

Summary of use of reader/scribe/word processor for 9-1 International GCSE in English Language, specifications A and B, and English Literature, linear and modular

This is a complicated area, with several different options available. For full details, please see JCQ's [access document](#) which is updated each academic year. **The rules for GCSE apply equally to International GCSEs.**

The main principle is that students are rewarded for the aspects of the quality of written communication that they are responsible for. Mark schemes are applied using the 'best fit approach'. Where a student has used a scribe, the examiner will select a level of the mark scheme using the 'best fit approach' and then make an adjustment according to the information given on the scribe front sheet. **There is no deduction of a discrete number of marks because of using a scribe.**

This extract (p. 66 in March 2026 version) explains the position on the use of scribes:

'5.7.8 In subjects where quality of written communication (QWC) is being assessed or where the candidate's spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) is being assessed, a scribe will be allowed.

A scribe will be allowed in the written papers of the following subjects:

- GCSE English Language (including the Writing section);
- GCSE English Literature (...);
- Functional Skills English (including the Writing paper).

However, where a scribe is used in an examination assessing spelling, punctuation and grammar, marks can only be awarded if the candidate can demonstrate that they have carried out the skills being assessed. '

Inform students of impact of different approaches to the use of a scribe

Students using a scribe must be made aware of the different options and how these affect their access to marks. In most cases, students will dictate punctuation but not spelling. A student wishing to be rewarded for their punctuation and the structuring of their sentences and text must be instructed to dictate punctuation and paragraphing to their scribe.

Where a scribe is used, the scribe completing the scribe cover sheet (form 2) specifies what the student has and has not done:

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).

Centres **must** ensure that the scribe cover sheet is fully filled in and that it is attached to the script, so that the examiner is aware of the conditions under which the paper was completed.

The scribe cover sheet is obtained when applying for access arrangements on 'Access Arrangements Online' which is accessed on Edexcel Online:

Results

Select date of birth (dd/mm/yyyy) Application status Access arrangements

Expiry Date
 to

<input type="checkbox"/>	Application date	Application reference	Candidate name	Candidate number	Application status	Access arrangement	Print
<input type="checkbox"/>	02/03/2026	██████	██████	██████	Approved	25% Extra Time	<input type="button" value="PRINT"/>

Please select exam 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.

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

Bilingual translation dictionaries

Bilingual translation dictionary without extra time

A bilingual translation dictionary without extra time may not be used in GCSE English Language or Literature. Please see the guidance in the JCQ [Instructions for conduction examinations](#) document, section 14, which is updated each academic year.

Bilingual translation dictionary with 25% extra time

[Please see section 5.15 of JCQ's access arrangements](#).

An online application for a bilingual dictionary with 25% extra time must only be applied for by the EAL Co-ordinator or the SENCo where all of the following exist:

- the candidate's first language is not English, Irish or Welsh;
- the candidate entered the United Kingdom within three years of the examination(s), is new to learning in English and does not have sufficient prior and current knowledge of academic English. The candidate may have been assessed on arrival as being new to English (Band A on the DfE scales) or in the early acquisition stages of language development (Band B on the DfE scales).
- English is not one of the languages spoken in the family home;
- prior to their arrival in the United Kingdom the candidate was not:
 - o educated in an international school where some or the entire curriculum was delivered in English;
 - o prepared for or entered for IGCSE qualifications where the question papers were set in English;
 - o prepared in English for other qualifications, e.g. IELTS qualifications or Preliminary English Tests;
- the candidate has to refer to the bilingual translation dictionary so often that examination time is used for this purpose, delaying the answering of questions;
- the provision of 25% extra time reflects the candidate's normal way of working with the dictionary. (A definition of normal way of working is provided within Chapter 4, paragraph 4.2.5.

4EA1 International GCSE in English Language, specification A (linear) and 4XEA1 (modular)

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
4EA1/01 4XEA1/01	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 – Transactional Writing.</p> <p>Candidates are advised to spend an hour and 30 minutes on Section A, so a reader is not needed until an hour and 30 minutes into Paper 1.</p> <p>Section B: the reader may read the question paper instructions and the choice of 2 writing tasks.</p>
	Section B: Transactional Writing	Yes	Yes	<p>18 marks are allocated to AO5:</p> <p>‘Write clearly, using a range of vocabulary and sentence structures, with appropriate paragraphing and accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation.’</p> <p>Candidates using scribes, 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>	
4EA1/02 4XEA1/02	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 – Imaginative Writing.</p> <p>Candidates are advised to spend 45 minutes on Section A, so a reader is not needed until 45 minutes into Paper 2.</p> <p>Section B: the reader may read the question paper instructions and the choice of 3 writing tasks.</p>
	Section B: Imaginative Writing	Yes	Yes	<p>12 marks are allocated to AO5:</p> <p>‘Write clearly, using a range of vocabulary and sentence structures, with appropriate paragraphing and accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation.’</p> <p>Candidates using scribes, 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>	

4EB1 International GCSE in English Language, specification B

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
4EB1/01	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 C – Writing.</p> <p>Candidates are advised to spend an hour on Section A and an hour on Section B, so a reader is not needed until two hours into the paper when the candidate reaches the start of Section C.</p> <p>Section C: the reader may read the question paper instructions and the choice of 3 writing tasks.</p>
	Section B: Reading and Writing	No	Yes	<p>8 marks are allocated to AO5:</p> <p>‘Write clearly, using a range of vocabulary and sentence structures, with appropriate paragraphing and accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation.’</p> <p>Candidates using scribes 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>	
	Section C: Writing	Yes	Yes	<p>10 marks are allocated to AO5:</p> <p>‘Write clearly, using a range of vocabulary and sentence structures, with appropriate paragraphing and accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation.’</p> <p>Candidates using scribes 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>	

4ET1 International GCSE in English Literature (linear) and 4XET1 (modular)

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
4ET1/01 4XET1/01	Section A: Unseen Poetry	Yes	Yes	NA	Quality of written communication is not assessed on 4ET1/4XET1. Students are not assessed for 'reading' so human readers are allowed.
	Section B: Anthology Poetry	Yes	Yes	NA	
	Section C: Modern Prose	Yes	Yes	NA	
4ET1/02 4XET1/02	Section A: Modern Drama	Yes	Yes	NA	
	Section B: Literary Heritage Texts	Yes	Yes	NA	

Coursework option on 4EA1 and 4ET1

Access arrangements do not generally apply to coursework as the normal approach for all candidates is to word process with spell and grammar checker on with no restrictions on the use of dictionaries, for example. Students who might use speech to text in an exam, are free to use this when completing their coursework. It is not generally in a student's interest to use a scribe to write coursework (unless this is unavoidable because of an impairment which prevents hand writing or word processing) as students could not be rewarded for spelling and would need to dictate punctuation and paragraphing.