



## Information about the GCSE (9-1) 2019 English Language Grade Boundaries

The GCSE English Language grade boundaries are set using the comparable outcomes methodology. This approach means that we use a combination of statistics about candidate ability and senior examiner expert judgement to ensure that changes in the ability profile of cohorts and the demand of the assessments are taken into account when setting grade boundaries.

Summer 2019 saw the changes made to paper 2 come into play. These changes were:

- Question 2 (2 marks) and Question 5 (1 mark) now target AO1 'identify information and ideas', rather than AO2 'analyse how writers use language and structure.'
- Structured bullet points added to Questions 3 and 7b to clarify the requirements.
- 5 minutes additional time.

Our focus in making changes was to save students valuable time and allow them to progress through the paper more quickly and confidently, thereby impacting positively on students' experience of sitting the exam whilst keeping changes to a minimum to ensure as little disruption as possible.

The changes made the paper more accessible to candidates and contributed to an increase in mean score for the paper.

The boundaries in Summer 2019 have therefore increased to reflect the increase in candidate performance and in order to ensure the maintenance of standards across series. Centres, and by extension the candidates, are also now more familiar with the requirements of the specification as it is in its third year, and as expected have performed better on the papers.

Summer 2019 also saw the end of the 'Sawtooth Effect'. The 'Sawtooth Effect' is a pattern of change caused by assessment reform. Specifically, performance on high stakes assessments is often adversely affected when that assessment undergoes reform, followed by improving performance over time as students and teachers gain familiarity with the new examination.

It is of the utmost importance that candidates receive the grade that fairly reflects their performance in their examinations. If you have any further questions about this or any other aspect of our assessments, please get in touch via [teachingenglish@pearson.com](mailto:teachingenglish@pearson.com)