

Strategy for Teaching English Across the Curriculum



basic education

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PREAMBLE

Performance in learning outcomes is inextricably linked to proficiency in the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) and utility. A large body of research from various studies and surveys such as ANA, SACMEQ, PIRLS and TIMSS and NSC provide abundant evidence in this regard.

English, which is the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) in the majority of schools in South Africa, is cited in many studies as a barrier to learning. Language difficulties do not only impact on English as a subject, but encroach into the content subjects, resulting in dismal results.

Furthermore, the withdrawal of the Language Compensation policy, which compensated African learners for using a language other than their own to learn, with effect from 2014, may lead to underperformance.

The DBE introduces the teaching English Across the Curriculum as a means of strengthening LoLT from Grade 1 to Grade 12, thus addressing the barrier factor and mitigating the negative impact the withdrawal of the Language Compensation policy may have.

The strengthening of English as a subject and as LoLT, will mitigate the negative impact that the withdrawal of the language compensation policy could have on learner performance. The successful implementation of the strategy Teaching English Across the Curriculum will enhance knowledge acquisition and improve learner attainment. Furthermore, the successful implementation of the strategy for teaching English Across the Curriculum will enforce teaching and learning in English, thus enhancing learner competence in the LoLT.

The introduction of English First Additional Language (EFAL) in the Foundation Phase, and the subsequent phases, addresses the strengthening of LoLT in the GET, which should merge with the full implementation of the strategy for Teaching English Across the Curriculum (EAC) in Grades 10-12.

With the implementation of CAPS, EFAL is offered as a subject in Grade 1 in schools where LoLT changes to English in Grade 4. The DBE, in partnership with the British Council, has developed a programme called the Certificate in Primary English Language Teaching (CiPELT) and the Certificate in Secondary English Language Teaching (CiSELT) to support the implementation of EFAL.



Strategy for Teaching English Across the Curriculum

Language is a tool for conceptualizing content and knowledge and expressing oneself accordingly in a rational, “academic” style, based on subject-specific conventions and registers. In every institution of learning, the language of learning and teaching, LoLT, should be developed, not only by the English teacher, but by all teachers while disseminating knowledge.

The concept Language Across the Curriculum (LAC), which is old as education is, was researched and introduced as a means of bridging the barriers between content knowledge and language. It is also referred to as Content-based Instruction (CBI), Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), among others (Teaching English, The British Council). In applying LAC, one learns about a subject using the language they are trying to learn, as a tool for developing knowledge and so they develop their linguistic ability in the target language. The approach here is that one needs to understand the language before one can decode the science in the knowledge presented.

The meaning of the specialised language, technical vocabulary, text types and illustrations must be unlocked so that acquisition thereof can be enhanced.

Keith Kelly, in A New Challenge for Chemistry Education (October 2010), states that there are three areas of language for any classroom context: subject-specific language, general academic language, and peripheral language. He states that an awareness of these “languages,” as well as pedagogy for dealing with the language, is important for the science teacher working with learners in an additional language. Subject-specific language in chemistry can best be described as the information carrying words, which are usually noun phrases such as sulphuric acid or the process of acidification. General academic language is cross-curricular language and, as such, is not exclusive to any one subject. A good example is the language of sequencing, including phrases such as first, second, next, and finally. Such language is used in chemistry for introducing steps in a process, but it could also be used in a history lesson for describing reasons contributing to an event which happened in the past. Peripheral language is the language of the classroom: the language used by the teacher to manage the class and the informal language between students.

Carrasquillo and Rodriguez (132: 2002) spell out the challenge to chemistry teachers who work with learners through English:
Science is, in itself, a language and each different science (biology, physics, chemistry) is a separate language
If chemistry is a language as well as a body of content, then it needs to be taught as a language as well as a body of content.

Esri (Geography Specialist Forum) President Jack Dangermond (2004) stated
“We use languages to describe our world,” he said. “Languages are a vehicle for greater understanding because they let us reflect on our experience and organize our reality. Languages help us conceptualize, communicate, and ultimately collaborate.
Just as mathematics and music have benefited from specialized languages developed to record and describe concepts in these fields, GIS has emerged as the language of geography. And like all living languages, GIS is evolving and expanding in response to change.”

David Hume (Foundations of Physics Vol 18, 1233, (1988) states, “Nothing is more usual than for philosophers to encroach on the province of grammarians, and to engage in disputes of words, while they imagine they are handling controversies of the deepest importance and concern.”

It is thus important for all subject teachers to understand how language is used in their subjects in order mediate knowledge.



Language Across the Curriculum addresses this.

Illustrations:

1. If the value of x is 12, and that of y is 15, what will be the value of z , if z is the difference?

Not a good Maths example, but the point of departure is the conditional ‘if’, which learners should be taught prepares for a comparison of two aspects, the values of x and y in this case. The **difference**, which is maths-speak, should be explained against use of difference as in language use. The science and place of ‘therefore’ is then scaffolded for decoding.

2. Volcano

A study of volcano could be preceded by vocabulary and language structure development.

Eruption (noun) – to erupt (verb) (come out in great force)

Volcano (noun) – volcanic (adjective) eruption

Hot (adjective) lava (noun+subject) flows (verb) down (preposition) the (article) mountain (object).

If the above language aspects can be addressed before the actual teaching of the concept, either as a language or introduction to the geography lesson, then more can be acquired. The approach is to teach learners to follow the action words (**assassinate**), key words (the **main idea** is...), ‘leaders’ (the tasks of the manager are as **follows**), prefixes (**geography**, **biography**, **autocrat**, **homogenous**), language choice (massacre versus murder), etc.

Aims of LAC

- To support language development in each learner, in all domains of language use, in each learning activity in school;
- To enhance knowledge acquisition through awareness of language use;
- To create a link through the learning processes;
- To enhance awareness of the relatedness of aspects;
- To develop critical reading, writing and learning; and
- To give learners feedback about their progress.

LAC focuses on:

- the conventional four skills of language, viz. Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking; and
- all non-verbal means of representation and expression that we use when communicating.

The focus is on the areas because they enhance

- knowledge acquisition
- interrogation of knowledge
- expression and presentation of knowledge – in writing or spoken form, and
- critical thinking, reading and writing

Example of practical application



Figure 1: The Language of Chemistry

<u>Identify objects and explain purpose</u>				
Questions				
What is a...?	(A)	is a	thing device instrument tool object substance	where who which that
Give me explanation for a...				
Who can explain what this is?				
How would you explain...?				
What do we call this?				
What is the technical term for...?				
Statements				
... is called				
The term/name for this is...				
We call this...				
<u>Describe the sequences of a process or an experiment</u>				
Teacher questions:		Learner statements		
What comes first/next?		Firstly, secondly, thirdly,		
What happened/happens then?		fourthly... finally/lastly		
And then/after that...?		First, The first thing to happen is, First of all,		
When does/did... happen?		Then, after that, next		
		The next step / stage		
		Eventually, Finally, In the end, At last		

The following Learning skills are shared by all subjects in the curriculum.

- Locating information
- Gathering facts
- Organising information
- Acquiring information - using strategies through reading
- Acquiring information- setting purpose for listening
- Communicating orally -speaking with accuracy and pose, and in writing with clarity and exactness, using the writing process
- Interpreting pictures- cartoon analysis. For example, the zebra cartoon after a Soweto derby (soccer game)
- Evaluating and applying - applying problem-solving and information critical thinking skills
- Writing for specific audiences and purposes

Learners need to be taught these skills and consciously, be made aware that they apply in all subjects. Guidance should be given on how one goes about identifying use of the above. See the following:



- Locating information - **find the coordinates of Vhembe in the map** provided; **find the word, in the first paragraph**, which means...; which **vitamins** do you find **in the green vegetables**?
- Gathering facts – **list the occurrences** that led to the June 16 Soweto uprising, mention the steps you need to take to repair a broken valve
- Organising information – draw a table in which you present the advantages and disadvantages of **over-draft**
- Acquiring information - **using strategies through reading**: skim the text below and give an idea of what the text suggests
- Acquiring information- **setting purpose for listening**: listen to the recording and follow the sound of the drum during the transitions. Present your observations
- Communicating orally -speaking with accuracy and pose, and in writing with clarity and exactness, using the writing process. Based on your recent lesson cholesterol, prepare a written presentation, from which an oral presentation will be made, on the diet one must follow to avoid cholesterol build-up.
- Interpreting pictures – see the attached cartoon and present your interpretation of the text to the class.
- Evaluating and applying - applying problem-solving and information critical thinking skills. Do you think the journalist's article on the game played correct? Give a reason for your answer.

Planning for LAC

- Establish learners' prior-knowledge of new content/theme and their language ability.
- Identify new terminology and concepts.
- Structure and plan meaningful tasks and create experiences within the classroom environment for learners to acquire effective listening, speaking, reading and writing skills
- Create opportunities for learners to learn how to 'think critically about what they hear...' and to 'Use oral language to gather, process and present information' and communicating in a wide variety of social contexts to a wide variety of audiences.
- Establish strategies to manage all forms of communication to ensure all learners have fair and equitable opportunities to develop their interpersonal speaking and listening skills, e.g. large and small group discussions.
- Model approaches, processes, strategies and activities of the different language skills to enable learners to develop.
- Establish effective resources needed.
- Establish different assessment strategies, methods and tools to cater for language needs of learners.
- Establish routines for observing and recording the progress of individual learners

Assessing learning through language skills

- The focus of assessment will be on a learner's progress in understanding skills, concepts and terminology in an area of study.
- Use different assessment strategies, methods and tools to cater for language needs of learners.
- Assess learner's degree of knowledge and understanding by what they say, read or write
- Establish routines for observing and recording the progress of individual learners' language development.



The role of learners

Learners need:

- an environment that encourages risk-taking;
- lessons based on themes;
- flexibility - differentiation - produce a word when others write a sentence or draw a picture to show what they have understood while the others write a paragraph;
- to be exposed to exactly the same experience as their peers;
- participation in role-play, drama and song activities; and
- to learn by making and doing.

What is the role of listening and speaking as essential communicative skills in learning across the curriculum?

- Processing and acquiring information
- Listening to interact
- Speaking to interact
- Speaking for academic purposes
- Three main aspects that are always present in all episodes of speaking and listening.
 - Social
 - Cognitive
 - Linguistic

Different kinds of listening:

- Comprehensive (Informational) Listening--Learners listen for the content of the message.
 - Identify, interpret and evaluate messages
 - Distinguish between facts and opinions
 - Understand instructions, directions and procedures
 - Identify main and supporting ideas
 - Make notes and summary
 - Give interpretation of meaning
- Critical (Evaluative) Listening-- Learners judge the message.
 - Identify and interpret persuasive, emotive and manipulative language, bias, prejudice and stereotyping
 - Awareness and interpretation of tone, pace and language use
 - Respond to style, tone and register and evaluate correctly
 - Understand the logical sequence of information
 - Make judgments and support with evidence
 - Make assumptions and predict consequences



- Make critical responses to language use, word choice, format and pronunciation
- Structure markers

Examples:

- Expressions: First of all; on the one hand ...; firstly;
- Rhetorical question: How are we going to solve the problem ...?
- Forms of address or repetitions: Ladies and gentlemen; I want to emphasise that ...; Are you with me?
- Key words are the theme words
 - They inform the main theme or sub-theme of the text
 - Such words used in oral texts are:
 - usually emphasized;
 - usually incorporated in the title;
 - mostly repeated; and
 - used as synonyms.

Critical awareness of language usage

- Vocabulary and creative language use
- Ability to manipulate language in order to evoke audience response
- Awareness of, and sensitivity to language use on cultural issues

Reading

Learners need

- to understand the reading process (pre-reading, during reading and post-reading). See table below.
- skills to read and comprehend content-based texts, e.g. skimming, scanning, etc.
- knowledge of different types of texts and the best strategies for reading them.
- multiple and meaningful opportunities to practise reading in subject-specific contexts with appropriate resources.
- opportunities to talk about their reading and thinking.
- background knowledge in subject areas.
- expanded sight vocabularies and word-solving strategies for reading subject-specific texts.
- strategies for previewing texts, monitoring their understanding, determining the most important ideas and the relationships among them, remembering what they read, and making connections and inferences.
- strategies for becoming independent readers in any context.
- to view texts critically in a world driven by multimedia and visual stimuli.



Before/pre-reading

Skimming and scanning to previewing text features and unfamiliar words, finding organizational patterns, predicting text content, use prior knowledge to think about the topic, setting a purpose for reading, reviewing and clarifying vocabulary, finding signal words

During reading

Find meaning using clues such as definitions, examples, illustrations, clarification, parenthetical note, comparison, elaboration, typographic and design, making notes, visualizing asking/understanding comprehension questions, using graphic organizers and study guides, identify and clarify ideas, self question to monitor comprehension, confirming and rejecting predictions

Post reading

making inferences, explaining / evaluating writer's inferences and conclusions, drawing conclusions / own opinion, evaluating, analysing and interpreting, making comparisons **understanding text features** – titles, headings, captions, illustrations, graphs, charts, diagrams, bold-faced print, italics, headings, subheadings, numberings, captions, illustrations, graphs, diagrams, maps, icons, pull down menus, key word searches

Writing

In her findings, Melissa Kelly, (About.com Guide) has noticed that due to growing disappointment about the writing ability of high school graduates, content subjects are realizing that writing instruction can no longer be confined to the English classroom. As teachers in various disciplines have added writing to their courses, they have discovered that writing assignments bring great benefits. Not only do they enhance students' general writing ability, but they also increase both the understanding of content while learning the specific vocabulary of the disciplines.

The following strategies are distinguished:

➤ **Writing-to-learn (should be integrated with reading)**

- Writing-to-learn activities are impromptu, short or informal writing tasks designed to enhance thinking skills - through key concepts and ideas
- Limited to less than 5 minutes of class time or assigned as brief, out-of-class assignments
- Attention is focused on ideas rather than correctness of style, grammar or spelling. It is less structured than disciplinary writing/ writing to demonstrate knowledge.
- Writing-to-learn is a strategy that teachers employ throughout and/or at the end of a lesson to engage learners and develop big ideas and concepts.
- Rationale for writing-to-learn
- Enhance higher level thinking skills: fostering critical thinking, analysis and application activities
- improve learners' metacognitive skills (knowledge about when and how to use particular strategies for learning or for problem solving)
- helps learners keep their writing skills sharp
- learners become better readers, thinkers
- learners processing their ideas through writing

➤ **Writing-to-demonstrate-knowledge**

When writing-to-demonstrate-knowledge learners show what they have learnt. Products may apply knowledge in new ways or use academic structures for research and/or formal writing.

Writing-to-demonstrate-knowledge assignment requires learners to:



- write reports, essays, persuasive writing, and creative or expressive writing, as well as research papers
- synthesize information and explaining understanding of concepts and ideas
- write for an audience with a specific purpose
- apply knowledge in new ways, e.g. essays that deal with specific questions or problems, letters, projects, and more formal assignments or papers prepared over weeks or over a course
- adhere to format and style guidelines or standards typical of professional papers, such as reports, article reviews, and research papers and should be checked before being submitted by the student for correctness of spelling, grammar, and transition word usage.

Hayes Jacobs (2006: 38), among others, describes the need for an active literacy across the curriculum where subject teachers “talk about” language with their students. This does not to suggest by any means that chemistry or content subject teachers become language teachers in the traditional sense that we know. It may be, as Hayes Jacobs suggests, that subject teachers should have moments in their lessons in which they make explicit to learners the different types of terminology in the lesson. These might include words that are “high frequency” in their subjects, terms that are “specialized,” and phrases that students can use to “embellish” their subject-specific language.

The presentation above demonstrates how LoLT can be changed from being a barrier to being a carrier of knowledge acquisition. Learners need to be grounded in all the aspects addressed above, which are applicable to all subjects, for them to make better progress in acquiring, dealing with and interrogating new knowledge.

In order for us to do justice to our learners, a concerted effort on the part of every teacher in the school is of vital importance. Every teacher needs to engage learners using the LoLT because the LoLT is the language in which the child is being assessed. All goals are attainable with commitment and an intense desire to see our learners catapulted forward into the world of work embodying excellent speaking, reading and writing skills.



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Generic guidance on Writing Across the Curriculum

In order to achieve the objectives of Writing-Across-the-Curriculum, learners need to be taught the following:

Paragraph Structure - all types

When the paragraph will stand alone, learners need to be taught the following:

- Topic sentence contains the main idea of the paragraph. When answering a question, don't restate the whole question, but do use some of the key words in the question. The topic sentence is usually the first, second, or last sentence in a paragraph. It is easiest to make it the first sentence.
- Explain the topic sentence.
- Prove your ideas are true or important with interesting, specific details.
- End with a closing sentence that refers to the main idea in the topic sentence. Don't write the same sentence.

Tips for Various types of Paragraphs

1. Compare/Contrast

In a compare and contrast paragraph, you write about the similarities and differences between two or more people, places, things, or ideas.

Example: Write a paragraph comparing the weather in Bloemfontein and Cape Town.

The following words can help you to write a good compare and contrast paragraph:

- Helper Words:

Similarities	Differences
is similar to	the other hand
both	however
also	but
	in contrast

- Similarities

is similar to: Example: Spring weather in Limpopo is similar to spring weather in Durban.

Both: Example: Both Durban and Port Elizabeth have rain in the spring.

Also: Example: Cullinan also has a rainy spring season.

Too: Example: Harrismith has a rainy spring season, too.

as well: Example: As well, Halifax has rainy spring season.

- Differences

on the other hand: Example: On the other hand, winter is much colder in Cape Town.

However: Example: However, winter is much colder in Qwaqwa.

But: Example: Vancouver has a mild winter, but Halifax has a cold one.



in contrast to: Example: In contrast to Durban, Cape Town has a cold winter.

differs from: Example: Cape Town differs from Durban by having a cold winter.

1. 2. Choice

In a paragraph where you have to make a choice, you need to choose which object, idea, or action that you prefer. Often, you will need to give your opinion on a choice of actions or events.

Example: Write a paragraph stating whether you would prefer to play hockey or basket ball.

The following words can help you to write a good choice paragraph:

- Helper Words:

Point of View	Personal Opinion
in my opinion	I think that
belief	I consider
idea	I believe/ I prefer
understanding	it seems to me

- Point of View

in my opinion: Example: In my opinion, hockey is more fun than basket ball.

belief: Example: My belief is that hockey is more fun than basket ball.

Idea: Example: My idea is that hockey is more fun than basket ball.

Understanding: Example: My understanding is that hockey is more fun than basket ball.

I think that: Example: I think that I would prefer to play hockey and not basket ball.

I consider: Example: I consider hockey to be more exciting than basket ball.

I believe: Example: I believe hockey is more exciting than basket ball.

it seems to me: Example: It seems to me that hockey is more exciting than basket ball.

I prefer: Example: I prefer hockey over basket ball.

- Personal Opinions

like/ dislike: Example: I like the sport of hockey because it is fast and exciting.

Hope: Example: I hope that I can play hockey in the future.

Feel: Example: I feel that hockey is my favourite sport.

3. Classification

When writing a classification paragraph, you group things or ideas into specific categories.

Example: Write a paragraph discussing two types of energy resources.

The following words can help you to write a good classification paragraph:



- Helper Words:

is a kind of
can be divided into
is a type of
falls under
belongs to

is a part of
fits into
is grouped with
is related to
is associated with

is a kind of: Coal is a kind of non-renewable resource.

can be divided into: Energy resources can be divided into two types.

falls under: Coal falls under the category of non-renewable resources.

belongs to: Coal belongs to the category of non-renewable resources.

is a part of: Coal is a part of the category of non-renewable resources.

fits into: Coal fits into the category of non-renewable resources.

is grouped with: Coal is grouped with non-renewable resources.

is related to: Coal is related to other non-renewable resources.

is associated with: Coal is associated with other non-renewable resources.

4. Description

In a description paragraph, you are writing about what a person, place, or thing is like. Sometimes, you may describe where a place is located.

Examples:	Write a paragraph describing what a polar bear looks like.
	Describe where Johannesburg's industry is located.

The following words can help you to write a good description paragraph:

- Helper Words:

Properties	Measurement	Analogy	Location
size	length	is like	in
colour	width	resembles	above
shape	mass/weight		below
purpose	speed		beside
			near
			north/east/south/west

5. Definition

When writing a definition paragraph, you take a thing or an idea and explain what it is.

Example:	Write a paragraph giving the definition of a pest.
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The following words can help you to write a good definition paragraph:



“is defined as”:

Example:	A pest is defined as any animal or plant that damages crops, forests, or property.
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“is a kind of”

Example:	A pest is a kind of animal or plant that damages crops, forests, or property.
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6. valuation

In an evaluation paragraph, you make judgments about people, ideas, and possible actions. You need to make your evaluation based on certain criteria that you develop. In the paragraph, you will state your evaluation or recommendation and then support it by referring to your criteria.

Example: Write a paragraph evaluating whether pesticides should be used on farms.

The following words can help you to write a good evaluation paragraph:

- Helper Words

Criteria for Evaluation	Recommendation
good / bad	suggest
correct / incorrect	recommend
moral / immoral	advise
right / wrong	argue
important / trivial	

- Criteria

good / bad: Example: The use of pesticides such as DDT is bad for the environment.

correct / incorrect: Example: The belief that pesticides must be used is incorrect.

moral / immoral: Example: The use of pesticides to control pests is immoral because it harms the environment.

right / wrong: Example: It is wrong to use pesticides because they harm the environment.

important / trivial: Example: The issue of pesticides is an important one because it affects the environment.

- Recommendation

suggest: Example: I suggest that pesticides should not be used to control pests.

recommend: Example: I recommend that pesticides should not be used because they are harmful to the environment.

advise: Example: I would advise farmers not to use pesticides if possible.

argue: Example: I would argue that pesticides should not be used because they harm the environment.

7. Explanation

In an explanation paragraph, you need to explain how or why something happens. Very often in social studies class, you will be asked to explore causes and effects of certain events.

Example: Write a paragraph explaining why so many Europeans moved to Canada during the nineteenth century.



The following words can help you to write a good explanation paragraph:

- Helper Words:

Cause	Effect	
because	therefore	it follows that
since	thus	if . . . then
as a result of	consequently	
is due to	hence	

- Cause

because: Example: People moved to Canada from Europe during the nineteenth century because they had poor living conditions in Europe.

since: Example: Since living conditions in Europe were terrible, many people moved to Canada.

as a result of: Example: People moved to Canada from Europe as a result of poor living conditions in Europe.

is due to / was due to: Example: The large influx of people to Canada was due to economic pressures in Europe.

- Effect

therefore: Example: Living conditions in Europe were terrible. Therefore, many people moved to Canada for a better life.

thus: Example: Living conditions in Europe were terrible. Thus, many people moved to Canada for a better life.

consequently: Example: Living conditions were terrible in Europe. Consequently, many people moved to Canada.

hence: Example: Living conditions were terrible in Europe. Hence, many people moved to Canada.

it follows that: Example: Living conditions were terrible in Europe. It follows that many people moved to Canada.

if . . . then: Example: If living conditions were better in Europe, then fewer people would have moved to Canada.

8. Sequence

In a sequencing paragraph, you are writing to describe a series of events or a process in some sort of order. Usually, this order is based on time.

Example: Write a paragraph outlining how a person becomes the prime minister.

The following words can help you to write a good sequence paragraph.

- Helper Words:

Order	Time
first, second, third, etc.	recently
in the beginning	when
before	previously
then	afterwards
	subsequently

- Order



first, second, third, etc.: Example: First, you need to become a leader of a political party. Second, you need to win a seat in the House of Commons. Third, your party must have a majority of seats.

in the beginning: Example: In the beginning, you need to become a leader of a political party.

before: Example: Before becoming the prime minister, you need to become the leader of a political party.

then: Example: Then, you must win a seat in the House of Commons.

after: Example: After winning a seat in the House of Commons, you must make sure you have a majority of seats.

finally: Example: Finally, after all these steps, you can call yourself a psychologist.

at last: Example: At last, you can call yourself a psychologist.

subsequently: Example: Subsequently, you must make sure you have a majority of seats in the House of Commons.

- Time

recently: Example: She was recently elected prime minister.

previously: Example: She is the new prime minister. Previously, she worked as a lawyer in Toronto.

afterwards: Example: She won the party leadership last year. Afterwards, she won the election.

when: Example: When she won the party leadership, she was still working as a lawyer.

after: Example: After winning a seat in the House of Commons, you must make sure you have a majority of seats.

