



Planning for lower-ability and SEND learners at KS4

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16 June 2026

[Access recording](#)



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Aims, contexts, sources of general guidance

Aims of the session

- Balancing the needs/wants of students and their parents with the realities of school capacities and the framework of assessments to make informed decisions
- Look at different qualifications that may suit your less-able students on their own or in combination, including plans for new 'stepping stones' qualifications
- Planning access arrangements & understanding the best approach for each student and their implications for accessing SPAG marks
- GCSE, Int GCSE, ELC and FS pathways (separate and combined)
- Managing the SLE and SLC (for GCSE, Int GCSE, ELC and FS) for learners with additional needs including audiences and videorecording.

Parameters of session

- Credentials: I'm not an expert but a lot of personal and professional experience with ASD, dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, anxiety, VI, HI, cerebral palsy, and gender identity. Experience of teaching GCSE, Int GCSE, ELC, A level, ESL, EFL, IELTS in various contexts.
- Realistic: it's a highly complicated area. This session will need to be fairly high level but other more detailed sessions coming and available
- 'Shorthand'

Contexts

- I have a few students in Y11 doing ELC as well as GCSE using the [mapped course planner](#).
- My students are entered for FS, ELC and GCSE. They are in mainstream classes for English but have additional sessions when other students are doing MFL.
- I work in a small school/special school/AP/PRU where most students have additional needs and are working at different speeds and will be assessed at different times.
- I'm delivering over 1 or 2 years.
- My students come and go during the year and we try and assess them as soon as they are ready.
- I want to map out assessments over 2 or 3 years so that learners always have a clear learning aim and get a sense of achievement by passing a qualification at a particular level.

Where can I go for general support in teaching learners with particular needs?

[FS training recordings](#)

[Learners with Dyslexia](#)

[Learners with SpLD and ASD](#)

[Supporting learners with ASD](#)

[Supporting learners with dyscalculia](#)

[Reasonable adjustments](#)

[Ask the examiner, FS English, SLC and SEND learners](#)

[Sourcing texts for VI students: RNIB Bookshare](#)

[Pearson modified papers information](#)

Forthcoming Pearson training

Festival of functionality: [book now](#)

| Event | Date | Time |
|---|----------------|---------|
| Supporting Learners with ADHD in Post 16 English and Maths | 14th September | 10-11am |
| Supporting Learners with ASD in Post 16 English and Maths | 21st September | 10-11am |
| Supporting Learners with Dyspraxia in Post 16 English and Maths | 22nd September | 10-11am |
| Supporting Learners with Dyslexia in Post 16 English and Maths | 24th September | 10-11am |
| Supporting Learners with SEMH in Post 16 English and maths | 7th October | 4-5pm |
| Supporting Learners with Dyscalculia in Post 16 English and Maths | 8th October | 10-11am |
| Functional Skills Reasonable Adjustments 2026 / 27 | 8th October | 4-5pm |
| Supporting Learners with SpLD and ASD in the ESOL classroom | 22nd October | 4-5pm |

**Which qualification/s
should I choose?**

Which qualifications are we going to consider?

Entry level qualifications: pitched just below Grade 1 GCSE

- Entry Level certificate Entry level Functional Skills

L1/2 qualifications that are smaller than GCSE

- L1/2 Functional Skills

GCSE

- 1EN0
- 1EN2

International GCSE

- 4EA1
- 4EB1

Comparing English qualifications

[Access the summary](#)

| | Available UK/International | Guided learning hours (GLH) | Number of certifications per year/entry deadline | Students' work submitted by | Main age range | Style of content & assessment | Admin & paperwork (see details below) | Fees (2026-2026) updated each year on 1.8 |
|-------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|---|----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| ELC | UK & Int | 60-120 | 1, in May/June. Enter by 21.2 each year. | 15 May each year | 14-16 | Like GCSE | Around 3 steps | £31.20 |
| EL FS 1-3 | UK only | 55 each | On demand. Register in autumn, ideally. | NA | 14+ | Life/work | Around 7 steps | £18.35 |
| FS L1/2 | UK only | 55 each | On demand | NA | 14+ | Life/work | Around 9 steps | £11.95 each Reading/Writing. SLC free |
| GCSE 1EN0 or 1EN2 | UK & Int | 120 | 2*, in May/June & November. Enter by 4.10 for Nov and 21.2 for June each year. | 15 May for summer; early November for November series | 14+ | Academic | Around 3 steps | £56.40 |

Reasons to choose ELC

- Younger students (compared to FS) (14-16)
- Stable cohort: students stay and are present for the whole academic year
- Looking for an assessment style & content aligned to GCSE English Language
- Looking for a simple entry/admin/moderation style aligned to GCSE
- Looking for a qualification where students are assessed for speaking and listening on their own, and one in which S&L 'counts' but does not have to be video-recorded.

Resourcing

Relatively little bespoke published material

- Students who have passed ELC at EL3 can progress onto FS L1/2
- For a good overview of how to deliver ELC, see the [quick start slides and recording](#).

ELC free resources

[Course planners](#): 2-year model and 2-year model mapped to GCSE English Language

[Getting ready to teach](#) (past training pack)

You could make use of [EL FS resources](#)

[GCSE-style KS3 assessments](#)

[Let's Think in English materials](#)

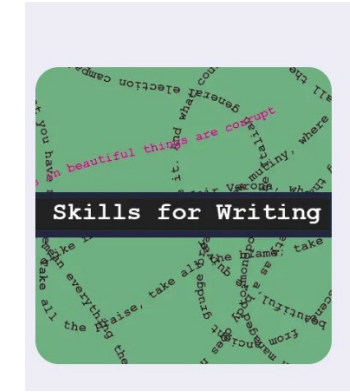
ELC published teaching resources

[Skills for writing](#)

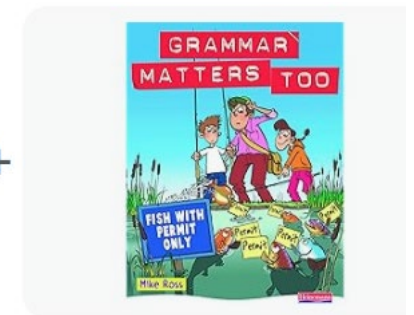
[Inspire English range](#)

[Grammar Matters Too](#)

[Spelling Matters Too](#)



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Reasons to choose EL or L1/2 FS

- Older students, students with work/life links/experience of the world of work.
- Looking for a flexible entry pattern, possibly because students may join and leave your setting through the academic year.
- L1/2: In FE, students may progress onto GCSE from L2 FS, although this is no longer required to meet funding requirements. In terms of being accepted post-16, most L3 courses accept L2 FS. L2 FS is acceptable for all levels of apprenticeships and T levels. Students must consult the individual college regarding the course they wish to apply for, for full details.

Resourcing

Wide range of free resources

Pearson digital published resources

No Pearson published hardcopy books but books available from [CGP](#)

GCSE English language: 1EN0 or 2.0?

[Look at a detailed comparison.](#)

[Get help choosing one of the 4 GCSE and Int GCSE options for English.](#)

| 1EN0 | 1EN2 |
|---|--|
| Paper 1: 1 hr 45 mins (40%) & Paper 2: 2 hrs & 5 mins (60%) | Paper 1 & 2: 1hr & 55 mins each (50% & 50%) |
| Unseen 19thC fiction | Unseen 19thC non-fiction |
| | Particularly clear and supportive question style |
| | Choice of 2 student work books |

Resourcing

Very wide range of free resources

Hard copy student and teacher books

Wide range of paid-for digital resources

Int GCSE

In some settings (independent schools, special schools, AP, home educated students), teachers may have the option to offer students Int GCSE rather than GCSE because it suits their students' needs better.

Considerations

SLE is optional

English Language A

1 unseen text on 1 paper vs 3/4 unseen texts on 1 ENO or 2.0 BUT 20 texts to teach

Coursework option instead of Paper 2

Modular approach (got non-UK centres)

English Language B

1 single exam (3 hrs)

2 unseen texts vs 3/4 on GCSE

Resourcing

Very wide range of free resources

Hard copy student and teacher books

Wide range of paid-for digital resources

Proposed 'stepping stones' to reformed GCSE qualifications for English and Maths



In November 2025, the DfE published the [post-16 education and skills white paper](#), which includes plans for stepping stones qualifications for English and Maths.



The [consultation](#) on these closed on 2 June 2026, but it can still be read.

Access arrangements and their impact on marks for reading and writing

Fundamental principles and considerations



Any exam/assessment arrangements should be ‘the normal way of working’.



Plan for each component as the access arrangements may have an impact for writing, but not reading, for example.



The best way of working for each student should be established at the start of the course and become ‘the normal way of working’.



Students have access to marks for the skills they demonstrate. If they use a scribe but dictate punctuation, they have access to punctuation and organisation marks.

Access arrangements: GCSE English language and literature



For full details, see the JCQ documents which are updated every year:



[JCQ Access arrangements](#)



[ICE](#)



[Summary of arrangements for GCSE](#)

Example GCSE English language: scribe/word processing

Access arrangement

For the examiner to apply the correct mark allocation it is essential that the following information is provided. Please place an 'X' in the appropriate box which accurately reflects how the approved application for a scribe was used. If this information is not provided we cannot guarantee that the script will be marked.

1. The candidate used a scribe/speech recognition technology but did not dictate spellings (letter by letter) and punctuation.
2. The candidate used a scribe/speech recognition technology and dictated punctuation.
3. The candidate used a scribe/speech recognition technology and dictated spellings letter by letter.
4. The candidate used a scribe/speech recognition technology and dictated punctuation and spellings letter by letter.
5. The candidate used a word processor with the spell check enabled (switched on).
6. The candidate used a word processor with the spell check and grammar check enabled (switched on).

Word processing as 'normal way of working'

For this purpose, please use the [word processor cover sheet](#).

Use of a word processor

The use of a word processor (permitted where it is the student's normal way of working) with the spell check and grammar check disabled has no impact on marks for AO6 because for English examinations the spell and grammar checkers must be disabled where a word processor is not being used as part of access arrangements.

Example: GCSE English language TENO

| TENO GCSE English Language | | | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|--|---|
| Unit | Section | Human reader allowed? | Scribe allowed? | Marks allocated to areas affected by the use of a scribe/speech recognition technology or word processor | Comments |
| TENO/01 | Section A: Reading | No | Yes | NA | <p>Human readers may read the instructions on the front cover of the paper and then nothing else until the candidate reaches the start of Section B – Imaginative Writing. Candidates are advised to spend an hour on Section A, so a reader is not needed until an hour into Paper 1.</p> <p>Section B: the reader may read the question paper instructions and the choice of 2 writing tasks.</p> <p>Where appropriate, candidates may use a computer reader without impacting the marks awarded for reading.</p> |
| | Section B: Imaginative Writing | Yes | Yes | <p>16 marks are allocated to AO6:</p> <p>'Candidates must use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation'.</p> <p>Candidates using scribes or word processing with grammar checker off, will have access to the marks for the skills they have demonstrated themselves, usually all except spelling if they have dictated punctuation and paragraphing.</p> | |
| TENO/02 | Section A: Reading | No | Yes | NA | <p>Human readers may read the instructions on the front cover of the paper and then nothing else until the candidate reaches the start of Section B – Transactional Writing. Candidates are advised to spend an hour and 15 minutes on Section A, so a reader is not needed until an hour and 15 minutes into Paper 2.</p> <p>Section B: the reader may read the question paper instructions and the choice of 2 writing tasks.</p> <p>Where appropriate, candidates may use a computer reader without impacting the marks awarded for reading.</p> |
| | Section B: Transactional Writing | Yes | Yes | <p>16 marks are allocated to AO6:</p> <p>'Candidates must use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation'.</p> <p>Candidates using scribes or word processing with grammar checker off, will have access to the marks for the skills they have demonstrated themselves, usually all except spelling if they have dictated punctuation and paragraphing.</p> | |

Access arrangements: Int GCSE English language and Literature



For full details, see the JCQ documents which are updated every year:



[JCQ Access arrangements](#)



[ICE](#)



[Summary of arrangements for Int
GCSEs in English](#)

Access arrangements: Functional Skills L1/2

For full details, see the JCQ documents which are updated every year:

[Access arrangements](#)

[ICE](#)

[Specific FS access arrangements](#)

Access arrangements: Entry Level Certificate

For full details, see the JCQ documents which are updated every year:

[Access arrangements](#)

[ICE](#)

There is specific guidance on the type of support that can be given for students generally (regardless of access arrangements) at each level in the specification:

Examples

Reading

Teachers can read out the introductions, given in italics, to each text and the questions – *but not the texts themselves* – and draw attention to the marks allocated to each question.

Teachers cannot answer the questions or help with the completing of the tests in any other way.

No dictionaries or thesauri are allowed.

Speaking and listening

Entry Level 2

Students must complete *two* tasks.

Students can complete the tasks as individuals, in a pair or as a small group.

One task must include the comparison of different ideas.

Teachers can select tasks from the examples on *pages 15–22*, adapt these tasks, or devise tasks of their own.

Suggested timings: 3–5 minutes per task. These are suggested timings only and teachers are free to alter them as appropriate for the needs of their students.

At the end of each task, students should answer questions about their topic.

If students need help, teachers may prompt students up to two times during each task.

Managing the SLE and SLC (for GCSE, ELC and FS) for learners with additional needs including audiences and videorecording.

GCSE

Video-recording requirements: 30 (10P, 10M & 10D) or all students if you have fewer than 30

- Control the audience: it can be just the teacher
- Use an online meeting if that works better
- Request audio-only if needed
- BSL may not be used
- Makaton may not be used
- Family members may not be used as an audience for selective mutes

Apply for an exemption if there are insurmountable hurdles to the student completing the SLE

Submission/quality assurance requirements

- Upload video-recordings to the LWT
- External monitoring of sample
- Centre monitor report
- General examiner report

GCSE

Video-recording ASD students and those with complex additional needs for the GCSE English Language spoken language endorsement (1EN0/1EN2)

The SLE is a required element for all students entered for 1EN0/1EN2. It can be completed at any time during the 2-year course and centres should plan well in advance of the 15 May sample submission deadline for any students for whom video-recording may be more challenging.

Students at special schools, AP, or PRUs and those with EHCPs are not exempt from the SLE or from video-recording.

1. Do ASD students/those with complex needs, need to be recorded at all? If you have 30 other recordings from across teaching groups, you could avoid recording such students.
2. Another option is to [assess such students remotely](#) if this is more acceptable to them. Zoom allows students to turn their self-view off which may be preferable for some students.
3. You can assess such students with just them and the teacher. A wider audience is not required.
4. If none of these approaches help, you may provide the name, candidate number and details of why a particular student cannot be video-recorded and we can consider approving an audio-only recording **on a case by case basis**. We would then inform your monitor to expect one audio-only recording in your sample for a particular student. Contact teachingenglish@pearson.com in order to make such a request. **You must make any such arrangements well before the submission deadlines (15 May for June and 5 November for the November series).**
5. A final option is an exemption from the SLE using a [JCQ exemption form](#). It should be sent to uk.special.requirements@pearson.

Can a student who has refused to undertake the SLE or who is not willing to be audio or video-recorded still gain a grade for GCSE English language?

If a student is not able to complete the SLE and be recorded (where a recording is needed) despite all the above approaches being attempted; and has not been granted an exemption, the grade 'NC', not classified, must be entered on Edexcel Online by 15 May (for June exam series). The grade 'not classified' will appear on their certificate for the Spoken Language Endorsement underneath the grade awarded for the rest of the qualification.

FS

Video-recording requirements: at least 1 of each task at each level (with the minimum number of learners). The recording is of the task not the individual student.

At each level and for each task there is:

- a required number of learners
- Specified timings
- Specified formats

These generally can't be adjusted

Submission/quality assurance requirements

- L1/2: appoint a Lead IV; Lead IV must do OSCA training annually
- Store video recordings in centre until you are contacted in spring by your SV to arrange a centre visit (normally virtual)
- Share videos with SV at SV visit
- If approved, you can make SLC and FS qualification-level certification claims.

ELC

No video or audio recording required.

Broad task parameters at each level.

Teacher chooses from a range of tasks or adapts one of the Pearson provided ones.

Task 1: Who are you?

| Expected outcomes | | |
|--|--|---|
| Entry Level 1 | Entry Level 2 | Entry Level 3 |
| Students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• give their name and age and where they live• talk about whether they have any brothers and sisters and provide some information about them. | Students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• give their name and date of birth, and say if they have any brothers and sisters• include some additional information, such as whether they have any pets and what they like to do in their spare time. | Students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• give an extended talk to include details about who they are and present information about their family/carers• develop ideas to include their dreams and ambitions for the future and any other information that will interest the listener. |

Submission/quality assurance requirements

- Teacher completes the speaking and listening section of the assessment record sheet
- Pearson moderation of sample of reading and writing (uploaded to the LWT)
- Centre moderator report
- General examiner report

FAQs SLE, SLC, S&L

Can a student 'double-use' their GCSE SLE or FS L2 SLC spoken language assessment?

This is not possible because:

- The format of the assessment is different.
- The number of students who are assessed in each task is different.
- The timings are different.
- The assessment criteria are different.
- The video-recording requirements are different.

Can a student who has refused to undertake the SLE or who is not willing to be audio or video-recorded still gain a grade for GCSE English language?

If a student is not able to complete the SLE and be recorded (where a recording is needed) despite [all reasonable approaches](#) being attempted; and has not been granted an exemption, the grade 'NC', not classified, must be entered on Edexcel Online by 15 May (for June exam series). The grade 'not classified' will appear on their certificate for the Spoken Language Endorsement underneath the grade awarded for the rest of the qualification. If the student resits the qualification, they will be required to sit the SLE.

May hearing-impaired/deaf candidates use British Sign Language and a signer? Can they be exempted?

No, they may not use BSL or a signer. They should apply for an exemption using this JCQ form. It should be sent to uk.special.requirements@pearson. JCQ decided that 'when an exemption is granted by an awarding body an indication will be placed on the candidate's certificate'. On certificates a '(+)' will be added to the end of the subject description e.g. ENGLISH(+), with any endorsement grade already in the system not appearing.

Myth busting

Untrue: If I teach in a special school or alternative provision, I can amend assessments at my own discretion to suit my students' needs.

Untrue: If I teach students with EHCPs, I can expect them to be automatically exempted from the SLE or SLC.

Centres need to follow procedures to request any individualisation of assessment/recording well in advance of the assessment and the submission deadline and await a response before assessing.

Any 'changes' apply to a particular learner only at the time requested. There are no blanket approvals for an alternative approach year on year.

Questions and contact

Any questions?

Contact

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Pronouns: She, her, hers

- (+44) 344 463 2535
- qualifications.pearson.com/contactus
- Email: teachingenglish@pearson.com
- Sign up to regular subject advisor updates
- Book an appointment with Clare



