

Specification

GCSE

English Literature

Cambridge OCR Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1)
in English Literature

J352

For first assessment in 2017



About our new name

As of September 2025, our name is Cambridge OCR.

Students who sat an exam **in summer 2025** will receive a Cambridge OCR branded exam certificate (our new brand), which will be the same for all future exam series.

You'll continue to see the OCR or Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations name while we work to update our material to our new name, Cambridge OCR. This will take some time, and you can still access all up-to-date qualification resources and materials via [Teach Cambridge](#).

Important: We'll keep the OCR/Oxford Cambridge and RSA name on existing teaching resources while the content of these remains applicable to the specification being taught. **New and refreshed** resources will be produced using the Cambridge OCR name/logo.

Are you using the latest version of this specification?

The latest version of our specifications will always be on [our website](#) and may differ from printed versions. We will inform centres about changes to specifications.

Tell us what you think

Your feedback plays an important role in how we develop, market, support and resource qualifications now and into the future. We want you and your students to enjoy and get the best out of our qualifications and resources, but to do that we need your honest opinions to tell us whether we're on the right track or not.

You can email your thoughts to support@ocr.org.uk or visit our [feedback page](#) to learn more about how you can help us improve our qualifications.



Designing and testing in [collaboration with teachers](#) and students



Helping young people develop an [ethical view of the world](#)



Equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging (EDIB) are [part of everything we do](#)

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Introducing...

GCSE (9–1) English Literature (from September 2015)

Our GCSE (9–1) English Literature specification is designed to encourage students to engage critically with and explore a variety of texts across the major genres including modern texts as well as classic literature.

Underpinned by a skills-based approach, the emphasis is on building students' confidence in developing and articulating a fresh, individual response to texts that is supported and justified.

Contact the team

We have a dedicated team of English Subject Advisors working on our GCSE (9–1) English qualifications.

If you need specialist advice, guidance or support, get in touch as follows:

- **01223 553998**
- english@ocr.org.uk
- [@OCR_English](https://www.facebook.com/OCR_English)

Teaching and learning resources

We recognise that the introduction of a new specification can bring challenges for implementation and teaching. Our aim is to help you at every stage and we're working hard to provide a practical package of support in close consultation with teachers and other experts, so we can help you to make the change.

Designed to support progression for all

Our resources are designed to provide you with a range of teaching activities and suggestions so you can select the best approach for your particular students. You are the experts on how your students learn and our aim is to support you in the best way we can.

We want to...

- Support you with a body of knowledge that grows throughout the lifetime of the specification
- Provide you with a range of suggestions so you can select the best activity, approach or context for your particular students
- Make it easier for you to explore and interact with our resource materials, in particular to develop your own schemes of work
- Create an ongoing conversation so we can develop materials that work for you.

Plenty of useful resources

You'll have four main types of subject-specific teaching and learning resources at your fingertips:

- Delivery Guides
- Transition Guides
- Topic Exploration Packs
- Lesson Elements.

Along with subject-specific resources, you'll also have access to a selection of generic resources that focus on skills development and professional guidance for teachers.

Skills Guides – we've produced a set of Skills Guides that are not specific to English, but each covers a topic that could be relevant to a range of qualifications – for example, communication, legislation and research. Download the guides at ocr.org.uk/skillsguides

Active Results – a free online results analysis service to help you review the performance of individual students or your whole school. It provides access to detailed results data, enabling more comprehensive analysis of results in order to give you a more accurate measurement of the achievements of your centre and individual students. For more details refer to ocr.org.uk/activeresults

Professional Development

Take advantage of our improved Professional Development Programme, designed with you in mind. Whether you want to look at our new digital training or search for training materials, you can find what you're looking for all in one place at the CPD Hub.

An introduction to the new specifications:

We'll be running events to help you get to grips with our GCSE (9–1) English Literature qualification.

These events are designed to help prepare you for first teaching and to support your delivery at every stage.

Watch out for details at cpdhub.ocr.org.uk.

To receive the latest information about the training we'll be offering, please register for GCSE email updates at ocr.org.uk/updates.

1 Why choose an OCR GCSE (9–1) in English Literature?

1a. Why choose an OCR qualification?

Choose OCR and you've got the reassurance that you're working with one of the UK's leading exam boards. Our new GCSE (9–1) in English Literature course has been developed in consultation with teachers, employers and Higher Education to provide students with a qualification that's relevant to them and meets their needs.

We're part of the Cambridge Assessment Group, Europe's largest assessment agency and a department of the University of Cambridge. Cambridge Assessment plays a leading role in developing and delivering assessments throughout the world, operating in over 150 countries.

We work with teachers, employers, and universities to create qualifications that support the needs of all students and help them prepare for their future. We offer A levels, GCSEs, vocational courses, and other academic options to schools, colleges, workplaces, and other organisations.

Our Specifications

We believe in developing specifications that help you bring the subject to life and inspire your students to achieve more.

We've created teacher-friendly specifications based on extensive research and engagement with the teaching community. They're designed to be straightforward and accessible so that you can tailor the delivery of the course to suit your needs. We aim to encourage

learners to become responsible for their own learning, confident in discussing ideas, innovative and engaged.

We provide a range of support services designed to help you at every stage, from preparation through to the delivery of our specifications. This includes:

- A wide range of high-quality creative resources including:
 - Delivery Guides
 - Transition Guides
 - Topic Exploration Packs
 - Lesson Elements
 - ...and much more.
- Access to Subject Advisors to support you through the transition and throughout the lifetime of the specifications.
- CPD/Training for teachers to introduce the qualifications and prepare you for first teaching.
- Active Results – our free results analysis service to help you review the performance of individual students or whole schools.

All GCSE (9–1) qualifications offered by OCR are accredited by Ofqual, the Regulator for qualifications offered in England. The accreditation number for OCR's GCSE (9–1) in English Literature is (QN: 601/4872/X).

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1b. Why choose an OCR GCSE (9–1) in English Literature?

OCR's GCSE (9–1) in English Literature specification aims to encourage learners to read, engage critically with and to explore a wide range of literature; to develop and sustain confident, personal responses to their reading, using supporting textual evidence; to use accurate, effective writing skills; and enjoy a variety of texts across the major genres, including modern texts and texts from different cultures, as well as classic literature.

Underpinned by a skills-based approach, the emphasis is on building learners' confidence in developing and articulating a fresh, individual response to texts which are supported and justified. This provides learners with a solid grounding, whether going on to Further Education, Higher Education or the workplace.

Aims and learning outcomes

The aims of this GCSE (9–1) specification are to enable learners to:

- read a wide range of classic literature fluently and with good understanding, and make connections across their reading
- read in depth, critically and evaluatively, so that they are able to discuss and explain their understanding and ideas
- develop the habit of reading widely and often
- appreciate the depth and power of the English literary heritage
- write accurately, effectively and analytically about their reading, using Standard English
- acquire and use a wide vocabulary, including the grammatical terminology and other literary and linguistic terms they need to criticise and analyse what they read.

1c. What are the key features of this specification?

The key features of OCR GCSE (9–1) in English Literature will enable learners to develop:

- skills to enhance their understanding of and engagement with their reading, including responding to unseen texts
- provide clear crossover opportunities with OCR's GCSE (9–1) in English Language
- critical and imaginative responses to modern and literary heritage texts, assessed in two external exams
- skills in writing critically, effectively and analytically about a range of texts which have been chosen to appeal to learners with different interests and enthusiasms
- engaged personal responses to poetry, choosing from diverse and stimulating themes for study in the free OCR Poetry Anthology, available at www.ocr.org.uk
- confidence in developing and articulating a fresh, individual response to texts, including unseen texts, which is supported and justified.

1d. How do I find out more information?

If you are already using OCR specifications you can contact us at: www.ocr.org.uk

If you are not already a registered OCR centre you can find out more information on the benefits of becoming one at: www.ocr.org.uk

Find out more?

Ask a Subject Advisor:

Email: ocrenglish@ocr.org.uk

Customer Contact Centre: 01223 553998

Teacher support: www.ocr.org.uk

2 The specification overview

2a. The Overview of GCSE (9–1) in English Literature (J352)

Learners must complete both components (01 and 02) to be awarded the GCSE (9–1) in English Literature.

Content Overview	Assessment Overview	
<p>2</p> <p>Reading and responding to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">one studied modern prose or drama text, including making connections with a thematically linked unseen modern, same-genre extractone studied 19th century prose text.	<p>Exploring modern and literary heritage texts (01) Closed text 80 marks 2 hour written paper</p>	<p>50% of total GCSE</p>
<p>Reading and responding to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">one thematic poetry cluster from the OCR Poetry Anthology, including making connections with a thematically linked unseen poemone studied Shakespeare play.	<p>Exploring poetry and Shakespeare (02) Closed text 80 marks 2 hour written paper</p>	<p>50% of total GCSE</p>

2b. Content of GCSE (9–1) in English Literature (J352)

The OCR GCSE (9–1) in English Literature specification aims to encourage learners to be:

- inspired
- motivated
- challenged by following a broad, coherent, engaging course of study.

It will introduce and extend learners' insight into and experience of a diverse range of substantial literature, studying whole texts in the major genres, stimulating their curiosity, encouraging them to engage with literature in their everyday lives.

Learners will study texts which include one Shakespeare play, a wide selection of poetry since 1789, one 19th century novel and fiction or drama from the British Isles from 1914 onwards. These are selected by the centre from the OCR set text list detailed in Section 2c of this specification.

There is a choice of three poetry clusters for study from the free OCR Poetry Anthology: Love and Relationships, Conflict, and Youth and Age.

OCR's GCSE (9–1) in English Literature is designed to develop knowledge and skills in reading, writing and critical thinking. Learners will develop their expertise in reading literature critically and evaluatively, making connections across their reading, and articulating informed, independent interpretations of texts, both studied and unseen.

The set texts will be reviewed after three years and may be subject to change. Each set text will remain on the list for the lifetime of the qualification, unless the review process identifies a necessary change. If a text is to be removed from the list and replaced with another text, centres will be notified a year in advance.

2c. Content of Exploring modern and literary heritage texts (01)

For this component, learners study one modern prose or drama text and one 19th century novel. The focus is on learners engaging with their reading through exploring key themes, ideas and issues, characterisation and settings in order to build confidence in their skills of critical evaluation. Study of the modern set text is enhanced through comparative study with an unseen modern, same genre extract.

The following tables set out the content of GCSE (9–1) in English Literature, Section A and Section B for component 01. These provide details on the required knowledge, understanding and skills as well as expected breadth and depth of texts studied.

Section A: Exploring modern and literary heritage texts (01)

Text choice	Content	Learners should be able to:
<p>Modern prose or drama</p> <p>Choice of one set text from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Anita and Me</i> – Meera Syal • <i>Never Let Me Go</i> – Kazuo Ishiguro • <i>Animal Farm</i> – George Orwell • <i>An Inspector Calls</i> – J. B. Priestley • <i>DNA</i> – Dennis Kelly • <i>Leave Taking</i> – Winsome Pinnock *first assessment June 2024. 	<p>Centres study one set text from the list, either prose or drama.</p> <p>Learners develop comprehension skills. Learners learn to articulate their understanding of aspects of plot, characterisation, events and settings and to distinguish between literal and implied meaning.</p> <p>Learners develop critical reading skills. Learners engage personally with texts, including with those written for performance and build confidence in their abilities to sustain an individual response which is supported and justified.</p>	<p>reflect critically and evaluatively on their reading. Learners are expected to respond to some of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • themes, ideas and issues • characters and relationships • language • social and/or cultural contextual factors. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pay attention to the details of a text: understanding the significance of a word, phrase or sentence in context • demonstrate the ability to read at a literal level and also explore deeper implications • explain motivation, sequence of events and the relationship between actions or events. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and interpret key themes • make an informed personal response, justifying a point of view by referring closely to evidence in the text • reflect critically and evaluatively on a text, using an understanding of context to inform reading

Text choice	Content	Learners should be able to:
Modern prose or drama	<p>Learners reflect on the contexts in which texts are set, for example, those relating to social and cultural situations or experiences.</p> <p>Learners look at literary contexts in reading, for example, use of symbolism or allegory for effect.</p> <p>Learners develop their own viewpoints supported by textual evidence and recognising that there are different interpretations that other readers could make.</p> <p>Learners analyse and evaluate how language, form and structure inform and impact on their reading of texts.</p> <p>Learners will require knowledge and understanding of grammatical features and literary and linguistic terminology, including (but not restricted to), phrase, metaphor, meter, irony and persona in order to support their views about the text with insight and precision.</p> <p>Learners develop critical and comparative understanding of texts.</p> <p>Learners should explore modern literature more widely, through reading a diverse range of modern prose or drama extracts and texts.</p> <p>Learners engage with different texts and begin to discover how understanding of one text is illuminated by its relationship with another. This prepares them for making comparisons between their studied text (printed extract) and a thematically linked unseen modern, same-genre extract in the exam.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognise and evaluate the possibility of different valid responses to a text. • explain and illustrate how choice of language shapes meaning • analyse how the writer uses language, form and structure to create effects and impact • use relevant subject terminology accurately to support their views. • in order to enhance their understanding of themes, characters, settings, contexts (where known) and literary styles, learners make connections and contrasts between texts, comparing features and qualities.

Text choice	Content	Learners should be able to:
Modern prose or drama	<p>Learners develop writing skills. Learners make a sustained, informed personal response to their reading. They are able to write effectively about literature for different purposes, including writing to describe, explain, summarise, argue, analyse and evaluate.</p> <p>Learners craft their writing and create impact through careful selection and emphasis of key points, interwoven with textual evidence to back up their understanding and ideas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produce clear and coherent pieces of extended writing • select and emphasise key points and ideas for a particular purpose • develop and maintain a consistent viewpoint • use textual references and quotations effectively to support views • use accurate Standard English and spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Section B: Exploring modern and literary heritage texts (01)

Text choice	Content	Learners should be able to:
<p>19th century prose</p> <p>Choice of one set text from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Great Expectations</i> – Charles Dickens • <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> – Jane Austen • <i>The War of the Worlds</i> – H G Wells • <i>The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde</i> – Robert Louis Stevenson • <i>Jane Eyre</i> – Charlotte Brontë • <i>A Christmas Carol</i> – Charles Dickens. 	<p>Centres study one set text from the five 19th century prose set texts that include a range of classics.</p> <p>Learners develop comprehension skills. Learners articulate their understanding of key aspects of plot, characterisation, events and settings and learn to differentiate between literal and implied meaning.</p> <p>Learners develop critical reading skills. Learners engage personally with 19th century texts of enduring appeal and build confidence in their abilities to sustain an individual response which is supported and justified.</p> <p>Learners reflect on relevant social, historical or cultural contexts – for example, social customs and attitudes, or literary contexts – for example, generic features of science fiction or the Gothic.</p> <p>Learners develop their own viewpoints supported by textual evidence and at the same time recognise that there are different interpretations that other readers could make.</p>	<p>reflect critically and evaluatively on their reading. Learners are expected to respond to some of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • themes, ideas and issues • atmosphere and emotion • plot development • characters and relationships • language • relevant social, historical or cultural contexts, or literary contexts such as genre. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pay attention to the details of a text: understanding the significance of a word, phrase or sentence in context • demonstrate the ability to read at a literal level and also explore deeper implications • explain motivation, sequence of events and the relationship between actions or events. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and interpret key themes • make an informed personal response, justifying a point of view by referring closely to evidence in the text • reflect critically and evaluatively on a text, using an understanding of context to inform reading • recognise and evaluate the possibility of different valid responses to a text.

Text choice	Content	Learners should be able to:
19 th century prose	<p>Learners analyse and evaluate how language, form and structure inform and impact on their reading of texts.</p> <p>Learners will require knowledge and understanding of grammatical features and literary and linguistic terminology, including (but not restricted to), phrase, metaphor, meter, irony and persona, in order to support their views about the text with insight and precision.</p> <p>Learners develop writing skills. Learners make a sustained, informed personal response to their reading. They write effectively about literature for different purposes, including writing to describe, explain, summarise, argue, analyse and evaluate.</p> <p>Learners craft their writing and create impact through careful selection and emphasis of key points, interwoven with textual evidence to back up their understanding and ideas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explain and illustrate how choice of language shapes meaning • analyse how the writer uses language, form and structure to create effects and impact • use relevant subject terminology accurately to support their views. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produce clear and coherent pieces of extended writing • select and emphasise key points and ideas for a particular purpose • develop and maintain a consistent viewpoint • use textual references and quotations effectively to support views • use accurate Standard English and spelling, punctuation and grammar.

2c. Content of Exploring poetry and Shakespeare (02)

For this component, learners study a themed poetry cluster from the OCR Poetry Anthology and a Shakespeare play.

There is a choice of three poetry clusters for study, each comprising fifteen poems since 1789, some of which are from the English literary heritage, including Romantic poetry, alongside modern poems and poems from around the world. The poems have been carefully selected to provide a balanced and diverse collection for study.

The focus is on learners taking a skills-based approach to engaging with and responding critically to poetry,

including comparing poems and responding to unseen poetry. Learners explore a Shakespeare play through engaging with key themes and ideas, characterisation and settings. This is underpinned by understanding of the language and how society and culture are presented in the play.

The following tables set out the content of GCSE (9–1) in English Literature, Section A and Section B for component 02. These provide details on the required knowledge, understanding and skills as well as expected breadth and depth of texts studied.

Section A: Exploring poetry and Shakespeare (02)		
Text choice	Content	Learners should be able to:
Poetry across time Choice of one themed poetry cluster from the OCR Poetry Anthology: * The content of <i>Towards a World Unknown Anthology</i> was updated for First Teach 2022 (Version 2). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love and Relationships • Conflict • Youth and Age. 	There is a choice of three thematic poetry clusters for study in the OCR Poetry Anthology, each comprising a diverse range of poems since 1789 drawn from modern and literary heritage poets and covering different styles, poetic genres and thematic elements. Learners develop comprehension skills . Learners take a skills-based approach to engaging with and responding critically to a variety of poetry. Learners explore how poets use key features to present ideas, themes and settings and learning to differentiate between literal and implied meaning.	reflect critically and evaluatively on their reading. Learners are expected to respond to some of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • themes, ideas and issues • atmosphere, tone and attitude • appeal to the senses • language • imagery • form and structure. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pay attention to the details of a text: understanding the significance of a word, phrase or sentence in context • demonstrate the ability to read at a literal level and also explore deeper implications • explain motivation, sequence of events and the relationship between actions or events.

Text choice	Content	Learners should be able to:
Poetry across time	<p>Learners develop critical reading skills. Learners engage personally with their reading and build confidence in their abilities to sustain an individual response to texts which is supported and justified and recognise that there are different interpretations that other readers could make.</p> <p>Learners analyse and evaluate how language, form and structure inform and impact on their reading of poetry.</p> <p>Learners will require knowledge and understanding of grammatical and structural features and literary and linguistic terminology, including (but not restricted to) rhyming pattern, stanza form and imagery in order to support their views about the text with insight and precision.</p> <p>Learners develop their critical and comparative understanding of texts.</p> <p>Learners engage with a range of poems to discover how understanding of one poem is illuminated by its relationship with another. This prepares them for making comparisons between a studied poem from their poetry cluster and a thematically linked unseen poem in the exam.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and interpret key themes • make an informed personal response, justifying a point of view by referring closely to evidence in the text • recognise and evaluate the possibility of different valid responses to a text. • explain and illustrate how vocabulary choices and structural features shape meaning • analyse how the writer uses language (including figurative language), form and structure to create effects and impact • use relevant subject terminology accurately to support their views. • in order to enhance their understanding of themes, settings and literary styles, learners make connections and contrasts between poems, comparing features and qualities.

Text choice	Content	Learners should be able to:
Poetry across time	<p>Learners develop writing skills. Learners make a sustained, informed personal response to their reading. They are able to write effectively about literature for different purposes, including writing to describe, explain, summarise, argue, analyse and evaluate.</p> <p>Learners craft their writing and create impact through careful selection and emphasis of key points, interwoven with textual evidence to back up their understanding and ideas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produce clear and coherent pieces of extended writing • select and emphasise key points and ideas for a particular purpose • develop and maintain a consistent viewpoint • use textual references and quotations effectively to support views • use accurate Standard English and spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Section B: Exploring poetry and Shakespeare (02)

Text choice	Content	Learners should be able to:
<p>Shakespeare</p> <p>Choice of one play from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> • <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> • <i>Macbeth</i> • <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>. <p>Where an extract is printed on the question paper it will be taken from the <i>The Complete Works of William Shakespeare: The Alexander Text</i> (Collins Classics). Centres are free to use any edition of their chosen Shakespeare text but should avoid using heavily edited editions.</p>	<p>Centres study one set text from a choice of four Shakespeare plays.</p> <p>Learners develop comprehension skills. Learners articulate their understanding of aspects of plot, characterisation, events and settings and to distinguish between literal and implied meaning.</p> <p>Learners develop critical reading skills, learners engage personally with texts clearly written for performance and build confidence in their abilities to sustain an individual response which is supported and justified.</p> <p>Learners reflect on relevant social, historical or cultural contexts – for example, social customs and attitudes.</p> <p>Learners develop their own viewpoints supported by textual evidence, whilst at the same time recognising that there are different interpretations that other readers could make.</p>	<p>reflect critically and evaluatively on their reading. Learners are expected to respond to some of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • themes, ideas and issues • atmosphere and emotion • plot development • characters and relationships • language • dramatic effects • relevant social, historical or cultural contexts as demonstrated in the play. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pay attention to the details of a text: understanding the significance of a word, phrase or sentence in context • demonstrate the ability to read at a literal level and also explore deeper implications • explain motivation, sequence of events and the relationship between actions or events. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and interpret key themes • make an informed personal response, justifying a point of view by referring closely to evidence in the text • reflect critically and evaluatively on a text, using an understanding of context to inform reading • recognise and evaluate the possibility of different valid responses to a text.

Text choice	Content	Learners should be able to:
Shakespeare	<p>Learners analyse and evaluate how language, form and structure inform and impact on their reading of texts, including use of dramatic devices to engage and entertain an audience.</p> <p>Learners will require knowledge and understanding of grammatical features and literary and linguistic terminology, including (but not restricted to), phrase, metaphor, meter, irony and persona, in order to support their views about the text with insight and precision.</p> <p>Learners develop writing skills.</p> <p>Learners make a sustained, informed personal response to their reading. They are able to write effectively about literature for different purposes, including writing to describe, explain, summarise, argue, analyse and evaluate.</p> <p>Learners craft their writing and create impact through careful selection and emphasis of key points, interwoven with textual evidence to back up their understanding and ideas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explain and illustrate how choice of language shapes meaning • analyse how the writer uses language, form and structure to create effects and impact • use relevant subject terminology accurately to support their views. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produce clear and coherent pieces of extended writing • select and emphasise key points and ideas for a particular purpose • develop and maintain a consistent viewpoint • use textual references and quotations effectively to support views • use accurate Standard English and spelling, punctuation and grammar.

2d. Prior knowledge, learning and progression

Learners in England who are beginning a GCSE (9–1) course are likely to have followed a Key Stage 3 programme of study. No prior knowledge of this subject is required.

GCSEs are qualifications that enable learners to progress to further qualifications either Vocational or General.

This qualification provides the ideal foundation for students to progress to OCR AS level and A level English qualifications: English Language, English Language and Literature (EMC) or English Literature.

Find out more at www.ocr.org.uk

3 Assessment of OCR GCSE (9–1) in English Literature

3a. Forms of assessment

The OCR GCSE (9–1) in English Literature (J352) is a linear qualification with 100% external assessment.

This qualification consists of two examined components, externally assessed by OCR. Both are closed text examinations of two hours duration, each with a 50% weighting.

Exploring modern and literary heritage texts (01)

This component is a closed text, 2 hour examination worth 80 marks: 40 marks for Section A and 40 marks for Section B.

Section A: Modern prose or drama (25% of total GCSE (9–1))

Learners study **one** modern prose or drama set text.

Learners respond to one extended response-style question on their studied text, which is split into two parts:

a) A comparison of an extract from the studied text with a modern, same-genre unseen extract

AND

b) A related question on the same studied text.

Section B: 19th century prose (25% of total GCSE (9–1))

Learners study **one** 19th century set text.

Learners respond to **one** extended response-style question on their studied text, from a choice of two:

An extract-based question, making links to the whole text

OR

A discursive question.

Exploring poetry and Shakespeare (02)

This component is a closed text, 2 hour examination worth 80 marks: 40 marks for Section A and 40 marks for Section B.

Section A: Poetry across time (25% of total GCSE (9–1))

Learners study **one** themed poetry cluster from the OCR Poetry Anthology.

Learners respond to one extended response-style question on their studied poetry cluster, which is split into two parts:

a) A comparison of a named poem from the OCR Poetry Anthology with an unseen poem

AND

b) A related question on a different poem (own choice) from the OCR Poetry Anthology.

Section B: Shakespeare (25% of total GCSE (9–1))

Learners study **one** Shakespeare set play.

Learners respond to **one** extended response-style question on their studied play, from a choice of two:

An extract-based question, making links to the whole text

OR

A discursive question.

3b. Assessment Objectives (AO)

There are four assessment objectives in OCR's GCSE (9–1) in English Literature and these are detailed in the table below.

Learners are expected to demonstrate their ability to:

	Assessment Objective
AO1	Read, understand and respond to texts. Students should be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations.
AO2	Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.
AO3	Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.
AO4	Use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.

In the specification as a whole, 25% of the total marks relate to tasks which require learners to make

comparisons between texts.

AO weightings in GCSE (9–1) in English Literature

The relationship between the assessment objectives and the components are shown in the following table.

Component	% of qualification				
	AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4	Total
Exploring modern and literary heritage texts (J352/01)	20%	17.5%	10%	2.5%	50%
Exploring poetry and Shakespeare (J352/02)	20%	22.5%	5%	2.5%	50%
	40%	40%	15%	5%	100%

3c. Total qualification time

Total qualification time (TQT) is the total amount of time, in hours, expected to be spent by a learner to achieve a qualification. It includes both guided learning hours and hours spent in preparation, study,

and assessment. The total qualification time for GCSE English Literature is 140 hours. The total guided learning time is 120-140 hours.

3d. Qualification availability outside of England

This qualification is available in England. For Wales and Northern Ireland please check the Qualifications in Wales Portal (QIW) or the Northern Ireland Department of Education Performance Measures/ Northern Ireland Entitlement Framework Qualifications

Accreditation Number (NIEFQAN) list to see current availability.

3e. Language

This qualification is available in English only. All assessment materials are available in English only and all candidate work must be in English.

3f. Assessment availability

There will be:

- one examination series available each year in June to **all** learners.

All examined components must be taken in the same examination series at the end of the course.

This specification will be certificated from the June 2017 examination series onwards.

3g. Retaking the qualification

Learners can retake the qualification as many times as they wish. They retake all components of the qualification.

3h. Assessment of extended responses

The assessment materials for this qualification provide learners with the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning and marks for extended responses are integrated into the marking criteria.

Learners will be assessed on the use of a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation (AO4) in Section B of each examined component.

AO4 will carry a 5% weighting in this GCSE (9–1) in English Literature qualification.

3i. Synoptic assessment

This GCSE (9–1) in English Literature specification focuses on skills-based learning. The ability to acquire and apply knowledge and understanding within frameworks for study is transferable to other subjects. Reading critically and evaluatively, making connections across reading and analysing the impact of language, structure, form and presentation are all essential skills developed through this qualification.

The requirement to respond to unseen texts and to use them comparatively in the assessment encourages independent thought and analysis, necessary for critical evaluation in other subjects.

The ability to communicate using accurate Standard English is essential to express ideas in all subjects.

The two examined components (01 and 02) in OCR GCSE (9–1) in English Literature provide a broad, coherent focus for assessment of the course. Across the two components, all the specified reading requirements in the GCSE (9–1) subject content are covered. In each component there is an opportunity for comparison of a studied text with a thematically linked unseen text, to enable learners to use their knowledge of a familiar text to demonstrate broader awareness and understanding of context, meaning and writers' use of language.

The assessment model has been designed so that opportunities for synoptic assessment are integrated into the specification.

Both the OCR GCSE (9–1) in English Literature and the OCR GCSE (9–1) in English Language include the study of literary texts. The inclusion of 19th century prose texts in English Literature helps to contextualise the study of 19th century prose non-fiction texts in English Language.

Both OCR GCSE (9–1) English specifications assess learners' ability to make connections between texts. In some cases these connections may be obvious, while in others the connection will be more implicit. In both specifications, there is no predetermined set of ways in which the texts relate, leaving learners free to explore a range of possibilities. Learners can begin to discover how an understanding of one text is illuminated by its relationship with another.

The use of unseen material in all GCSE (9–1) English examinations allows learners to draw on analytical skills developed in both OCR GCSE (9–1) in English Literature and GCSE (9–1) in English Language and offers the potential to stretch learners to produce sophisticated responses to texts encountered for the first time.

3j. Calculating qualification results

A learner's overall qualification grade for GCSE (9–1) in English Literature will be calculated by adding together their marks from the two components taken to give their total weighted mark. This mark will then be

The information in this section is designed to give an overview of the processes involved in administering this qualification so that you can speak to your exams officer. All of the following processes require you to submit something to OCR by a specific deadline.

compared to the qualification level grade boundaries for the entry option taken by the learner in the relevant exam series to determine the learner's overall qualification grade.

More information about the processes and deadlines involved at each stage of the assessment cycle can be found in the Administration area of the OCR website.

OCR's *Admin overview* is available on the OCR website at <https://www.ocr.org.uk/administration>.

4 Admin: what you need to know

4a. Pre-assessment

The information in this section is designed to give an overview of the processes involved in administering this qualification so that you can speak to your exams officer. All of the following processes require you to submit something to OCR by a specific deadline.

More information about the processes and deadlines involved at each stage of the assessment cycle can be found in the Administration area of the OCR website.

OCR's Admin overview is available on the OCR website at <https://www.ocr.org.uk/administration>.

Estimated entries

Estimated entries are your best projection of the number of learners who will be entered for a qualification in a particular series. Estimated entries

should be submitted to OCR by the specified deadline. They are free and do not commit your centre in any way.

Final entries

Final entries provide OCR with detailed data for each learner, showing each assessment to be taken. It is essential that you use the correct entry and option code, considering the relevant entry rules.

Final entries must be submitted to OCR by the published deadlines or late entry fees will apply.

All learners taking GCSE (9–1) in English Literature must be entered for J352.

Entry code	Title	Component code	Component title	Assessment type
J352	English Literature	01	Exploring modern and literary heritage texts	External Assessment
		02	Exploring poetry and Shakespeare	External Assessment

Collecting evidence of student performance to ensure resilience in the qualifications system

Regulators have published guidance on collecting evidence of student performance as part of long-term contingency arrangements to improve the resilience of the qualifications system. You should review and consider this guidance when delivering this qualification to students at your centre.

For more detailed information on collecting evidence of student performance please visit our website at: <https://www.ocr.org.uk/administration/general-qualifications/assessment/>

4b. Accessibility and special consideration

Reasonable adjustments and access arrangements allow learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment and show what they know and can do, without changing the demands of the assessment. Applications for these should be made before the examination series. Detailed information about eligibility for access arrangements can be found in the *JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*.

Special consideration is a post-assessment adjustment to marks or grades to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition at the time the assessment was taken. Detailed information about eligibility for special consideration can be found in the *JCQ A guide to the special consideration process*.

4c. External assessment arrangements

Regulations governing examination arrangements are contained in the *JCQ Instructions for conducting examinations*.

Head of Centre annual declaration

The Head of Centre is required to provide a declaration to the JCQ as part of the annual NCN update, conducted in the autumn term, to confirm that the centre is meeting all of the requirements detailed in the specification.

Any failure by a centre to provide the Head of Centre Annual Declaration will result in your centre status being suspended and could lead to the withdrawal of our approval for you to operate as a centre.

Private candidates

Private candidates may enter for OCR assessments.

A private candidate is someone who pursues a course of study independently but takes an examination or assessment at an approved examination centre. A private candidate may be a part-time student, someone taking a distance learning course, or someone being tutored privately. They must be based in the UK.

Private candidates need to contact OCR approved centres to establish whether they are prepared to host them as a private candidate. The centre may charge for this facility and OCR recommends that the arrangement is made early in the course.

Further guidance for private candidates may be found on the OCR website: <http://www.ocr.org.uk>.

4d. Results and certificates

Grade scale

GCSE (9–1) qualifications are graded on the scale: 9–1, where 9 is the highest. Learners who fail to reach the minimum standard of 1 will be Unclassified (U). Only

subjects in which grades 9 to 1 are attained will be recorded on certificates.

Results

Results are released to centres and learners for information and to allow any queries to be resolved before certificates are issued.

Centres will have access to the following results information for each learner:

- the grade for the qualification
- the raw mark for each component
- the total weighted mark for the qualification

The following supporting information will be available:

- raw mark grade boundaries for each component
- weighted mark grade boundaries for each entry option.

Until certificates are issued, results are deemed to be provisional and may be subject to amendment.

4e. Post-results services

A number of post-results services are available:

- **Review of results** – If you are not happy with the outcome of a learner’s results, centres may request a review of marking.
- **Missing and incomplete results** – This service should be used if an individual subject result

for a learner is missing, or the learner has been omitted entirely from the results supplied.

- **Access to scripts** – Centres can request access to marked scripts.

4f. Malpractice

Any breach of the regulations for the conduct of examinations and coursework may constitute malpractice (which includes maladministration) and must be reported to OCR as soon as it is detected.

Detailed information on malpractice can be found in the guide *Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments: Policies and Procedures* published by JCQ.

5a. Grade descriptors

5 Appendices

Grade 8	<p>In relation to a range of texts, to achieve grade 8, candidates will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• sustain a convincing, informed personal response to explicit and implicit meanings of texts• sustain a perceptive critical analysis of the ways in which writers use language, form and structure• use judicious and well-integrated textual references to develop personal responses• show perceptive understanding of how contexts shape texts and responses to texts• make illuminating comparisons between texts
Grade 5	<p>In relation to a range of texts, to achieve grade 5, candidates will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• develop a generally coherent and engaged response to explicit and implicit meanings of texts• develop a clear understanding of the ways in which writers use language, form and structure• use apt textual references to support responses• use understanding of contexts to inform responses to texts• make credible comparisons between texts
Grade 2	<p>In relation to a range of texts, to achieve grade 2, candidates will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• make straightforward comments about explicit meanings of texts• describe straightforward aspects of language, form or structure• make general references to obvious details of texts• show awareness that texts are related to contexts• make basic links between texts

5b. Overlap with other qualifications

There is some overlap between the content of this specification and that of OCR's GCSE (9–1) in English Language specification.

5c. Avoidance of bias

The GCSE (9–1) qualification and subject criteria have been reviewed in order to identify any feature which could disadvantage learners who share a protected

Characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010. All reasonable steps have been taken to minimise any such disadvantage.

Summary of Updates

Date	Version	Section	Title of Section	Change
March 2018	2	2a 3a	Overview of GCSE (9–1) in English Literature (J325) Forms of assessment	Clarity of assessment overview, stating closed text.
April 2018	2.1	i) Front cover ii) 4d	i) Disclaimer ii) Results and Certificates: Results	i) Addition of Disclaimer ii) Amend to Certification Titling
August 2018	2.2	2c	Content of Exploring modern and literary heritage texts (01)	Addition of <i>A Christmas Carol</i> – Charles Dickens
February 2019	2.3	2c	Content of Exploring poetry and Shakespeare (02)	Clarification on Shakespeare edition chosen
June 2020	2.4	4e	Post-results services	Wording amended from 'Enquiries about results' to 'Review of results'
				Update to specification covers to meet digital accessibility standards
September 2022	2.5	2c	Content of Exploring modern and literary heritage texts (01)	Addition of new text 'Leave Taking' by Winsome Pinnock and final assessment date added for 'My Mother said I never should' by Charlotte Keatley
August 2023	2.6	2c	Content of Exploring modern and literary heritage texts (01)	Removal of text 'My Mother said I never should' by Charlotte Keatley as the final assessment series (June 2023) has now passed.
		3c	Total qualification time	Insertion of new section
February 2024	2.7	3d, 3e	Qualification availability, Language	Inclusion of disclaimer regarding availability and language
		4a	Pre-assessment	Update to include resilience guidance
		Checklist		Inclusion of Teach Cambridge
March 2024	2.8	2c	Content of Exploring poetry and Shakespeare (02)	Insertion of clarification that the content of <i>Towards a World Unknown Anthology</i> was updated for First Teach 2022 (Version 2).



Date	Version	Section	Title of Section	Change
November 2025	3.0	Covers, page footers, section 1a and 4d		Updated covers, footers and certificate title to reflect the new Cambridge OCR brand. Inside cover includes statement: 'About our new name'. Minor rewording in generic section 1a.

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