

English GCSE from 2015

As you may have seen in the news, the English Language and English Literature GCSE courses have changed in recent years. At JFS, our English staff have had extensive training and professional development in preparation for the new courses, which will be first examined in Summer 2017. We will be following the Edexcel GCSE syllabi. As in previous GCSEs, there are two GCSE qualifications available: English Language and English Literature. All candidates will follow an integrated course in English Language and English Literature throughout KS3 and then into KS4, when they will be assessed as two separate subjects

What do I need to know?

- As in previous GCSEs, there are two GCSE qualifications available: English Language and English Literature. All candidates will follow an integrated course in English Language and English Literature, which will be assessed as two separate subjects.
- Both English Language and English Literature will be assessed entirely by examinations - there will be no controlled assessments or coursework.
- Speaking and Listening will be assessed through endorsement. They will undertake tasks and marks will be submitted, but these will not contribute to their GCSE marks.
- There will be four exams in total, all taking place at the end of Year 11 in June 2017
- All students will sit the same exam; there is no tiering (higher/foundation).
- Students will not be allowed to bring their set texts into the exam
- Students will receive a numerical grade at the end of the course, (no more A*s, As, Bs, or Cs); instead there will be a '1 to 9' grading system, with 9 now being the highest grade awarded.

Texts and Resources

As the exams are closed-book (no texts allowed) students will be encouraged to purchase their own copies of the set texts. This will allow them to annotate these copies as they study and revise them. Copies can be purchased through your child's English teacher, using JFS' parentpay scheme. Any student not able to purchase text copies will be lent set texts from the English department. These must be returned, unannotated, at the end of the course.

Grading

The current eight point A*-G grading system will be replaced with a new nine-point scale. Nine will be the top grade and one the lowest. Therefore, the new grades will not map directly onto the old ones. Ofqual is now consulting on where the boundaries are to fall. It is intended that the bottom of a new grade four will correspond to the bottom of a current grade C. So – broadly speaking – nationally, the same proportion of candidates will achieve a grade four or above as currently achieve a grade C or above.

At the top end of the grade scale, there are several possibilities. Ofqual have suggested that the new grade seven could be equivalent to the current grade A, providing three top grades instead of two. This leaves the potential for grade nine to indicate exceptional performance, achievable by only the top half of those students who currently achieve the highest grade of A*.

For weaker students it is proposed that the proportion of students who achieve a grade one in the new GCSEs will be about the same as those who currently achieve either a grade F or G. Although applicable to a small minority, for these youngsters it can represent real progress.

How can I help?

- Encourage your child to keep an organised and comprehensive folder of work. Exam revision will be easier if notes are kept clear and filed in a logical way.

- Encourage your child to engage with their set texts. Ask them about their set texts and their thoughts. Test their knowledge of the text and key quotes from it. If you can, watch film, TV or stage versions with them. Then discuss how good they were or how faithful to the text.
- Encourage your child to read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction. All students will be provided with a suggested reading list at the beginning of the course. In addition to this (and for reluctant readers in particular) regular reading and discussion of high-quality broadsheet newspaper articles (The Guardian, The Times, The Telegraph, The Week) will help with comprehension and word-level skills.
- Close to exams or assessments, encourage your child to access online revision resources such as BBC bitesize or Mr Bruff. In addition, your child will be given login details for Pearson's Active Learn an online resource that contains a multitude of fiction and non-fiction extracts, writing tasks and comprehension tasks.
- Check your child is completing his/her homework and make sure you (and they) know the dates of all tests and assessments.
- Ensure your child has space and quiet to work at home, a balanced diet and appropriate rest breaks, particularly in the lead up to exams.

GCSE English Language

GCSE English Language develops students' abilities to read, understand and respond to all types of text. Students are taught to recognise and appreciate themes and attitudes and the ways in which writers achieve their effects while developing information retrieval strategies and their own ability to construct and convey meaning in written work, matching style to audience and purpose.

Key Points

- Two exam papers;
- All texts will be unseen;
- Texts will be from a range of genres and from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries;
- More emphasis on spelling, punctuation and grammar in the writing tasks;
- Speaking and Listening will be assessed through endorsement. They will undertake tasks and marks will be submitted, but these will not contribute to their GCSE marks.

Exam Layout

PAPER ONE: 40% of English Language GCSE. 1 hour 45 minutes.

Section A

Reading

A series of questions on a 19th century fiction extract. 1 hour

19th Century fiction extract with a series of comprehension and language analysis questions.

Section B

Writing

A choice of two creative-fiction writing tasks 45 Minutes

Creative writing based on the theme of the extract in section A.

PAPER TWO: 60% of English Literature GCSE. 2 hours.

Section A

Reading

A series of questions on two 20th/21st century non-fiction extracts.

1 hour 15 minutes

Two 20th/21st Century non-fiction extract with a shared theme.

Section B

Writing

A choice of two non-fiction (transactional) writing tasks 45 Minutes

Transactional writing based on the theme of the extracts in section A.

GCSE English Literature

GCSE English Literature develops students' abilities to read a wide range of classic literature fluently and with good understanding, and make connections across their reading. Students are required to read critically, so that they are able to discuss and explain their understanding and ideas. They will be assessed on their ability to write accurately, effectively and analytically about their reading. They must use Standard English and a wide vocabulary, including grammatical terminology, and literary and linguistic terms.

Key Points

- Two exam papers – both closed book;
- Texts will include:
- A 19th Century novel;
- A Shakespeare play
- A selection of poetry since 1789 (taken from the Pearson anthology);
- British fiction or drama from 1914 onwards.

Exam Layout

PAPER ONE: 50% of English Literature GCSE. 1 hour 45 minutes

Section A

A play by Shakespeare

55 minutes

A two-part question, with the first task focused on an extract. The second task is focused on how a theme reflected in the extract is explored elsewhere in the play Text Choices:

Macbeth

The Tempest

Romeo and Juliet

Much Ado About Nothing

Twelfth Night

The Merchant of Venice

Section B

Post 1914-Literature

50 minutes

An essay question from a choice of two. Text Choices:

An Inspector Calls

Hobson's Choice

Blood Brothers

Journey's End

Animal Farm

Lord of the Flies

Anita and Me

The Woman in Black

PAPER TWO: 50% of English Literature GCSE. 2 hours 15 minutes

Section A

A 19th Century Novel

55 minutes

A two-part question, with the first part focussed on an extract. The second part is an essay question exploring the whole text.

Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

Section B part 1

35 minutes

One question comparing a named poem from the Anthology collection to another poem from that collection of your choice. The named poem will be shown in the question paper. The Pearson Poetry Anthology:

- Relationships
- Conflict
- Time & Place

Section B part 2

45 minutes

One question comparing two unseen contemporary poems.

Unseen Poems printed on the exam paper.

Key Stage 4			
YG	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
Year 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Unit 1 Comparing Unseen Poetry- Unit 2 Transactional Writing- Unit 3 Post 1914 Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Unit 4: English Spoken Language Endorsement- Unit 5: 19th Century Novel and 19th century extracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Non-fiction extracts- Comprehension and writing skills- Unseen poetry
Year 11	Controlled Assessment: Comparison of Shakespeare and selected poetry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Mocks- Poetry Anthology	Revision for examinations