

English autumn update

English Curriculum team
30 November 2021

Autumn 2021

Overview

- High level overview of 2021 exam outcomes (GCSE and A-level)
- Autumn 2021 exam series
- Summary of changes for summer 2022 exam series
- Support and resources available from AQA
- Q and A

Overview of 2021 exam outcomes (GCSE and A-level)

GCSE English Language results 2021 vs. 2020

Cumulative percentages by Grade

Gender	Year	Number Sat	% of Total no. Sat	7	4	1
Male	2021	318383	12.2	19.6	75.5	99.0
	2020	311363	12.2	17.0	74.0	99.5
Female	2021	310714	11.8	33.3	86.0	99.4
	2020	304012	11.8	30.3	86.2	99.8
All	2021	629097	12.0	26.4	80.7	99.2
	2020	615375	12.0	23.5	80.0	99.7

Data extracted from the 2021 JCQ GCSE data for all UK candidates (aged 16)

GCSE English Literature results 2021 vs. 2020

Cumulative percentages by Grade

Gender	Year	Number Sat	% of Total no. Sat	7	4	1
Male	2021	287944	11.0	19.3	75.5	98.6
	2020	279993	11.0	18.1	74.5	99.3
Female	2021	285702	10.9	33.4	86.0	99.2
	2020	279099	10.9	32.2	86.5	99.6
All	2021	573646	10.9	26.3	80.7	98.9
	2020	559092	10.9	25.1	80.5	99.5

Data extracted from the 2021 JCQ GCSE data for all UK candidates (aged 16)

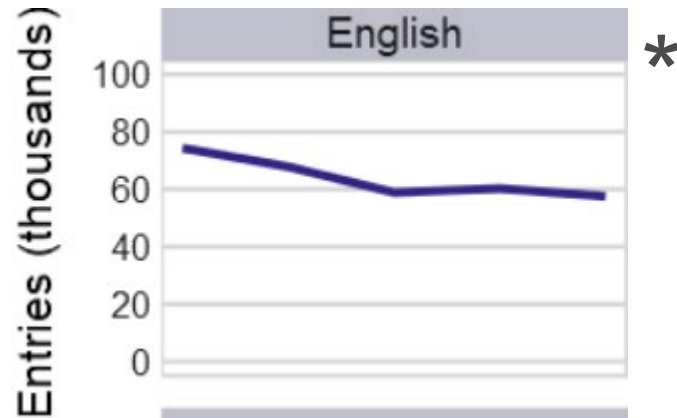
JCQ A-level results 2021 vs. (2020)

Subject	Gender	Total No.	A	C	E
English Language	M	4025 (4238)	21.8 (16.8)	83.0 (83.1)	99.5 (99.9)
	F	10509 (10815)	29.7 (23.8)	89.6 (88.8)	99.8 (100)
	ALL	14534 (15053)	27.5 (21.8)	87.8 (87.2)	99.7 (99.9)
English Literature	M	8967 (9374)	40.5 (34.7)	88.6 (89.3)	99.7 (99.9)
	F	30525 (32006)	45.0 (38.6)	92.6 (91.8)	99.8 (99.9)
	ALL	394962 (41380)	44.0 (37.7)	91.7 (91.2)	99.8 (99.9)
Language and Literature	M	2043 (1927)	27.1 (20.2)	84.1 (82.9)	99.4 (99.6)
	F	5926 (5952)	32.7 (25.5)	89.7 (88.8)	99.7 (99.9)
	ALL	7969 (7879)	31.3 (24.2)	88.3 (87.3)	99.6 (99.8)

Data extracted from the 2021 JCQ data for all UK candidates

Downward trend in A-level English up-take

Ofqual entry data for A-level English subjects



Qual	June 2020	June 2021	Diff.
Lit	38,310	36,135	-6%
Lang	14,715	14,230	-3%
Lang/lit	7,250	7,155	-1%

Published by Ofqual (2020)

*English Language, English Literature and English Language and Literature

Narrowing of the curriculum

Unsurprisingly, the mechanistic nature of these GCSEs is failing to inspire a love of English in students. – Geoff Barton (ASCL General Secretary)

We have killed this subject with the new, terribly boring GCSE.

The teaching of English has become the equivalent of teaching art through painting by numbers.
(disillusioned teacher)

Too much emphasis on testing has destroyed any creativity in this subject.

The questions at GCSE are more mechanistic and formulaic, so the teaching is more formulaic, and that doesn't appeal to kids who would have liked English, and the independence and imagination it offered – Peter Thomas (former Chair for NATE)

Narrow and dull?

Autumn 2021 exam series

Autumn 2021 exam series

Autumn exam series running for:

- A-levels: All subjects
- AS: Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry and Physics
- GCSE: All subjects
- Level 3 Core Mathematics
- Level 2 Further Mathematics

Expect approach to awarding to closely match the one taken in autumn 2020, i.e. look to carry forward the generosity from the summer grades.

[AQA | 2021 exam changes | Autumn exam series](#)

Autumn 2021 series (continued)

	Start / End	Results day
GCSE resits (English and Maths)	Monday 1 November – Thursday 4 November	13 January 2022
GCSE English Language : It is not a regulatory requirement for students to have completed the spoken language endorsement for autumn 2021 series. Where students have completed NEA, this can be carried forward as normal.		
Functional skills	Friday 5 November	13 January 2022
Functional Skills English: Students must complete a Speaking, Listening and Communicating component and centres need to submit audio-visual evidence. AQA Notes and guidance: non exam assessment (NEA)		

Summer 2022 exam series

Looking ahead to Summer 2022

That means getting back to exams, which are set, marked and graded by examiners, with everyone taking the same assessments at the same time, in the same way so that you have a fair chance to show what you know, understand and can do.

Dr Jo Saxton,
Chief Regulator, OFQUAL

Grading standards in 2022

We want to get back quickly to how grading was before the pandemic, but we fully understand that students taking exams in 2022 have experienced disruption, so we won't do it in one jump. Instead, 2022 will be a transition year to reflect that we are in a pandemic recovery period. We will aim, therefore, to reflect a point midway between 2021 and 2019 when it comes to grading. Then in 2023 we want to return to results that are in line with those before the pandemic began.

Dr Jo Saxton, Chief Regulator, OFQUAL

[Exams and Assessments 2022 – fairness and clarity - The Ofqual blog](#)

		% 7+	Diff.	% 4+	Diff.	% 1+
English Language	2019	17.3	up 9.1%	70.2	up 10.5%	99.0
	2021	26.4		80.7		99.2
English Literature	2019	21.0	up 5.3%	74.4	up 6.3%	98.4
	2021	26.3		80.7		98.9

Data extracted from AQA GCSE data for all UK candidates (aged 16)

English subjects with **no changes** for summer 2022

- ELC Step up to English
- Functional Skills English

GCSE English Language: summer 2022 series

Arrangements for spoken language NEA for **summer 2022** :

- can be conducted by the teacher at any time during the course and by virtual means.
- can take place in front of a single teacher who can represent an 'audience'.
- there's **no requirement for teachers to submit a sample of audio-visual recordings**
- you'll still need to submit a Centre Declaration Sheet as normal.

English subjects with optionality: GCSE English Literature

All students will be assessed on a Shakespeare play and unseen poetry

Schools and colleges then choose **two** of the following three areas:

- Anthology of poetry
- Modern text
- 19th-century novel.

Adaptations :

- the total exam marks available reduced from 160 to 130
- the total exam time reduced from 4 hours to 3 hours and 25 minutes.

There will be **no advanced information** on what exams will cover for GCSE English Literature.

Summer 2022 series: A-level

There are no changes to assessments for 2021 for all our A-level English specifications.

Advanced Information

- To help students revise, exam boards will provide advance information about the focus of exams for most subjects at GCSE, AS and A-level.
- Advance information will:
 - help focus revision time
 - vary in breadth, depth and presentation between subjects
 - not detail everything in the exam (this could risk providing a balanced education, progression or fair results)
 - not require changes to a question paper's usual structure (so exam papers will be familiar to teachers and students)
 - not be allowed into the exam.
- Advanced information will be published by 7 February 2022 – or sooner if the impact of the pandemic worsens.
- [Advance-Information-for-General-Qualifications-2021-22.pdf](#)

Advanced Information

- Advance information is intended to communicate in advance some of the aspects of the specification that will be assessed in the examination papers.
 - The breadth, depth and presentation of the advance information will vary between subjects to reflect their different characteristics.
 - The information will detail the focus of particular aspects of the examination; for example, the content, contexts, texts, topics, sub-topics, themes and skills that will be assessed in the 2022 exams.
 - This may be different, depending on the nature and design of the subject and each specification's assessment arrangements.
 - It will support revision in the time before the examination.

[Advance-Information-for-General-Qualifications-2021-22.pdf](#)

Summer 2022

- A closer look at GCSE Literature
- Support and resources available from AQA
- Q and A

Overview of exam structure for GCSE Literature 2022

Paper 1
Centres enter students ANY 2 of the 3 options below
Paper 1P
Students answer one question on their poetry anthology cluster of choice. 30 marks (AO1, AO2, AO3) Duration: 50 minutes
Paper 1N
Students answer one question on their 19th century novel of choice. 30 marks (AO1, AO2, AO3) Duration: 50 minutes
Paper 1M
Students answer one essay question from a choice of two on their modern prose/drama text of choice. 30 marks (AO1, AO2, AO3) Duration: 50 minutes
Total duration: 2x 50 minutes Total marks = 60 (46% of qualification)

Paper 2
Compulsory paper
Section A - Compulsory
Students answer one question on their Shakespeare play of choice. 30 marks (AO1, AO2, AO3) + 4 marks (AO4)
Section B - Compulsory
Students answer two compulsory questions on unseen poetry. Part 1: Students answer one question on one unseen poem 24 marks (AO1, AO2) + 4 marks (AO4) Part 2: Students answer one question comparing the first unseen poem with a second unseen poem. 8 marks (AO2)
Total duration: 1 hour 45 minutes Total marks = 70 (54% of qualification)

Overview of exam structure for GCSE Literature 2022

Paper 1

Centres enter students **ANY 2 of the 3 options below**

Paper 1P

Students answer one question on their **poetry anthology** cluster of choice.
30 marks – 23%

Paper 1N

Students answer one question on their **19th century novel** of choice.
30 marks – 23%

Paper 1M

Students answer one essay question from a choice of two on their **modern prose/drama text** of choice.
30 marks – 23%

Total marks – 60
(46% of qualification)

Paper 2

Compulsory paper

Section A - Compulsory

Students answer one question on their Shakespeare play of choice.
30 marks + 4 marks AO4 – 26.2%

Section B - Compulsory

Students answer two compulsory questions on unseen poetry.
Part 1: Students answer one question on one unseen poem
24 marks (AO1, AO2) + **4 marks (AO4)**
Part 2: Students answer one question comparing the first unseen poem with a second unseen poem.
8 marks (AO2)
27.2 %

Total marks – 70
(54% of qualification)

Examiner's Report: unseen poetry

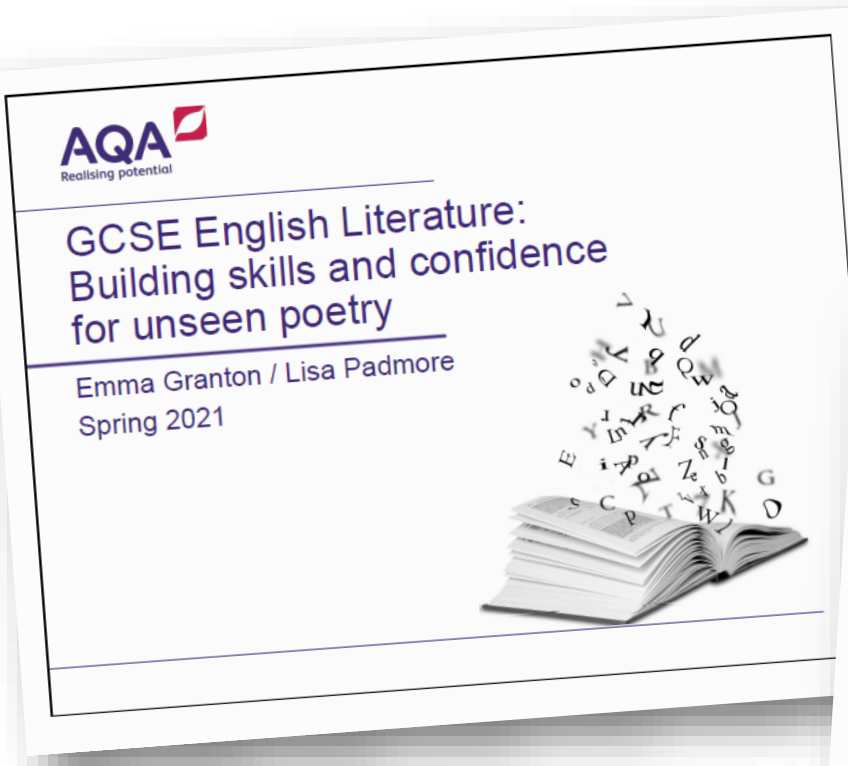
Students often do their best work in Section C. Sometimes, those who found the previous two sections more of a challenge because they were trying hard to remember revised material flourished in this section simply by responding to the poems.

Every student appeared to 'get it' regardless of their ability. It never ceases to amaze me what wonderful ideas students come up with then they've not been told what to think.

A liberating means by which students can demonstrate the skills they have learned.

Responses were a real pleasure to read. Freed from the burden of a prepared poem, the unseen poem actually enabled students to write with empathy and understanding and out perform their section A and section B responses.

Support for Unseen Poetry: course materials



Contents	
	Page
Paper 2, Section C, Question 27.1	
<i>Report on the exam 2019</i>	4
Mark scheme	5
Example responses	7
Paper 2, Section C, Question 27.2	
<i>Report on the exam 2019</i>	12
Mark scheme	13
Example responses	14
Commentaries	16

Teacher's Guide:

Building skills and confidence with unseen poetry

- Ten poems to use in the classroom with accompanying teaching ideas
- Teaching strategies and activities to support the development of reading and confidence with unseen poetry
- Exam preparation advice

'The Truth about Monsters' by Nikita Gill (2017)

The truth is this,
every monster
you have met
or will ever meet,
was once a human being
with a soul
that was as soft
and light
as silk.

Someone stole
that silk from their soul
and turned them
into this

So when you see
a monster next,
always remember this.
Do not fear
the thing before you.
Fear the thing
that created it
instead.



Overview of contents

Contents

Introduction

Poetry collection

Section 1: Approaches to reading poems

Section 2: Unlocking meanings

Section 3: Words, words, words

Section 4: Exploring structure and patterns

Section 5: Speakers and voices

Section 6: Comparing/ connecting poems

Exam preparation

Further resources

Support and resources from AQA

Support from AQA: Professional development courses

Continue to offer our free of charge support programme.

In spring 2022 we'll be running **Supporting student exam preparation courses**.

You can book your place now for GCSE Eng Lang and GCSE Eng Lit [AQA | Professional development](#) (further dates for A-level to follow)

Past courses available to download via Centre services (English > Training, guidance and events) include:

- **Fundamental skills** (autumn 2020) – available for both GCSE English subjects and all A-level specifications.
- **Supporting student progression** (autumn 2021) – available for GCSE English Language, GCSE Literature, A-level English Literature (spec A and spec B)

Virtual Communities

Materials from the autumn term's Virtual community events are available to download from Centre services.

- explored the idea of 'threshold concepts' in English
- focused on the importance of structure as a threshold concept for both GCSE English Language and English Literature.
- looked at how to apply the idea of 'narrative dynamics' to reading of fiction texts.

The spring Virtual community events will continue to the theme of threshold concepts for GCSE English with a focus on the skill of 'critical evaluation'.

(Dates TBC)

Focus on Success series: teacher-led CPD materials

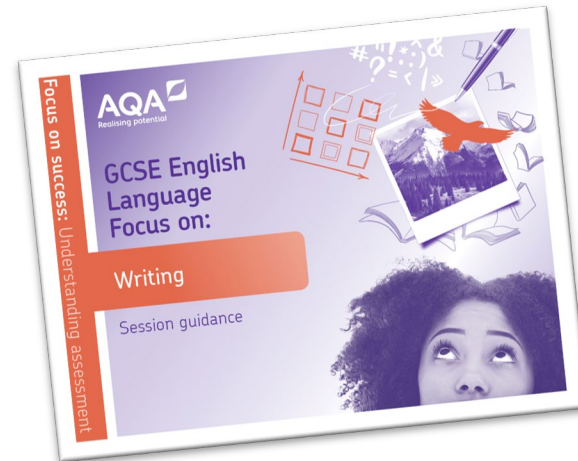
- Focus on Co-teachability

GCSE English Language

- Focus on writing
- Focus on AO2
- Focus on managing multiple texts

GCSE English Literature

- Focus on extract-to-whole questions
- Focus on AO3 (context)



Focus on success:

Available via Centre Services
(English > GCSE > Training, guidance and events)



[Pre-exams](#) | [Exams](#) | [Post-exams](#) | [Resources](#) | [Key information](#)

[Home](#) / [Resources](#) / [Assessment and training](#) / [Subjects](#) / [English](#)

English assessment and training resources

Do not share these resources outside of your school or college.
All materials are the property of AQA and sharing anything affecting live assessment could be considered malpractice. Read our [full copyright terms and conditions](#).

focus

[Clear all filters](#)

Qualification

GCSE

Category

Training, guidance and events

Resource type

Teaching your subject



Specification

8700 English Language

8702 English Literature

A-Z

Showing 1-6 of 6 results [Reset search](#)

-  [8700 GCSE English Language Focus on Success - AO2](#)
20 August 2021
-  [8700 GCSE English Language Focus on Success - Extract to whole](#)
23 August 2021
-  [8700 GCSE English Language Focus on Success - Managing multiple texts](#)
23 August 2021
-  [8700 GCSE English Language Focus on Success - Writing](#)
20 August 2021
-  [8702 GCSE English Literature Focus on Success - AO3](#)
20 August 2021
-  [GCSE English Language and English Literature Focus on Success - Co-teachability](#)
19 October 2021

Mark scheme guidance and application e-learning courses

Mark scheme guidance and application e-learning modules are now available on-demand for:

- GCSE English Language
- GCSE English Literature
- A-level English Literature A
- A-level English Literature B

Providing expert instruction from senior AQA examiners in how to apply mark schemes to key question types as well as the opportunity to take part in marking activities.

Access this via Professional development area of the website

[AQA | Professional development](#)

(available until 31st March 2022)

Further support: MERiT from Exampro

- **MERiT is a mock reporting tool that can help you to identify your students' strengths and weaknesses.**
- MERiT will automatically generate detailed reports based on your student data / mock exam marks.
- Marks can be entered online or via spreadsheet.
- All data can be exported for further analysis so there is **no duplication of effort for mark entry.**
- Individual student reports can be exported to share with students, parents and carers.
- Population means and rankings will be released as soon as enough marks have been entered. Population means should be available earlier than in previous years.
- £50 for the year - this gives you access to MERiT for GCSE English and GCSE Literature for the one fee

[Exampro | MERiT](#)

Contact details

To stay up to date with all the latest information subscribe to updates via the English webpage [AQA | Subjects | English](#)

Scroll down to the bottom of the page...

Connect with us

Contact our team

Tel: [0161 953 7504](tel:01619537504)

8am - 5pm Monday to Friday

Email (GCSE): english-gcse@aqa.org.uk

Email (AS and A-level): english-gce@aqa.org.uk

Subscribe for updates

Receive the latest news, resources and support for your subject area from AQA.

[Sign up now for free >](#)

Thank you - any questions?
