CLASS MEETS

Term	What it means
Communication Portfolio	The folder where you keep every piece of work this course produces across two years.
Reflective Journal	Your ongoing written record of how you grow as a reader, writer, listener and speaker.
Anchor text	The novel, short story collection or graphic novel your class agrees to study together in Units 3 to 5.
Key Assignment	A required piece of work the SEC expects your teacher to verify for module credits.

BEFORE YOU TEACH IT

Before the Lesson

- Plan for a 60-minute slot. If your period is shorter, protect Set Up Your Portfolio and the Course Brief; the journey overview and the partner talk are what trim first.
- Prepare an anchor-text shortlist for class agreement (see step 3 teacher notes for stockable titles).
- Confirm the live KA count and credit weightings against the current NCCA specification and SEC assessment arrangements before stating any total aloud.

Suggested Timing (60 minutes default)

- Getting Started: 5 minutes
- Your Course Journey: 8 minutes
- Set Up Your Portfolio: 15 minutes
- Course Brief: 22 minutes
- Think About It: 5 minutes
- What You Covered: 5 minutes

Longer slot (60 minutes)

- Journey 8 minutes, Setup 15, Brief 22; keep full partner talk.
- Optional Brief rewrite only after the filed copy is confirmed.

If the period runs short (under 45 minutes)

- Journey landmarks only (about 2–3 minutes).
- Setup capped at 10 minutes (folder + journal, then 3–4 minute anchor agree).
- Protect at least 15 minutes for the Course Brief; use the homework fallback if under 12 minutes remain.
- Trim or drop partner talk first.

Teaching Tips

- Circulate while students create their folder and journal; tick names before opening the Brief.
- Give the Brief the fullest writing time you can; one filed draft beats an unfinished redraft.
- Use paired discussion for Think About It only if time allows.
- Spot-check portfolios, journals and filed briefs before students leave.

Common Mistakes

- If the filename is off, get them to rename it now so they can find it in Year 2.
- If the anchor title does not match the class decision, have them correct it before filing.
- If a goal is vague, ask: "How will future-you know you met this?" and tighten it on the spot.

Differentiation

- Support: If goals stall, give two starters aloud: one speaking goal and one writing goal, and let them rewrite in their own words.
- Extension: Add a one-line title page to the Reflective Journal naming who you are at the start of LCA.
- Support: If folder setup is slow, pair them with a neighbour who is already done and keep the Brief clock running.

RUNNING THE LESSON

Step 1: Getting Started · 5 min

This lesson runs to a 60-minute slot. Open with one plain line: this course runs four modules across two years, with Key Assignments your teacher verifies, plus an oral exam and a written paper.

Keep the welcome under five minutes so setup and the Course Brief have the time they need. Have your anchor-text shortlist ready before the class starts. Titles stay in your notes only; students write whatever the class agrees.

Default path (60 minutes): journey landmarks about 8 minutes, setup about 15 minutes (folder + journal, then a 3–4 minute anchor agree), protect the full 22 minutes for the Course Brief, then Think About It and the close at 5 minutes each.

If you have a 60-minute slot or double period: restore Journey to 8 minutes, Setup to 15, Brief to 22, and keep the full partner talk; optional Brief rewrite only after the filed copy is confirmed.

Step 2: Your Course Journey · 8 min

Suggested Timing (60 minutes)

- Getting Started: 5 minutes
- Your Course Journey: 8 minutes (landmarks only)
- Set Up Your Portfolio: 15 minutes
- Course Brief: 22 minutes (protect at least 15 of it)
- Think About It: 5 minutes (trim first if the period is short)
- What You Covered: 5 minutes

Read the landmark rows aloud, then ask what stands out. Name that the journal feeds the Personal Reflection Task later. If they ask about the oral exam, keep to what is published: it is worth 4 of the subject's 16 credits, it is held in May of Year 2, and an external examiner appointed by the SEC, not you, normally conducts it. Its detailed format for the current course is not published, so do not tell them what it will ask. Do not dwell on every KA; the point is that they can see where the two years go.

Full Module 1 KA map (teacher reference only; not for the student page): KA1 Lesson 2 identity journal entry; KA2 Lessons 11–12 three front covers; KA3 Lessons 17–18 dialogue with named contribution; KA4 Lessons 23–24 drafted, proofed and edited piece; KA5 Lesson 29 anchor-text journal entry. Module 2 (Year 1 spring): 4 KAs. Module 3 (Year 2 autumn): 4 KAs. Module 4 (Year 2 spring): 4 KAs. Confirm the live KA count and credit weightings against the current NCCA LCA English and Communications specification and SEC assessment arrangements before stating any total to the class.

Step 3: Set Up Your Portfolio · 15 min

Two parts to this step: (1) create folder + journal while you circulate and tick names; (2) timed 3–4 minute agree-and-write for the anchor title only. You can also run the anchor agree during the opening while devices boot. Still check every student has a folder and a journal before the Brief opens, but do not let logging in eat their writing time.

Confirm every student has folder and journal before you open the Course Brief step.

Anchor-text shortlist (yours only; never print titles on the student page). Prepare three to five journey-themed options that suit your cohort and stock. Checkable starting points Irish post-primary libraries often hold or can order:

- *Illegal* by Eoin Colfer and Andrew Donkin (graphic novel; migration journey; Irish creators)
- *The Arrival* by Shaun Tan (wordless graphic novel; immigration)
- *Trash* by Andy Mulligan (novel; survival and justice)
- *Stone Cold* by Robert Swindells (novel; homelessness)
- *Once* by Morris Gleitzman (novel; wartime journey)
- *Refugee Boy* by Benjamin Zephaniah (novel; asylum and belonging)
- *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon (novel; personal investigation)
- *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck (novella; friendship and work)

Filter for reading level, sensitivity and what you actually have on the shelf. Students working alone pick from the same shortlist.

Literacy skills here transfer straight into every other LCA course that needs a folder of evidence and a reflective log.

Step 4: Course Brief · 22 min

This is the piece that goes in the folder. Protect the full writing time. Circulate for three checks: anchor title matches what the class agreed, journal format is a real choice they can keep up, and each goal is specific enough to revisit later.

One solid draft on file is the priority on day one. Treat mark-and-rewrite as optional and only after the brief is filed. Do not burn the period on a second full write while folders stay empty.

Fallback if fewer than 12 minutes remain: students complete anchor title + journal format + one goal in class and finish the other two goals for homework, still filed as `m1_l1_course_brief_<your-initials>`. Do not send anyone home with an empty folder.

Students who finish early can tidy the portfolio folder label and journal title page. Verify the brief is saved or filed before the close.

Step 5: Think About It · 5 min

Paired talk for two minutes, then take two or three answers from the room. Keep it light; the first formal journal entry is next lesson for KA1. If the period is short, this is the first step to trim.

Step 6: What You Covered · 5 min

Spot-check that every student has a portfolio folder, a journal, and a Course Brief on file before they leave. Next lesson banks M1 KA1 with the first formal identity journal entry.