

GCSE English 2015

A guide to our new
qualifications





GCSE English is changing from 2015

We promise to provide you with the most up-to-date information on the reforms for 2015 and the support you need to help you prepare for specification change.

This brochure is designed to outline the key changes, explain what they mean for your students, tell you about how our qualifications will address these changes and tell you about the support we're providing.



Key changes to GCSE for 2015

The following changes will apply to all awarding organisations' specifications:

- There will be two English GCSEs available - **GCSE English Language** and **GCSE English Literature**, with no option for students to take a single GCSE English.
- **All assessment will be through exams** at the end of the course and there will be no coursework or controlled assessment. These exams will be untiered, with students of all abilities taking the same papers.
- **Speaking and Listening** will still be taught and assessed, but it won't count towards students' final grade - it will be recorded separately on their certificates.
- There will be a **new grading scale, from 1 to 9** and, as with all of the new GCSEs, the standards required for students to achieve the top grades will be higher.
- **GCSE English Language** will now assess students' ability to read and respond to unseen 19th, 20th and 21st century fiction and non-fiction texts (there are no longer any set texts), as well as assessing writing, with a 20% weighting for Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar.
- In **GCSE English Literature**, students will study four set texts (Shakespeare, a 19th century novel, poetry, and post-1914 British fiction or drama) as well as having to compare unseen texts in the exam.

See full details of the changes at www.edexcel.com/gcseengprop



What do these changes mean for English?

The new subject criteria are designed to help learners keep pace with the world's highest performing countries and to ensure they emerge with a level of literacy that will provide a genuine foundation for the rest of their learning and working lives.

In many respects the criteria represent a shift in what is expected of learners. We know, from the many conversations we've had with you over the last year, that some of these changes are welcome. We also know that some will pose new challenges.

For example:

- the emphasis on **unseen assessment**
- a focus on **literary heritage texts**
- the increased weighting given to **technical accuracy within writing**
- **untiered** papers.

We've thought hard about these challenges when designing our specifications and assessments, as we aim to provide an experience that is both challenging and inclusive – and generally empowering for **all learners**.



How our English GCSE 2015 qualifications will address the changes



Photo: Ian Wedgwood. Pearson Education Ltd

Find out more at www.edexcel.com/gcseengprop

Our experience in running successful untiered International GCSE and Certificate English qualifications is helping us to create clear, **appropriately scaffolded papers** designed to **stretch and support the full ability range**. Through working with you and the wider English community, we believe we've selected **the most engaging texts and themes** we can. And we have really **scrutinised our mark schemes** and trialled new ones, to ensure our expectations around learner performance against the new GCSE standard are as clear as they can be: for you and for your students.

We also know that the specifications and assessments themselves are only one part of the story. The key to your learners' progress isn't going to come through the qualification alone. It comes through the passion and best practice that you bring to your teaching. That's why we have partnered with **Debra Myhill's team at the University of Exeter**, as well as the **Let's Think in English project at King's College London**, to create free support materials for improving writing skills and building students' confidence with challenging unseen texts.

The information provided is based on Pearson's draft specifications submitted to Ofqual will be subject to change in the final accredited qualification.



How we're supporting you

We're dedicated to providing the support and materials you need to plan and implement the new Edexcel GCSE English specifications successfully. In addition to the teaching and learning materials around improving writing and developing confidence with unseen texts, we will also be providing:

- comprehensive banks of **exemplar student work**, prior to first teaching
- additional **sample papers**, for formative use and mock exams
- student poetry **anthologies**, with accompanying free teaching and learning resources
- an online English Language Preparation Anthology, containing a **bank of practice unseen texts**
- **free training** on how to deliver all units, to help you feel confident in tracking your students' progress
- **local network groups** covering all regions, to ensure you have regular opportunity to share best practice
- a **dedicated English Subject Advisor** providing you with personal support when you need it.

In addition, we will also have ResultPlus (free, online results analysis service), examWizard (exam preparation tool) and much more.



Timeline of GCSE qualification reform

GCSEs are being reformed in stages. Subjects in the **first stage** are English Language, English Literature and Mathematics. These subjects will be reformed for first teaching in September 2015.

Subjects in the **second stage** will be available for first teaching in September 2016. These are Biology, Chemistry, Physics, History, Geography, Languages, Art and Design, Citizenship Studies, Computer Science, Design and Technology, Drama, Dance, Music, Physical Education and Religious Studies.

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Current GCSEs	June 2014 Current GCSEs available as linear qualifications – summer exam series only. November 2014 Exams in English, English Language, and Mathematics available as a resit opportunity only. Linear assessment only.	June 2015 Summer exam series for current GCSEs, linear qualifications only.	June 2016 Final summer exam series for current GCSEs in English, English Language, English Literature, and Mathematics. November 2016 Final exam resit opportunity for current GCSEs in English, English Language and Mathematics. Linear assessment only.		
First stage subjects	September 2014 Specifications for new GCSEs available in English Language, English Literature and Mathematics – first stage subjects.*	September 2015 First teaching of new GCSEs included as first stage subjects.		June 2017 First exam series for new GCSEs in English Language, English Literature and Mathematics – first stage subjects. November 2017 First November exams for new GCSEs in English Language and Mathematics – new post-16 rule first stage subjects.	
Second stage subjects			September 2016 First teaching of new GCSEs included as second stage subjects.	June 2017 Final summer exam series for current GCSEs – second stage subjects.	June 2018 First exam series for new GCSEs – second stage subjects.

*Subject to Ofqual accreditation.

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