

GCSE

WJEC Eduqas GCSE in
ENGLISH LANGUAGE

ACCREDITED BY OFQUAL

SPECIFICATION

Teaching from 2015
For award from 2017

This Ofqual regulated qualification is not available for candidates in maintained schools and colleges in Wales.

WJEC EDUQAS GCSE (9-1) IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

FOR TEACHING FROM 2015 FOR AWARD FROM 2017

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GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT

Component 1: 20th Century Literature Reading and Creative Prose Writing
Written examination: 1 hour 45 minutes
40% of qualification

Section A (20%) – Reading
Understanding of one prose extract (about 60-100 lines) of literature from the 20th century assessed through a range of structured questions

Section B (20%) – Prose Writing
One creative writing task selected from a choice of four titles

Component 2: 19th and 21st Century Non-Fiction Reading and Transactional/Persuasive Writing
Written examination: 2 hours
60% of qualification

Section A (30%) – Reading
Understanding of two extracts (about 900-1200 words in total) of high-quality non-fiction writing, one from the 19th century, the other from the 21st century, assessed through a range of structured questions

Section B (30%) – Writing
Two compulsory transactional/persuasive writing tasks

Component 3: Spoken Language
Non-exam assessment
Unweighted

One presentation/speech, including responses to questions and feedback

Achievement in Spoken Language will be reported as part of the qualification, but it will not form part of the final mark and grade.

This linear qualification will be available in the summer and November series each year. It will be awarded for the first time in summer 2017.

Qualification Accreditation Number: 601/4505/5

GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The WJEC Eduqas GCSE in English language builds on the tradition and reputation WJEC has established for clear, reliable assessment supported by straightforward, accessible guidance and administration.

In developing this specification, WJEC has been mindful to include the following features:

- opportunities for flexible teaching approaches
- questions and tasks designed to enable candidates to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do
- straightforward wording of questions
- accessibility of materials across the ability range
- opportunities for breadth of study
- use of ‘unseen’ material for analysis in external assessment
- focused assessment of specific language skills
- opportunities for producing extended writing
- high-quality examination and resource materials.

It enables learners to:

- read a wide range of texts, fluently and with good understanding
- read critically, and use knowledge gained from wide reading to inform and improve their own writing
- write effectively and coherently using Standard English appropriately
- use grammar correctly, punctuate and spell accurately
- acquire and apply a wide vocabulary, alongside a knowledge and understanding of grammatical terminology,¹ and linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language.

In addition, it enables learners to:

- listen to and understand spoken language, and use spoken Standard English effectively.

Spoken language will be reported on as part of the qualification, but it will not form part of the final mark and grade.

In designing this specification, careful consideration of length of examination time and the number of question papers has ensured a balance between robust assessment and manageability. Varied question types and clear rubric aim to make this untiered assessment accessible to learners of different abilities.

¹ See also the glossary of grammatical terms that supports the national curriculum programmes of study for English.

A key aim of this specification is to encourage candidates to produce high-quality texts in their Writing responses. To help learners achieve this, WJEC's assessment materials will ensure that high-quality texts will be studied as part of the Reading assessment. These may be beneficial to learners as a model for their own writing.

Regulatory requirements set out by the Department for Education and Ofqual state all GCSE in English language qualifications will:

- be assessed by examination
- have speaking skills assessed but this will not contribute to the overall grade. The assessment will be marked by teachers and reported separately, alongside the qualification grade on the certificate
- include 20% of the marks for the written exams which will be allocated to accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar
- be untiered
- be fully linear with assessments available in the summer series and resit opportunities in the November series.

This GCSE in English language encourages learners to read fluently and write effectively. Learners should be able to demonstrate a confident control of Standard English and they should be able to write grammatically correct sentences, deploy figurative language and analyse texts.

1.2 PRIOR LEARNING AND PROGRESSION

There are no previous learning requirements for this specification. Any requirements set for entry to a course based on this specification are at the school/college's discretion.

This specification builds on subject content which is typically taught at key stage 3 and provides a suitable foundation for the study of English Language at either AS or A level. In addition, the specification provides a coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study for learners who do not progress to further study in this subject.

1.3 EQUALITY AND FAIR ASSESSMENT

This specification may be followed by any learner, irrespective of gender, ethnic, religious or cultural background. It has been designed to avoid, where possible, features that could, without justification, make it more difficult for a learner to achieve because they have a particular protected characteristic.

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The specification has been discussed with groups who represent the interests of a diverse range of learners, and the specification will be kept under review.

Reasonable adjustments are made for certain learners in order to enable them to access the assessments (e.g. application for extra time in a GCSE subject where extended writing is required). Information on reasonable adjustments is found in the following document from the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ): *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration: General and Vocational Qualifications*.

This document is available on the JCQ website (www.jcq.org.uk). As a consequence of provision for reasonable adjustments, very few learners will have a complete barrier to any part of the assessment.

2 SUBJECT CONTENT

The qualification is made up of two externally-assessed examination components and one internally assessed non-examination component. The internally-assessed non-examination component tests spoken language skills. Achievement in Spoken Language will be reported as part of the qualification, but it will not form part of the final mark and grade.

There is a slightly heavier weighting on the non-fiction Reading and Writing in Component 2 than on the literature and creative writing in Component 1, in order to ensure that skills for work, life and further education are prioritised. It is assumed that the majority of learners will also be following a GCSE in English literature and will therefore study a broad range of literature via that qualification.

Subject content

This specification sets out the full range of content for GCSE English language. Centres may, however, increase depth, breadth or context within the specified topics to consolidate teaching of the subject content.

All texts in the examination will be 'unseen', that is, learners will not have studied them before. These texts will be drawn from each of the 19th to 21st centuries, as specified below.

GCSE English language is designed on the basis that learners should read and be assessed on high-quality, challenging texts from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. Each text studied in the classroom must represent a substantial piece of writing, making significant demands on learners in terms of content, structure and the quality of language. The texts, across a range of genres and types, should support learners in developing their own writing by providing effective models. The texts must include literature and extended literary non-fiction, and other writing such as essays, reviews and journalism (both printed and online). Texts that are essentially transient, such as instant news feeds, will not be used for examination purposes.

Scope of study

The WJEC Eduqas GCSE specification in English language requires learners to study:

Critical reading and comprehension

- *Critical reading and comprehension*: identifying and interpreting themes, ideas and information in a range of literature and other high-quality writing; reading in different ways for different purposes, and comparing and evaluating the usefulness, relevance and presentation of content for these purposes; drawing inferences and justifying these with evidence; supporting a point of view by referring to evidence within the text; identifying bias and misuse of evidence, including distinguishing between statements that are supported by evidence and those that are not; reflecting critically and evaluatively on text, using the context of the text and drawing on knowledge and skills gained from wider reading; recognising the possibility of different responses to a text

- *Summary and synthesis*: identifying the main theme or themes; summarising ideas and information from a single text; synthesising from more than one text
- *Evaluation of a writer's choice of vocabulary, form, grammatical and structural features*: explaining and illustrating how vocabulary and grammar contribute to effectiveness and impact, using linguistic and literary terminology accurately to do so and paying attention to detail; analysing and evaluating how form and structure contribute to the effectiveness and impact of a text
- *Comparing texts*: comparing two or more texts critically with respect to the above.

Writing

- *Producing clear and coherent text*: writing effectively for different purposes and audiences: to describe, narrate, explain, instruct, give and respond to information, and argue; selecting vocabulary, grammar, form, and structural and organisational features judiciously to reflect audience, purpose and context; using language imaginatively and creatively; using information provided by others to write (in different forms); maintaining a consistent point of view; maintaining coherence and consistency across a text
- *Writing for impact*: selecting, organising and emphasising facts, ideas and key points; citing evidence and quotation effectively and pertinently to support views; creating emotional impact; using language creatively, imaginatively and persuasively, including rhetorical devices (such as rhetorical questions, antithesis, parenthesis).

Spoken Language

- *Present information and ideas*: selecting and organising information and ideas effectively and persuasively for prepared spoken presentations; planning effectively for different purposes and audiences; making presentations and speeches
- *Respond to spoken language*: listening to and responding appropriately to any questions and feedback
- *Spoken Standard English*: expressing ideas using Standard English whenever and wherever appropriate.

2.1 COMPONENT 1

Component 1

20th Century Literature Reading Study and Creative Prose Writing

40% (1 hour 45 minutes)

Section A (20%) – Reading (40 marks)

This section will test through structured questions the reading of an unseen extract from one 20th century literary prose text (about 60-100 lines). This section assesses AO1, AO2 and AO4.

Section B (20%) – Prose Writing (40 marks)

This section will test creative prose writing through one 40-mark task. Candidates will be offered a choice of four titles giving opportunities for writing to describe and narrate, and imaginative and creative use of language. This response should be a narrative / recount. Candidates who write purely descriptively, or use a form other than that specified, such as poetry or drama, will not be able to access the full mark range as shown in the assessment criteria. This section assesses AO5 and AO6.

2.2 COMPONENT 2

Component 2

19th and 21st Century Non-Fiction Reading Study and Transactional/Persuasive Writing

60% (2 hours)

Section A (30%) – Reading (40 marks)

This section will test through structured questions the reading of two high-quality unseen non-fiction texts (about 900-1200 words in total), one from the 19th century, the other from the 21st century. Non-fiction texts may include, but will not be limited to: letters, extracts from autobiographies or biographies, diaries, reports, articles and digital and multi-modal texts of various kinds from newspapers and magazines, and the internet. This section assesses AO1 (and 2), AO2, AO3 and AO4.

Section B (30%) – Writing (40 marks)

This section will test transactional, persuasive and/or discursive writing through two equally weighted compulsory tasks (20 marks each). Across the two tasks candidates will be offered opportunities to write for a range of audiences and purposes, adapting style to form and to real-life contexts in, for example, letters, articles, reviews, speeches, etc. This section assesses AO5 and AO6.

2.3 COMPONENT 3

Component 3
Spoken Language
Unweighted

Candidates will be required to complete one formal presentation or speech. They will also be assessed on their responses to questions and feedback following the presentation or speech. Standard English should be a feature of all parts of the candidates' work in this component. This component assesses AO7, AO8 and AO9.

Achievement in Spoken Language will be reported as part of the qualification, but it will not form part of the final mark and grade.

3 ASSESSMENT

3.1 ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES AND WEIGHTINGS

Below are the assessment objectives for this qualification.

READING (50%) Read and understand a range of texts to:	
AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 (50%)	
AO5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. (This requirement must constitute 20% of the marks for each specification as a whole.)
SPOKEN LANGUAGE (<i>Unweighted</i>)	
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.

Please note, AO7, AO8 and AO9 are used to assess Spoken language which will be reported as part of the qualification, but it will not form part of the final mark and grade.

The table below shows the weighting of each assessment objective for the qualification as a whole for all series.

AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4	AO5	AO6
10%	20%	7.5%	12.5%	30%	20%

Reading is assessed by AO1, AO2, AO3 and AO4. This constitutes 50% of the qualification.

Writing is assessed by AO5 and AO6. This makes up the remaining 50% of the qualification.

Spoken language is assessed by AO7, AO8 and AO9. This assessment is unweighted in the qualification.

3.2 ARRANGEMENTS FOR NON-EXAM ASSESSMENT

SPOKEN LANGUAGE ENDORSEMENT FOR GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

This endorsement will be reported as a separate grade (Pass, Merit, Distinction or Not Classified) and will not contribute to the result of the GCSE English Language qualification.

This outline of the requirements has been produced in collaboration with all the relevant awarding bodies. Further clarification will be available in the *JCQ Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments*.

Tasks

Candidates must undertake a prepared spoken presentation on a specific topic. As a guide, the duration of the whole assessment should be no more than ten minutes. The key requirements are:

- Presentations must be formal but may take a wide variety of forms, including talks, debates, speeches and dialogues.
- Candidates must identify the subject for their presentations in advance and agree with their teacher.
- Presentations must be planned and organised. Candidates should be advised that lack of preparation is likely to prevent access to the criteria for the higher grades.
- Candidates may use pre-prepared notes, PowerPoint etc to assist them during their presentations but this is not a requirement.
- As part of, or following, the presentation, candidates must listen to and respond appropriately to questions and feedback.
- Where the audience is the teacher only, the presentation and dialogue must be designed in such a way that it could have a potentially wider audience than just one person (e.g. it replicates a television interview).

Assessment

No marks will be assigned to a candidate's performance - it will be assessed holistically as a grade, using a 'competency' basis on criteria which are provided on page 14. Competency means that a student must meet all the criteria in one grade before moving on to the next. Candidates who do not reach the Pass standard must be recorded as Not Classified.

Centres must make arrangements for internal standardisation of assessments. This should take place as far as possible *before* assessment begins in earnest. Internal standardisation should include a preliminary trial assessment session (including all teachers involved in assessment) using exemplar material provided by the awarding bodies, in order to ensure that there is a common understanding of the assessment criteria.

Monitoring

The endorsement will be assessed by centres. Each centre is required to provide audio-visual recordings of the presentations of a sample of candidates (see below). These will allow us to check that centres have used appropriate tasks, and have applied the assessment criteria correctly and consistently.

The centre must provide recordings of the presentations of a sample of candidates. The recording of each candidate's presentation, including questions and feedback from the audience, must be complete and unedited.

Using their knowledge of candidates' likely performance, centres should select the sample following the guidance shown in the table below. Centres are recommended to record slightly more than the minimum number at each grade to allow for candidates whose performance is awarded a higher or lower grade than the centre had anticipated. WJEC will provide details regarding the storage and submission of recordings.

Table 1 Sample Sizes

No of candidates at centre	No. of candidates whose presentations must be recorded	Minimum no. of candidates at each grade (D, M, P)
30 or fewer	All candidates	10
Over 30	30	10

This is a broad overview of what is required. Further information on arrangements for learners with communication issues and / or hearing needs may be found in the appendices.

If the awarding body has concerns as a result of monitoring, the centre will be provided with additional support (which may include a visit by a monitor) in the following academic year. In exceptional circumstances there will be enhanced monitoring arrangements which may include an earlier deadline for submission of assessments or a requirement to record the presentations of all candidates.

Candidate absence

Where a candidate misses the scheduled date/time for his/her presentation, the centre must organise an alternative session.

A candidate who is unable to undertake his/her presentation because of persistent absence (whether through ill health or any other reason) will not qualify for special consideration and will receive a 'Not Classified' result for the Spoken Language endorsement. However, standard procedures for sitting at an alternative venue do apply, if appropriate.

Entries and centre declaration

Entries for GCSE English Language automatically include the Spoken Language endorsement.

The head of centre is required to provide a written declaration to us by a published deadline to confirm that reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that all candidates whom the centre has entered for GCSE English Language have undertaken the Spoken Language endorsement.

Spoken Language Criteria for Pass, Merit and Distinction

General criteria

To be awarded a Pass, Merit or Distinction a Learner must –

- be audible, and
- use Spoken Standard English which, for the purpose of the spoken language assessment, means that a Learner must –
 - be intelligible, and
 - generally use language appropriate to the formal setting of the presentation.

Pass	Merit	Distinction
<p>In addition to the general criteria, to be awarded a Pass a Learner's performance in his or her spoken language assessment must meet all of the following criteria –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expresses straightforward/ideas information/feelings, • makes an attempt to organise and structure his or her presentation, • makes an attempt to meet the needs of the audience, and • listens to questions/feedback and provides an appropriate response in a straightforward manner. 	<p>In addition to the general criteria, to be awarded a Merit a Learner's performance in his or her spoken language assessment must meet all of the following criteria –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expresses challenging ideas/information/ feelings using a range of vocabulary, • organises and structures his or her presentation clearly and appropriately to meet the need of the audience, • achieves the purpose of his or her presentation, and • listens to questions/feedback responding formally and in some detail. 	<p>In addition to the general criteria, to be awarded a Distinction a Learner's performance in his or her spoken language assessment must meet all of the following criteria –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expresses sophisticated ideas/information feelings using a sophisticated repertoire of vocabulary, • organises and structures his or her presentation using an effective range of strategies to engage the audience, • achieves the purpose of his or her presentation and • listens to questions/feedback, responds perceptively and if appropriate elaborates with further ideas and information.

4 TECHNICAL INFORMATION

4.1 MAKING ENTRIES

This is a linear qualification in which all assessments must be taken at the end of the course. Assessment opportunities will be available in the summer and November series each year, until the end of the life of this specification. Summer 2017 will be the first assessment opportunity.

Where candidates wish to re-sit the qualification, all components must be re-taken.

The November series is only available to candidates who are re-sitting the qualification. Candidates who take an assessment in the November series must have reached at least the age of 16 on or before 31 August in the same calendar year as the assessment.

The entry code appears below.

WJEC Eduqas GCSE English Language: C700QS

The current edition of our *Entry Procedures and Coding Information* gives up-to-date entry procedures.

4.2 GRADING, AWARDING AND REPORTING

GCSE qualifications are reported on a nine point scale from 1 to 9, where 9 is the highest grade. Results not attaining the minimum standard for the award will be reported as U (unclassified).

5 APPENDIX

SPOKEN LANGUAGE ENDORSEMENT: GUIDANCE FOR TEACHERS OF LEARNERS WITH COMMUNICATION ISSUES AND / OR HEARING NEEDS

Introduction

This document has been produced by the awarding bodies for England to support learners with communication and/or hearing needs in the Spoken Language Endorsement for GCSE English Language. It has been developed jointly with representatives from the British Association of Teachers of the Deaf, The Communication Trust, National Deaf Children's Society and the Royal National Institute of Blind People. It should be read in conjunction with the GCSE English Language specification from your awarding body and common assessment criteria.

The aim of this document is to encourage access to the Endorsement for as many learners as possible and provide practical guidance and support for their teachers.

This document focuses on the arrangements for the assessment element of the Spoken Language Endorsement. However, it is important to ensure that, throughout the GCSE course and particularly for learners with communication and/or hearing needs, there is continuing language development work that is over and above any of the requirements specifically related to the Endorsement.

Access to the Endorsement

For Heads of Centre the most important responsibility in relation to the Endorsement is to ensure that as many learners as possible are offered full access to the opportunities that the Endorsement will give. While exemption may be appropriate for some learners with protected characteristics (as defined in the Equality Act 2010), for most it will not be. In these latter cases it is the responsibility of the Head of Centre to ensure that all such learners have the opportunity to take the Endorsement.

Heads' responsibilities in this area will be supported in two main ways:

- They will have to sign the annual Head of Centre declaration.
- There will be an annual monitoring exercise undertaken by the awarding bodies to identify and understand patterns of centre behaviour where surprisingly large numbers of Exemptions/Not Classified results occurred.

Flexibility of the Requirements

To support full access, Ofqual's requirements for the Endorsement contain considerable flexibility around provision for individual learners. Of special interest to teachers of learners with communication and/or hearing needs are the following:

- Format

Various formats of presentation are allowed, including talks, debates, speeches and dialogues. The most common format in mainstream centres is likely to be the formal individual 'talk', in front of an audience followed by questions, but there are other ways in which learners can perform. Sample assessment materials, for example, show learners in an individual dialogic format, where they are interviewed by a teacher as part of a media type presentation.

It is suggested that discussions are held with the learner and any specialist professional (e.g. speech and language therapist) and/or any specialist teachers (e.g. Teachers of the Deaf) to consider the most appropriate format.

- The Requirement for Audibility and Intelligibility

The Assessment Criteria require as a starting point that the learner should be audible and intelligible. The interpretation of 'audible' for the purposes of the endorsement means the learner is audible to the person undertaking the assessment and any audience present. Prompts can be given to encourage/remind the learner to speak louder.

Some learners can only be clearly understood by peers and staff who have become accustomed to their speech. Therefore, 'intelligibility' for the purposes of this endorsement requires that the learner is intelligible to the person making the assessment, who will have become attuned to the learner's speech over time.

- Presentation skills

The Assessment Criteria refer to learners' 'making an attempt to meet the needs of the audience', which might be interpreted as including an assessment of their presentation skills. Assessors should be mindful of the possible impact of a disability such as vision impairment on a learner's body language and their ability to make eye contact with the audience. Where this may be a factor, assessment should be carried out by someone who is familiar with the learner and their individual needs.

- Recording

Not all learners have to be recorded. A sample of learners needs to be recorded, once the centre entry goes beyond 30, but the centre chooses the sample. Mainstream centres therefore do not need to record learners with communication and/or hearing needs if they do not want to. Specialist centres, with 30 or fewer learners, will still be able to apply to their awarding bodies for an exemption from recording for those learners where recording would be a significant problem.

- Timings

There are no time limits to the presentation (at either end of the time scale). Guidance will indicate that learners can do all that is necessary to access the highest attainment levels within a presentation of 10 minutes but, where more time is required, this is permissible. Guidance will also suggest that a very brief presentation will offer learners limited opportunities to demonstrate their skills.

Pauses and rest periods are allowable - for instance between the presentation and questions.

- Notes, aids, amplification systems

Notes, PowerPoint, and visual aids are all permissible without restrictions on their content, length etc. Amplification systems, such as FM systems for deaf learners are permitted.

- Acoustic and room layout

It is important that all assessments for deaf learners (whether they have mild, moderate, severe or profound loss) take place in locations with an acceptable acoustic environment and with lighting good enough to facilitate speech/lip reading. In fact, this will be to the benefit of all candidates.

Additionally, the seating arrangements/layout of the room are also very important for speech/lip reading, e.g. if a member of the audience, assessor or questioner has their back to a window, the deaf candidate will find it hard to speech/lip read. A suitably experienced professional (e.g. Teacher of the Deaf) should advise on appropriate layout and lighting.

- Composition of Audience

There is flexibility in the make-up and size of the presentation audience. An audience can be a whole class, a small group, or an individual teacher. It could also comprise older students, governors, teaching assistants, learning mentors etc. If the audience comprises one person, they must ensure that their questions allow the learners the opportunities to demonstrate their skills. Audience members are allowed to offer encouragement, prompts and support to a learner. It is permissible to ask a learner to speak up, repeat etc.

- A Prompter

A prompter could help a learner remember where they are up to their presentation, or remind them what they have just said.

Arrangements which require Awarding Body approval

- Augmentative and alternative communication systems (AAC)

If the learners use alternative communication devices as their normal method of communication, they can apply to the awarding body for permission to use this method for their presentation.

- Sign Supported English or Cued Speech

Sign Supported English (SSE) or Cued Speech can be used, during the presentation, or during the question stage to ensure that the learner is fully aware of the questions being asked.

The use of Sign Supported English (SSE) or Cued Speech requires approval from the awarding body

- British Sign Language

Please note that British Sign Language is NOT allowed, as this is a distinct language in its own right and so is different from English.

Conclusion

Awarding bodies hope that as many learners as possible will complete the Spoken Language Endorsement alongside their GCSE in English Language. Where there are issues which go beyond the scope of this document, please contact a specialist practitioner (e.g. a Teacher of the Deaf or Speech and Language Therapist) and/or your awarding body as appropriate for further advice.