

**GCSE (9–1)**

*Parent and learner guide*

# **ENGLISH LANGUAGE & ENGLISH LITERATURE**

J351 & J352

For first teaching in 2015

## **What's changed in GCSE English**

Version 1



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## What's changed in GCSE English

### The new GCSEs (9-1) in English Language and English Literature

In 2013 the Department for Education announced plans for reforming GCSE qualifications. GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature (along with Maths) are in the very first group of the new, reformed GCSE qualifications to be taught and examined.

The new GCSE (9-1) English Language and GCSE (9-1) English Literature qualifications replace the previous GCSE English, GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature qualifications. The final examinations in the previous suite of qualifications will take place in 2016 (with resit opportunities for GCSE English and GCSE English Language in November 2016 and summer 2017). The first examinations in the new GCSE (9-1) English Language and GCSE (9-1) English Literature qualifications will take place in summer 2017.

To prepare learners for the summer 2017 exams, schools who teach GCSEs over two years will begin delivering content for the new GCSEs in English Language and English Literature from September 2015. Those that teach GCSEs over one year (common in many post-16 colleges) will begin a year later.

### Grading and tiers

One of the main changes for the new GCSEs is a new grading scale. Learners taking the new GCSEs will no longer be awarded a grade from A\* to G and instead a numbered scale will be used, from 9 (the highest grade) to 1 (the lowest grade). This is why the new qualifications are referred to as GCSE (9-1). As new GCSEs are being introduced in different years for different subjects, you will see a mixture of letter grades and number grades for different qualifications on results statements from 2017. From 2019, all GCSEs will have moved onto the 9-1 grading scale.

The highest grade, Grade 9, will be awarded to the top 20% of those who get Grade 7 or above. It has been introduced to give increased definition at the top of the grading scale, to clearly identify the very highest performers.

The new Grade 5 will be considered as a 'good pass' and is comparable to high Grade C / low Grade B performance from the old scale. This grade replaces the Grade C benchmark in the current system.

The new English (9-1) GCSEs are 100% exam assessed. This means that learners will no longer do any controlled assessment or coursework during the course.

All exams will take place at the end of the two year course (or one year course for post-16 colleges). The new exams will be untiered. This means that all learners, regardless of their ability, will sit the same exams. Previously, learners had a choice of sitting either Foundation tier or Higher tier exams depending on their ability and the grade they were likely to achieve.

Previous GCSE grades	New GCSE grades
A*	9
A	8
	7
B	6
C	5
	4
D	3
E	2
F	1
G	
U	U

*This table shows how the new GCSE 9 to 1 grading scale relates to the previous A\* to G scale.*

Following the new requirement for untiered exams in English, we have worked hard to ensure that the exams are accessible to all learners. You will notice that the questions in the exam papers may step up the level of demand as you work through the paper, so that we are able to challenge the highest performers as well as ensuring that all candidates can demonstrate their skills across the full range of assessment objectives.

# What's changed in GCSE English Language

## GCSE (9-1) English Language J351

The new GCSE (9-1) English Language qualification replaces both the previous GCSE English and GCSE English Language qualifications.

This qualification focuses on developing reading skills, writing skills and speaking and listening skills.

### Content

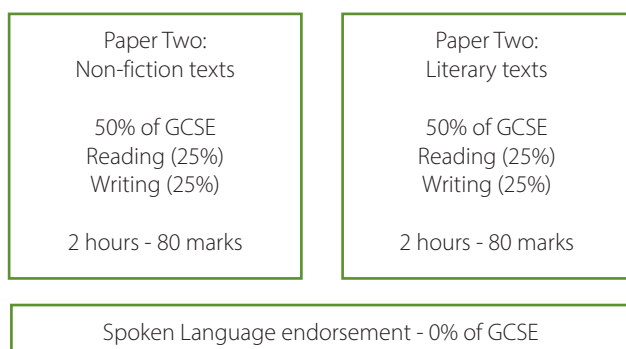
The new GCSE (9-1) English Language assessment is based entirely on unseen texts. This means that the texts which learners will answer questions on in the exams will not be ones that they have studied in class. Each exam contains two unseen texts that share a common theme. The first exam will include two non-fiction texts and the second exam will include two literary texts.

Learners will not have prior knowledge of the unseen texts before the exams, instead, they will be expected to demonstrate the skills they have learnt throughout the course and apply these to the unseen texts. These skills include understanding information in texts, analysing the effects of language use and comparing and evaluating texts.

### Exam structure

The GCSE (9-1) English Language requires learners to sit two exams. This means that learners will spend a little longer in the exam hall than before. The previous GCSE saw learners taking one exam that was 2 hours long. The new OCR GCSE (9-1) English Language qualification requires all learners to sit two different 2 hour exams. Following discussions with teachers, we felt that it was best to include more assessment time to allow learners the time to read the unseen texts, plan their answers and respond to the tasks.

GCSE (9-1) English Language



Each exam assesses both reading and writing skills. Reading assessment makes up 50% of the GCSE and writing assessment makes up the other 50%. In each exam, learners will respond to reading questions on the unseen texts and one writing task.

We've done lots of work improving question wording, to ensure things are as clear and concise as possible!

### Spoken language endorsement

Speaking and listening skills will be assessed separately to the GCSE (9-1) English Language qualification. This separate assessment is known as the Spoken Language endorsement.

The Spoken Language endorsement is a compulsory part of the GCSE English Language course but the assessment outcome will not form part to the 9-1 grade that learners receive for the GCSE. Instead, learners will receive a separate grade for their performance in Spoken Language. These grades are Pass, Merit or Distinction. Learners who do not reach the Pass criteria will receive a grade of Not Classified. You will see two grades on results statements for GCSE (9-1) English Language, one numerical grade (9-1) for the GCSE and another grade (Pass, Merit, Distinction or Not Classified) for the Spoken Language endorsement.

The Spoken Language endorsement requires learners to give, and answer questions on, one spoken presentation on a topic of their choice. Learners' speaking and listening skills will be assessed through their ability to present information/ideas to an audience, listen to questions on their presentation and to respond to those questions.

The Spoken Language endorsement is assessed by teachers and monitored by the exam board. For monitoring purposes, schools will select a sample of learners whose presentations will be video recorded. The video recordings will be sent to the exam board to check that we are happy with the grades that have been given.

## Assessment Objectives

Assessment objectives provide a breakdown of the skills which are assessed in the qualification. They are used by exam boards as designations that we give to questions in an exam paper to ensure that we are assessing the correct balance of skills in each exam series. There are a total of 9 Assessment Objectives for GCSE (9-1) English Language.

The Assessment Objectives for GCSE (9-1) English Language are:

### Reading

- AO1 Identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas  
Select and synthesise evidence from different texts
- AO2 Explain, comment on and analyse how writers use language and structure to achieve effects and influence readers, using relevant subject terminology to support their views
- AO3 Compare writers' ideas and perspectives, as well as how these are conveyed, across two or more texts
- AO4 Evaluate texts critically and support this with appropriate textual references.

### Writing

- AO5 Communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style and register for different forms, purposes and audiences  
Organise information and ideas, using structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion of texts
- AO6 Candidates must use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.

### Spoken Language endorsement

- AO7 Demonstrate presentation skills in a formal setting
- AO8 Listen and respond appropriately to spoken language, including to questions and feedback to presentations
- AO9 Use spoken Standard English effectively in speeches and presentations.

## Exam series and resits

Like the previous GCSE, there will be the opportunity for all learners to enter in the summer exam series. There will also be a resit session in November, which for the new GCSE (9-1) English Language is only for learners over the age of 16 by the 31 August before the November series.

# What's changed in GCSE English Literature

## GCSE (9-1) English Literature J352

The new GCSE (9-1) English Literature qualification replaces the previous GCSE English Literature qualification.

This qualification focuses on developing knowledge and understanding of prose, poetry and drama texts.

### Content

Learners will study prose, poetry and drama texts, including a Shakespeare play. The exact content they will study depends upon which set texts their school decides to teach.

Set texts are the texts which learners study throughout the course and which they will be assessed on in the exams. These texts are set by the exam board, which is why they are referred to as set texts. Exam boards produce the list of the texts that they will offer for the qualification and then schools decide which of these texts they want to teach, so long as they meet the required number and type of texts for the qualification. In GCSE (9-1) English Literature, the specific texts which the different exam boards provide may vary, but learners will always need to study a modern prose or drama text, a 19th century novel, poetry and a Shakespeare play.

The OCR GCSE (9-1) English Literature qualification requires learners to study one set text from each of the following four sections.

#### Modern prose or drama:

- Anita and Me
- Animal Farm
- Never Let Me Go
- An Inspector Calls
- My Mother Said I Never Should
- DNA

#### 19th century prose:

- Great Expectations
- Pride and Prejudice
- War of the Worlds
- The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde
- Jane Eyre

#### Poetry:

- Love and Relationships (15 poems from theme)
- Conflict (15 poems from theme)
- Youth and Age (15 poems from theme)

#### Shakespeare:

- Romeo and Juliet
- Macbeth
- The Merchant of Venice
- Much Ado About Nothing

Schools can choose which text from each section they want to teach. In some schools all learners taking the GCSE (9-1) English Literature qualification may study the same text for each section, in other schools, teachers may decide to teach different texts to different classes or teaching groups.

We have carefully selected our list of set texts, in discussion with teachers, so that there are texts which appeal to as wide a range of learners as possible. We have also worked hard to ensure that the texts are comparable in their level of difficulty, in other words, there is no 'easy' or 'hard' option.

## Exam structure

The GCSE (9-1) English Literature requires learners to spend a little longer in the exam hall than before. The previous GCSE saw learners taking three exams that totalled 3 hours exam time. The new OCR GCSE (9-1) English Literature qualification requires all learners to sit two different 2 hour exams (so 4 hours total exam time). Following discussions with teachers, we felt this was the best way to simply divide the time between the four texts, to allow time for reading, thinking and planning before responding to each section.

Each exam assesses learners' knowledge and understanding of two of the set texts. The first exam assesses the modern prose or drama text and the 19th century novel. This exam makes up 50% of the GCSE. The second exam assesses the poetry and the Shakespeare play and makes up the other 50% of the GCSE. In each exam, learners will respond to essay style questions.

We've done lots of work improving question wording, to ensure things are as clear and concise as possible!

### GCSE (9-1) English Literature

<p>Paper One: Modern &amp; literary heritage texts</p> <p>50% of GCSE Modern prose or drama (25%) 19th century prose (25%)</p> <p>2 hours - 80 marks</p>	<p>Paper Two: Poetry &amp; Shakespeare</p> <p>50% of GCSE Poetry (25%) Shakespeare play (25%)</p> <p>2 hours - 80 marks</p>
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### Assessment Objectives

Assessment objectives provide a breakdown of the skills which are assessed in the qualification. They are used by exam boards as designations that we give to questions in an exam paper to ensure that we are assessing the correct balance of skills in each exam series. There are a total of 4 Assessment Objectives for GCSE (9-1) English Literature.

The Assessment Objectives for GCSE (9-1) English Literature are:

- AO1 Read, understand and respond to texts. Students should be able to: maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations
- AO2 Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate
- AO3 Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written
- AO4 Use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.

### Exam series and resits

Like the previous GCSE English Literature, there will be the opportunity for all learners to enter GCSE (9-1) English Literature in the summer entry series.



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