

October 2015

Dear Head of Department

Edexcel International GCSEs in English Language A and English Literature

I'm writing to you to let you know about planned changes to our International GCSE specifications for English Language and Literature. International GCSEs are being reformed to ensure their demand is comparable to GCSE 9-1 and that they support progression to 2015 A levels.

Current International GCSEs share some features of GCSE 9-1, for example linear assessment, short and extended answer questions, and unseen assessment. Some features of 9-1 GCSEs, such as the change in grading system from A*-G to 9-1 and the required text coverage, have been designed to increase the rigour and international comparability of the GCSE.

In order to ensure that International GCSEs in English retain their status as highly regarded GCSE-alternative qualifications, we are proposing some revisions to our suite of International GCSEs in English Language and Literature.

Following close consultation with teachers, the current International GCSE specifications will be revised as follows:

- the grading system will move to the new 9-1 system from the current A*-G
- the content will be revised to support progression to the new GCE qualifications, for example the inclusion of a compulsory Shakespeare or literary heritage text
- the anthology will be up-dated
- the question papers will have some amendments to reflect the revised content.

Changes to the subject content are needed to ensure that International GCSEs are kept up-to-date and continue to provide progression to A level, but we are also keen to retain those features of the existing specifications which make them an attractive alternative to GCSE.

We will retain key features of the current International GCSEs, including:

- a coursework option
- popular international texts, including *Of Mice and Men* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*
- popular anthology texts.

The amendments to the International GCSEs in English Language and Literature will come into effect for UK centres for first teaching from September 2016, and first assessment in summer 2018.

The last assessment opportunity for the current English International GCSEs is summer 2017 for UK centres.

We are keen to ensure that you have sufficient time to consider the changes and make preparations for teaching the revised specifications. To that end, please find included with this letter an overview of the specification structure and content of the revised International GCSE

qualifications in both English Language and English Literature, as well as details of the confirmed texts.

The following timetable sets out the further information and support that you can expect:

Example question styles and draft content	Late November 2015
Specification and sample assessment materials	Mid January 2016
Support materials (i.e. schemes of work, course planners, exemplar responses)	Spring term 2016
Launch events	Spring term 2016
Getting Ready to Teach events	Summer term 2016
First teaching	September 2016

We would like to be able to keep you informed of progress with the development of the new specifications and sample question papers; and to make sure that you receive invitations to launch events next year. If you'd like to receive updates, please sign up for my email updates [here](#). You can contact me at teachingenglish@pearson.com if you have any questions about the redevelopment of International GCSEs.

Yours faithfully

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