



A Level English specifications



Available for first teaching
from September 2008



OCR A Level English

What's your passion?

OCR has revised its A Level suite of English qualifications. As texts are at the heart of an English qualification, OCR is pleased to take this opportunity to build on its previous offerings and produce new specifications that provide more opportunities for teachers to select texts that they like, and that encourage broader reading. Customers can now expect greater choice in texts that are set, and also the freedom to choose their own texts in the new coursework units.

The OCR A Level English suite consists of three key specifications:

- English Literature
- English Language
- English Language and Literature.

This brochure includes information on all three specifications and will focus on the key areas of interest.

A Level English Literature

This revised specification encourages learners to develop their interest in and enjoyment of literature and literary studies. There is a balance between set texts on the examined units and more freedom of choice on the coursework units, with guidance on text selection from OCR. This means that teachers can introduce books of particular interest to their learners, increasing the appeal of literature and raising motivation.

Features and benefits:

- Option to study extracts of set texts, where appropriate.
- Freedom to choose texts in the coursework units, with optional guidance available from OCR.
- Revised set texts list which contain a blend of classic and contemporary titles.
- Encourages wider reading around texts and contexts.
- Promotes a logical and enjoyable transition from GCSE study, developing learners' critical analysis skills for onward progression into higher education.
- Learners gain a good understanding of the changing traditions of literature in English through a range of texts from different periods right up to the present day.
- Opportunity for learners to return to Shakespeare at A2 with more advanced literacy skills.
- Re-creative writing is an optional task for AS Level coursework.
- Learners are able to study a literary work in the context of critical reading around it, encouraging more rounded and directly relevant study.
- OCR's word limits for coursework are consistent throughout the units.

Outstanding support

Coursework consultancy service

Available for all three English specifications for first teaching in 2008, the Coursework Consultancy Service will be based on the popular existing service. It will enable you to get further guidance from senior moderators on any aspect of coursework, including:

- The requirements of AS and A2 units
- Choice of texts
- Task setting
- Internal assessment and moderation
- Presentation of folders.

QCA requirements

The revised QCA subject criteria for English Literature includes some important changes and features:

- Minimum of 12 texts to be studied (6 at AS, 6 at A2)
- Four periods of study defined by QCA
- Requirements for learners to study poetry, prose and drama at AS and A2
- Specification must include coursework
- Wider reading around set texts and context
- 'Stretch and Challenge' style questions as A2.

A Level English Literature **course details**

For AS

Teaching units	Assessment method and weighting
<p>F661: Poetry and Prose 1800-1945</p> <p>Learners study works of poetry and prose ranging from Robert Frost to Edith Wharton. This unit develops critical literary skills, promotes a greater understanding of the contexts in which texts are produced and explores the variety of possible interpretations.</p>	<p>Mandatory unit</p> <p>2 hour exam AS – 60% A Level – 30%</p>
<p>F662: Literature Post-1900</p> <p>Through this study of modern literature students learn to compare texts and gain confidence in their use of literary critical concepts and terminology. Learners have the opportunity to select works of individual interest.</p>	<p>Mandatory unit</p> <p>Coursework AS – 40% A Level – 20%</p>

NOTE: Learners must complete both units to achieve the AS.

For A2

Teaching units	Assessment method and weighting
<p>F663: Drama and Poetry Pre-1800</p> <p>The study of Shakespeare is a key focus, as is the study of a literary heritage text. This includes critical analysis of structure, form and meaning, and consideration of others' interpretations.</p> <p>Learners are encouraged to compare and contrast texts across the works of authors writing from 1300-1800.</p>	<p>Mandatory unit</p> <p>2 hour exam A Level – 30%</p>
<p>F664: Texts in Time</p> <p>Learners develop research skills and synthesise their knowledge and understanding in an extended individual study of literary texts across genres. This unit gives learners an appreciation of the cultural and contextual influences upon readers and writers, and the ways in which texts relate to literary traditions, movements and genres.</p>	<p>Mandatory unit</p> <p>Coursework A Level – 20%</p>

NOTE: Learners must complete four units to achieve the Advanced GCE.

What stays the same, and what changes?

If you're already working with the current OCR A Level English Literature specification, you'll want to know which parts of this remain in the new specification – and what the main changes are.

The table below outlines the key points.

Main aspects that stay the same

Learners study poetry and prose at AS.

Learners study poetry, prose and drama at A2.

Coursework remains a feature of AS and A2.

The study of Shakespeare has been retained, but at A2 only.

Closed book exam at A2.

Most important changes

Changes to the course reflect new QCA requirements. 'Stretch and challenge' style assessment at A2. (See page 3).

Set texts lists have been reviewed and revised in response to customer feedback.

Critical reading around texts is actively encouraged.

New poets include Rossetti, Owen, Frost, Pope, Donne and Sheridan.

New authors include Hardy, Wharton, Fitzgerald and Waugh.

For more information on A Level English Literature, visit:
www.ocr.org.uk/englishlit/newalevel

“The specification is well structured, includes engaging tasks and provides clear guidance.”



'Stretch and Challenge'

A new Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) initiative for A Levels, 'Stretch and Challenge' is designed to give young people the opportunity to demonstrate their potential, and to help universities differentiate between applicants. Stretch and Challenge is included in A2 assessment, so it won't involve additional questions or exam papers.

'Stretch and Challenge' is achieved through a new approach to exam questions:

- The questions invite a greater variety of thinking and type of answer. For example, the introduction could ask the learner to 'analyse', 'evaluate' or 'discuss'.
- The questions are structured to show more connections between different sections of the specification.
- There are more synoptic assessments – exploring connections between different areas and levels of a subject – over and above the superficial links within question types.
- Extended writing is encouraged in all subjects (except in areas such as Maths, where it is clearly inappropriate).
- There's a wider range of question types – such as case studies and open-ended questions – rather than just short-answer questions.



You'll find examples of 'Stretch and Challenge' style questions in your English Literature Specimen Assessment Materials. Here's a short selection:

'A play primarily concerned with various kinds of rebellion.' Evaluate Shakespeare's presentation of rebellion in Henry IV Part 1 in the light of this view.

'Twelfth Night celebrates the wisdom of foolishness.' Evaluate the importance of the relationship between wisdom and foolishness in Twelfth Night in the light of this comment.

'Iago "rewrites" Othello: a play which begins as a romantic comedy, but which ends as a tragedy.' Evaluate the relationship between tragedy and comedy in Othello in the light of this comment.

By comparing one drama and one poetry text you have studied, how far and in what ways would you agree with the view that 'the women characters are presented as always defending the truth, no matter what the cost'?

By comparing one drama and one poetry text that you have studied, discuss ways in which writers explore the idea of a personal hell.

A Level English Language

This new specification will encourage learners' interest and enjoyment in the English language through the study of language in a variety of contexts, covering the adaptation of speech for different audiences, cultures and for modern technological methods.

There's a fresh approach to popular topics, while some new units – such as 'Language in the Media' – are introduced.

This A2 unit gives learners the opportunity to develop a full appreciation for the multiple roles of language in its different forms – including multimodal texts such as webpages, blogs or other medias.

This provides a practical and wide-ranging platform for further study, as well as for careers in creative communication.

Features you may find interesting about this course:

- Learners have the opportunity to study language in a variety of contexts and roles, including speech, culture and communication using modern technologies.
- Engaging and modern stimuli help teachers to get across the importance of language in the modern world.
- 'Language in the Media' at A2 introduces 'multimodal texts', for example websites which use a variety of communication tools simultaneously. Learners will find this interesting and engaging as they explore modern methods of communication.
- The specification includes study of the dynamics of speech and language in different cultures.
- Coursework units provide learners with the opportunity to analyse the uses and characteristics of language using a variety of texts of their choice.

Outstanding support

Coursework consultancy service

Available for all three English specifications for first teaching in 2008, the Coursework Consultancy Service will be based on the popular existing service. It will enable you to get further guidance from senior moderators on any aspect of coursework, including:

- The requirements of AS and A2 units
- Choice of texts
- Task setting
- Internal assessment and moderation
- Presentation of folders.



A Level English Language **course details**

For AS

Teaching units	Assessment method and weighting
F651: The Dynamics of Speech This unit focuses on the analysis of spoken and written English, scripted and unscripted, by children and among different groups such as friends, families, and national and local communities. It promotes a greater understanding of language acquisition and social context.	Mandatory unit 2 hour exam AS – 60% A Level – 30%
F652: Texts and Audiences Learners produce coursework for internal assessment on the themes of audience and purpose, and the cultural context in which texts are produced. They can conduct a sustained individual study, examining language use, context and effect across different modes.	Mandatory unit Coursework 3,000 words maximum AS – 40% A Level – 20%

For A2

Teaching units	Assessment method and weighting
F653: Culture, Language and Identity This unit explores issues surrounding dialect, culture, power and identity, and enables a deeper understanding of stylistic variation.	Mandatory unit 2 hour exam A Level – 30%
F654: Language in Media Learners have the opportunity to compare and analyse texts from three different modes: spoken, written and multimodal. They conduct a sustained study of language analysis and create their own writing.	Mandatory unit Coursework 3,000 words maximum A Level – 20%

What stays the same, and what changes?

If you're already working with the current OCR A Level English Language specification, you'll want to know which parts of this remain in the new specification – and what the main changes are.

The table below outlines the key points.

Main aspects that stay the same

Coursework remains a feature of AS and A2.

Focus on speech, accent and dialect.

Focus on language acquisition, formality and register including grammatical and lexical issues.

Passage and/or data-based analysis.

Adaptive writing and commentary task.

Focus on study of language and speech

Most important changes

New unit, Dynamics of Speech with a focus on children and language acquisition, speech varieties and social groups.

New focus on multimodal texts, e.g. website pages that combine different methods of communications, written text, spoken word, pictures and captions.

The inclusion of new units on popular and accessible topics such as 'Media Language', which gives learners the opportunity to compare and analyse texts from three different modes; spoken, written and multimodal.

New unit 'Culture, Language and Identity' which explores issues surrounding dialect, culture, power and identity and enables a deeper understanding of stylistic variation.

For more information on A Level English Language, visit:
www.ocr.org.uk/englishlang/newalevel



*"Simpler structure,
better texts."*

'Stretch and Challenge'

A new initiative for all A Levels, 'Stretch and Challenge' is designed to give young people the opportunity to demonstrate their potential, and to help universities differentiate between applicants. It will be part of the A2 units, so it won't involve additional questions or exam papers.

'Stretch and Challenge' is achieved through a new approach to exam questions:

- The questions invite a greater variety of thinking and type of answer. For example, the introduction could ask the learner to 'analyse', 'evaluate' or 'discuss'.
- The questions are structured to show more connections between different sections of the specification.
- Extended writing is encouraged in all subjects (except in areas such as Maths, where it is clearly inappropriate).
- There's a wider range of question types – such as case studies and open-ended questions – rather than just short-answer questions.
- There are more synoptic assessments – exploring connections between different areas and levels of a subject – over and above the superficial links within question types.



You'll find examples of 'Stretch and Challenge' style questions in your English Language Specimen Assessment Materials. Here's a short selection:

The following two passages are concerned with the links between healthy living and women's personal identity and status. By close reference to BOTH passages, make a detailed critical analysis of the linguistic approaches used by the authors. You should also analyse and evaluate the influence of contextual factors, like time and mode of production and, where appropriate, refer to your wider knowledge and study of this topic.

The following two passages raise a number of issues about good speech. By close reference to BOTH passages, analyse in linguistic detail some of the arguments raised by the authors. You should also evaluate the contextual factors, like time and mode of production and, where appropriate, refer to your wider studies of the topic.

The following two passages are examples of fictional writing for a teenage audience. By close reference to BOTH passages, make a detailed critical analysis of the linguistic approaches used by the authors. You should also analyse and evaluate the influence of contextual factors, like time and mode of production and, where appropriate, refer to your wider knowledge and study of this topic.

A Level English Language and Literature

The revision of this specification promotes the development of skills in literary analysis through creative engagement with a range of texts which aims to deepen learners' understanding of the use of language.

Both innovative and refreshing these specifications give teachers the freedom to choose texts within the coursework units, which include influential or culturally significant works. These can be related to another text along a chosen theme.

For example, in unit F674: Connections Across Texts, teachers could choose to consider 'fairness and rules' as portrayed in *Tom Brown's School Days*, WWI poetry, and live sports commentary.

The cross analysis approach enables learners to further develop integrated linguistic and literary skills.

Features you may find interesting about this specification:

- It promotes a logical and enjoyable transition from GCSE study, developing learners' skills over the two years for onward progression into higher education.
- The study of communication using modern technologies and across cultural diversity provides a solid platform from which to pursue careers in creative communication.
- There's a stimulating range of texts, from classics to contemporary fiction and from natural speech to multimodal texts.
- Favourite aspects of language are combined with literary evaluation, allowing a rounded appreciation of English.
- Literary analysis through creative engagement with a range of texts.

Outstanding support

Coursework consultancy service

Available for all three English specifications for first teaching in 2008, the Coursework Consultancy Service will be based on the popular existing service. It will enable you to get further guidance from senior moderators on any aspect of coursework, including:

- The requirements of AS and A2 units
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A Level English Language and Literature course details

For AS

Teaching units	Assessment method and weighting
<p>F671: Voices in Texts</p> <p>This unit explores the representation of individual voices that create meaning in texts ranging from prose fiction to natural speech transcripts.</p>	<p>Mandatory unit</p> <p>2 hour exam AS – 60% A Level – 30%</p>
<p>F672: Changing Texts</p> <p>Learners explore creative techniques and the ways in which literary texts are constantly being reinvented and reinterpreted for different audiences and purposes.</p>	<p>Mandatory unit</p> <p>Coursework 3,000 words maximum AS – 40% A Level – 20%</p>

For A2

Teaching units	Assessment method and weighting
<p>F673: Voices and Power</p> <p>This unit focuses on the changing representation of power relationships through the genre of drama.</p>	<p>Mandatory unit</p> <p>2 hour exam A Level – 30%</p>
<p>F674: Connections Across Texts</p> <p>Learners have the freedom to choose influential or culturally significant works which may fall outside the accepted literary canon. This enables them to study topics of personal interest.</p> <p>They conduct an analytical comparison of two drama texts and write their own creative piece. This helps to develop and enhance their skills as producers and interpreters of language.</p>	<p>Mandatory unit</p> <p>Coursework 3,000 words maximum A Level – 20%</p>

What stays the same, and what changes?

If you're already working with the current OCR A Level English Language and Literature specification, you'll want to know which parts of this remain in the new specification – and what the main changes are.

The table below outlines the key points.

Main aspects that stay the same

Study at AS introduces candidates to the connections between language and literature in written and spoken texts.

Elements of literacy analysis.

Analysis of a transcript of written speech.

Coursework remains a feature of AS and A2.

Focus on drama at A2.

Shakespeare included in set texts.

Requirement to study two plays from different time periods.

Most important changes

New set texts list including: *Surfacing* – M Atwood; *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* – M Haddon; *Hawksmoor* – P Akroyd; *The Great Gatsby* – F Scott Fitzgerald.

Multimodal texts are introduced, for example websites which simultaneously use a variety of communication tools.

A new focus on the construction of voice and the creation of meaning in texts.

A new focus on different types of text.

For more information on A Level English Language and Literature, visit:
www.ocr.org.uk/englishlangeandlit/newalevel

“Texts are very accessible.”

'Stretch and Challenge'

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- There are more synoptic assessments – exploring connections between different areas and levels of a subject – over and above the superficial links within question types.



You'll find examples of 'Stretch and Challenge' style questions in your English Language and Literature Specimen Assessment Materials. Here's a short selection:

Christopher Marlowe: *Dr Faustus*
Arthur Miller: *The Crucible*

Using the following two passages as a starting point, and applying what seem to you relevant approaches from your combined linguistic and literary study, examine ways in which ideas of salvation and damnation are presented in the two plays.

John Webster: *The Duchess of Malfi*
Caryl Churchill: *Top Girls*

Using the following two passages as a starting point, and applying what seem to you relevant approaches from your combined linguistic and literary study, examine ways in which the situation of women in relation to male dominance is presented in the two plays.

Shakespeare: *Hamlet*
Tom Stoppard: *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*
After his return from England Hamlet believes that he has been saved by
"... a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will." (V. ii. 10 -11)

Making close reference to relevant aspects of the language, action and context of one of your chosen plays, examine ways in which ideas of human destiny shaped by forces beyond the individual's control are presented.

Support for teachers of A Level English specifications

To help you get started with the new A Level English specifications, OCR will run a number of training courses. We will also provide a range of support materials and resources – some produced by OCR, some by our publishing partners.

Training

The following INSET courses will be available from September 2007:

Get ready – introducing the new specifications (first teaching from September 2008)

These **free** half-day sessions are designed to give you an overview of the new OCR English specifications.

They will:

- **Look at the structure of the new specifications**
- **Compare the new specification content with the old, including coursework and ‘Stretch and Challenge’ implications**
- **Discuss the support and resources available from OCR**
- **Summarise the benefits of the OCR specifications.**

Places are allocated on a first come, first served basis – so if you’re interested in attending one of these events, visit www.ocr.org.uk/inset to find out the dates of the events nearest to you.

Get started – towards successful delivery of the new specification (first teaching from September 2008)

These full-day sessions will give you guidance and support in planning to teach the new AS/A Level specifications.

They will:

- **Give an introduction to the structure and content of the new specifications**
- **Consider approaches to first teaching, and suggest best practice**
- **Look at coursework and ‘Stretch and Challenge’ implications**
- **Review the support and resources available from OCR.**

These courses will have some similarity to the half-day ‘Get ready’ sessions, but they will look at the new specifications in more depth, with the emphasis on first teaching. You’ll find more information at www.ocr.org.uk/inset

Support materials

New and improved support for A Level English.

OCR is producing the following materials to help you prepare for the new A Level English specifications.

- **Overarching scheme of work:** topic outlines, suggested teaching and homework activities, suggested resources and points to note. Supplied in Word, enabling teachers to adapt to their own needs.
- **Sample lesson plans:** detailed breakdowns of suggested teaching formats for the more difficult concepts within the unit(s). Supplied in Word, enabling teachers to adapt to their own needs.
- **Exemplar candidate work*:** real candidate answers to specimen assessment materials (SAMs), including indicative marks and examiner commentaries.
- **Coursework guidance documents:** accompanies each specification and includes suggestions for coursework themes, topics and texts.

All the above items will be available from autumn 2007 and can be found on the OCR website.

* available from spring 2008.

- English Literature www.ocr.org.uk/englishlit/newalevels/support
- English Language www.ocr.org.uk/englishlang/newalevels/support
- English Language and Literature www.ocr.org.uk/englishlangandlit/newalevels/support

A Level English e-community

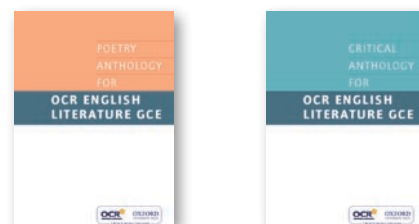
The OCR A Level English community gives you the chance to share ideas and resources with other OCR Centres, so join up today for advice from a fellow teacher or share your developed resources.

Join the e-communities for A Level English Literature and English Language on the OCR website at the following link:

www.ocr.org.uk/ecommunities



OCR is delighted to be working with Oxford University Press to create a suite of resources – both print and electronic - to support you in the new OCR A Level English Literature, Language, and Language & Literature specifications.



Coursework consultancy service

This is planned for all three English specifications and will be based on the popular existing service. You can get further guidance from senior moderators on any aspect of coursework, including:

- The requirements of AS and A2 units
- Choice of texts
- Task setting
- Internal assessment and moderation
- Presentation of folders.

Looking to the future - New OCR past papers service

In response to centre demand, OCR will be publishing past papers for live specifications on the OCR website free of charge. OCR's revised policy means that question papers will be published on the website between nine and twelve months after each exam series. This will allow you to use the papers as practice assessment material before they become more widely available. Once published online, the papers will remain available for two years. All papers can be downloaded free of charge.



Other OCR English-related qualifications

As an English teacher, you may be interested to know about these OCR qualifications.

GCSE English and GCSE English Literature

These new specifications provide coherent, satisfying and worthwhile courses of study for learners, whether or not they wish to pursue the study of English beyond GCSE.

For more information on GCSE English and GCSE English Literature, visit

www.ocr.org.uk/english/gcse

www.ocr.org.uk/englishlit/gcse

GCSE Media Studies

To explore and enjoy the modern dynamic range of media texts with critical autonomy and independence, you need a variety of literary skills. This specification enables learners to develop their enjoyment of media texts, in addition to developing a framework for critical analysis of their meanings and contexts.

For more information on GCSE Media Studies, visit

www.ocr.org.uk/mediastudies/gcse

A Level Media Studies

This specification offers both a theoretical and practical approach to Media Studies and new media. Learners explore textual analysis, media industries, evaluation of production work and critical perspectives.

For more information on A Level Media Studies, visit

www.ocr.org.uk/mediastudies/newalevel

A Level Critical Thinking

Critical Thinking is a skills-based rather than a content-based A Level. It develops the ability to interpret, analyse and evaluate ideas and arguments, and can support thinking skills in all subject areas, from arts and humanities to sciences.

For more information on A Level Critical Thinking, visit

www.ocr.org.uk/criticalthinking/newalevel

Background to the changes

Following a review of 14–19 education, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) has revised the subject criteria for A Levels. These changes are intended to reduce the volume of marking for teachers, and the amount of assessment for learners – and to ensure that every young person has the opportunity to realise their full potential. Along with all awarding bodies, OCR has revised A Levels for first teaching from September 2008.

We've made sure it's a change for the better

QCA's decision to revise A Levels has given us a great opportunity to make further improvements to our qualifications. We've been talking to teachers, heads of departments, local authority advisers, subject experts and examiners to make sure the new specifications, support materials and schemes of work meet your needs.

Want to find out more?

For more information on the new OCR A Level English suite, visit www.ocr.org.uk/english or call **01223 553998**

www.ocr.org.uk

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