



The new GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature (first taken summer 2017)

Major changes:

- Most students will now be taking both GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature. These are two separate GCSE qualifications.
- Both subjects are assessed by examination only. There is no coursework.
- There are no Higher and Foundation tiers so students of all abilities will sit the same examination.
- Grades will no longer be awarded at A* - G, they will now be awarded at 9 – 1, with 9 being the highest grade.
- GCSE English Language also has a Spoken Language component which will be graded at Pass, Merit or Distinction and does not count towards the 9-1 grade awarded for the exam components.

GCSE English Language

The English Language exams are based on the SKILLS of reading and writing. Students will have to show understanding of a variety of text types and should also be able to write convincingly in a range of styles. The components are as follows:

Component 1: 20th Century Literature Reading and Creative Prose Writing (1 hour 45 mins)

This component is all about FICTION. Students will read one extract from a text they have never seen before. They will be asked different types of questions. Some questions will simply require them to retrieve information, some questions will need them to deduce ideas about characters' motivations and some will ask them to comment on how the writer has used language or created effects.

Students will then produce one piece of creative writing in response to a choice of tasks. They can either write about personal experience or they can invent a story to suit the task.

Component 2: 19th and 21st Century Non-Fiction Reading and Transactional/Persuasive Writing (2 hours)

This component is all about NON-FICTION, for example, articles, reports, biographies. Students will read two extracts from non-fiction texts on a particular topic. One of these will be from the 19th Century and one will be recent. Again, they will be asked a range of questions and in this component they will also have to compare the two texts. They will have to consider why a writer has written a particular text, who the intended audience is and how the writer has put across a point of view.

Students will then produce two pieces of writing which will be transactional or persuasive. Transactional writing is the kind of 'real life' writing that they may need to do in their life outside school, for example, letters, formal emails or reports. It will be based on topics they can relate to their own life such as local/school issues, community events, environmental concerns etc. They will need to know how to persuade readers effectively.

Component 3: Spoken Language

This component will be done in the classroom at some point during the course. Your child will make one presentation and the teacher will ask some questions on the topic. The teacher will grade the presentation either Pass, Merit or Distinction. This will be on your child's exam certificate. It does not count towards the English Language grade but it is a necessary part of the qualification.

How you can help:

- Make sure your child is familiar with 'good' quality newspapers and magazines
- If you have to produce any real transactional or persuasive writing in your own life e.g. job application letter, letter of complaint, report on a topic relating to your job, share this with your child
- Encourage your child to be 'critical' readers- not critical in the negative sense but in the sense that they can recognise bias and how writers can influence readers effectively (e.g. headlines on tabloids)
- If you visit any historical museums, encourage your child to read older writing e.g. letters etc that are exhibited. This is the most difficult aspect of the new qualification.

GCSE English Literature

The English Literature exams are based on set texts and also on the SKILLS needed to understand unseen pieces of literature. Students will have to know key events, characters and themes in their set texts. They will also have to recognise writers' styles and techniques. They may also have to learn some key quotations from their set texts as they will not be able to take the books into the exams.

Component 1: Shakespeare and Poetry (2 hours)

Your child will study one play by Shakespeare **INSERT HERE** and an anthology of poetry from 1789 to the present day. The anthology has 18 poems, mainly about relationships, conflict and places.

Component 2: Post 1914 Prose or Drama, 19th Century Prose and Unseen Poetry (2 hours 30 minutes)

Your child will study one post 1914 text **INSERT HERE** and one 19th Century 'classic' text **INSERT HERE** for this component. They will also write about two previously unseen poems using the skills they learned from studying the poetry anthology.

How you can help:

- Ask questions about the texts your child is studying
- Look for stage productions of the texts

- Encourage your child to think about why a writer wrote a particular text at the time they wrote it
- Closer to the exam help your child memorise key quotes

Grades 9-1

The new grades 9-1 do not equate exactly to the old grades A* - G **ATTACH OFQUAL DIAGRAM**

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/537147/Postcard - Grading New GCSEs.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/537147/Postcard_-_Grading_New_GCSEs.pdf)

Grade 5 is considered to be a 'good pass'. However, Grade 4 is a Level 2 achievement and will meet the entry requirement for Level 3 courses (including A Levels) and employment. Therefore, students who attain Grade 4 will NOT have to re-sit the qualification.

In 2017, the first year of the new grading system, broadly the same proportion of students who would achieve C and above will achieve 4 and above. In 2017 only GCSE English Language, English Literature and Mathematics will use the new 9-1 grading system. In 2018, most other subjects will switch to the 9-1 grading system.

Grade 7 is roughly the equivalent of a Grade A so there is more discrimination at the top end of the grading system as now Grades 7, 8 and 9 replace A and A*.