

Choosing an English qualification

Please find some guidance below to help you in your choice of English qualifications. This guidance applies to schools and colleges based both in the UK and internationally.

Please note that publicly funded schools in England are required to offer qualifications on the Department for Education's [Section 96 guidance](#). This means that English state schools offer GCSEs. Independent schools in the UK and other countries may choose to offer GCSEs or International GCSEs. Self-funding students have a free choice of GCSE or International GCSE.

English Language

These are all 'English' as opposed to 'English as a foreign language' or 'languages' qualifications. This means they are not aligned to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) as 'languages' qualifications are. They are commonly sat by candidates who have English as a second or additional language. Edexcel also offers an [Int GCSE In English as a Second Language](#). This is a languages qualification. You can get more information about languages exams at teachinglanguages@pearson.com.

[GCSE English Language, 1EN0](#)

GCSEs are the 'standard' English Language qualifications that students in state schools in England sit, usually when they are aged 15/16. GCSE English Language will be automatically accepted by colleges and universities in the UK as evidence of English Language capability, usually at grade 4 or 5, depending on the course being applied for. GCSE English Language 1EN0 can be sat by private candidates providing the entering centre is willing to supervise the Spoken Language Endorsement (SLE) which is a compulsory part of the qualification. The SLE is a 10-minute presentation with questions and answers.

This qualification can be sat in November and May/June each year. The November exam series is intended as a resit opportunity and has an age restriction. Any student who was aged at least 16 on 31 August of the relevant year can take the GCSE English language in the November thereafter.

[GCSE English Language 2.0, 1EN2](#)

In September 2021, we launched an alternative to GCSE English Language 1EN0. Students may choose to study 1EN0 or 1EN2. GCSE English Language 2.0 (1EN2) has been designed to engage and motivate students through a choice of contemporary texts, relatable modern themes, and skills-based writing tasks. First certification was in June 2022. This GCSE has the same status as 1EN0 for progression to FE and HE, funding and school performance measures. It includes the Spoken Language Endorsement in the same way as 1EN0. As with 1EN0 it can be paired with GCSE English Literature (1ET0).

This qualification can be sat in November and May/June each year. The November exam series is intended as a resit opportunity and has an age restriction. Any student who was aged at least 16 on 31 August of the relevant year can take the GCSE English language in the November thereafter.

[International GCSE English Language A, 4EA1](#) and [B, 4EB1](#)

These are both Level 1/2 qualifications (like GCSEs) and are generally equivalent. Often students who are being taught in school do specification A and those who want to prove that they have competence in English (for example older students, returning to education) do specification B. A requires preparation of set texts from an anthology and has an exam and a coursework route. On the exam-route, students encounter two studied and one unseen text. B does not require students to prepare specific texts and consists of a single 3-hour exam, in which students encounter 2 unseen texts. Both specifications give students the option to carry out the Spoken Language Endorsement (SLE) to demonstrate their oral abilities in English. This can be a requirement for some degree courses (law, medicine) and is useful if the student does not have English as a first language. The A specification has an optional coursework route, but the B does not. Home-educated students or private candidates usually take exam-only routes because of the complications of having coursework/the SLE supervised and authenticated by a teacher at the exam centre where the qualification will be sat.

International GCSEs in English Language are regarded as generally equivalent to GCSEs. Colleges and universities set their own entry requirements for English Language, so it is always worth checking with the organisations where the student intends to continue their studies to see which English Language qualifications they accept.

These qualifications can be sat in May/June and November each year. Both exam series are open to all candidates (those sitting for the first time and those who are re-sitting).

Onscreen assessment: English Language A can be sat onscreen. Please see the [guidance](#).

Modular option for international (non-UK) centres only: we also offer [4XEA1 Int GCSE English Language A \(Modular\)](#). The coursework option is not available on 4XEA1.

[Find out more](#) about modular International GCSEs for international centres.

English Literature

[GCSE English Literature 1ETQ](#)

GCSEs in English Literature are the 'standard' English Literature qualification that students in state schools in England sit. This qualification can be offered to private candidates as it is 100% externally assessed. There is no coursework. Students sit two exams. The exams are 'closed book'. It is therefore not necessary to purchase a prescribed edition of the set texts, but we recommend that you choose the editions listed on the exam papers (those used by our examiners). Set texts are usually valid for the lifespan of the qualification. We do not anticipate any set text changes in the immediate future.

This qualification can be sat in May/June each year.

[International GCSE in English Literature](#)

International GCSEs in English Literature are generally equivalent to GCSEs in English Literature. Students of Edexcel's International GCSE in English Literature can choose from an exam-only or an exam and coursework option. Paper 1 is 'closed book'. Paper 2 is 'open book' (clean, unannotated copies only). Students are required to purchase prescribed editions of the Paper 2 texts at the start

of the two-year course. The editions are listed in the specification. Set texts are usually valid for the lifespan of the qualification. Private candidates usually sit the exam-only route.

These qualifications can be sat November and May/June each year. Once you have chosen your qualifications, you can use the links above to access free resources, past papers and paid-for student books.

Onscreen assessment: English Literature can be sat onscreen. Please see the [guidance](#).

Modular option for international (non-UK) centres only: we also offer [4XET1 Int GCSE English Literature \(Modular\)](#). The coursework option is not available on 4XET1.

Students who may not achieve Grade 4 at GCSE or International GCSE

Please [read this guidance](#) on qualifications which may better suit students unlikely to achieve Grade 4 or who would like to gain a 'stepping-stone' qualification in English.

Open access to resources for home educators, private tutors and private candidates

Most of the resources on our webpages are open access. A few resources have a silver padlock. This is either because they contain material with copyright restrictions, or because teachers require an assessment to remain secure for a period so that they can use it as a mock assessment. Silver-padlocked documents can only be accessed by Edexcel teachers in Edexcel centres who have an Edexcel Online login. Unfortunately, home-educators, private tutors and private candidates cannot have such a login as these are managed by exams officers in schools. Everything you need to deliver any of the above qualifications can be accessed without a login. Materials which are locked so that they can be used for mock exams are usually unlocked 12 months after the last exam (for all subjects) in the exam series. Pearson may take the decision to keep past assessment materials under restricted access for longer than 12 months if there is a legitimate business reason for doing so (for example, cancellation of an examination series). Private candidates (or their parents) may [request access](#) to restricted access assessment materials after they have made an entry to facilitate preparation for exams.

Finding a centre where private candidates can sit Pearson Edexcel qualifications

When a student is ready to sit their qualification, this [tool](#) can be used to find a centre where they can be entered.