

# ***English News***

**November 2005**

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## **WELCOME TO THE SECOND EDITION OF ENGLISH NEWS!**

- v This newsletter is intended to keep you up-to-date with the OCR suite of English qualifications, from GCSE through to the Advanced Extension Award.
- v We hope that you will continue reading to find out about the latest developments, opportunities and resources.

## **IN THIS ISSUE YOU WILL FIND INFORMATION ON:**

- v INSET
- v On-line support
- v Resources
- v Set texts
- v Top tips for GCSE English
- v Examining opportunities
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- v Coursework consultancy
- v English 21.

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**Contacts for English qualifications:**

**GCSE – Tel. 01223 553222; e-mail [gcse.english@ocr.org.uk](mailto:gcse.english@ocr.org.uk)**

**A-Level – Tel. 01223 552926; e-mail [alevel.english@ocr.org.uk](mailto:alevel.english@ocr.org.uk)**

## **New GCSE support materials**

OCR is continuing to develop the range of support materials for GCSE English and English Literature.

New downloadable Web resources sheets, written by OCR Principal Examiners, are becoming available on the Heinemann website for a range of our set texts.

Already available there is support for *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. This web sheet features a variety of activities based on character, language, setting, stylistic technique and theme.

Heinemann will be uploading further support materials during the autumn term for the following texts: *Whose Life is it, Anyway?*; *The Old Man and the Sea*; *Journey's End*; *Things Fall Apart*.

These web resources can be found at [www.heinemann.co.uk](http://www.heinemann.co.uk). Click on **Secondary**, then **English**, then **Free Resources**. You will then see a list of resources available.

Please keep checking for new additions!

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## **A-Level Literature Coursework Guidance**

Looking for advice on setting AS or A2 English Literature coursework tasks in the near future?

Many centres have already benefited from our coursework consultancy network. A senior moderator can offer guidance on the setting of tasks and on all other aspects of coursework planning and assessment.

For more information, e mail [alevel.english@ocr.org.uk](mailto:alevel.english@ocr.org.uk)

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## **Preparing Candidates for Examinations**

Thorough and insightful guidance from Principal Examiners on how best to prepare candidates for our examinations can be found in the Report to Centres document for each of the English qualifications. These highlight best practice and flag-up the common mistakes that can be made – and avoided.

Reports were despatched on CD-ROM in October to all Centres entering candidates for our English qualifications. Be sure to check your copy!

## **Question Papers and Mark Schemes**

Copies of all question papers and mark schemes from previous January and June examinations sessions for all English qualifications are available by contacting the OCR Publications Department on 0870 770 6622.

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## **Set Texts Update for GCE English Literature**

The final stage of set text changes for GCE English Literature takes place for A2 units 2710, 2712 and 2713 in the June 2006 session. Some texts set for January 2006 will therefore not be available in June 2006. Full details can be found in the specification document.

Centres are reminded that, as with any other session, questions will only appear on texts which are listed. This is of particular significance for candidates who are re-sitting and may not be able to answer on the text they studied previously.

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## **The points-pulling power of the AEA in English**

The Advanced Extension Award in English caters for candidates from across the subject area (Language, Language and Literature and Literature), and offers an interesting challenge for the most able.

The Advanced Extension Awards will now earn candidates extra UCAS points over and above those gained from the A-Level qualifications. This comes into effect for entry to higher education in 2006 onwards. A Merit earns an additional 20 UCAS points, while a Distinction will be worth an extra 40 UCAS points to a candidate.

As part of the current INSET programme, OCR is running an expanded series of training events for those teachers preparing candidates for the Advanced Extension Award in English, and for those thinking of taking advantage of this qualification.

Interested in finding out more? Visit the OCR website at [www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk) to browse through the specification. For details of scheduled and centre-based events, contact OCR Training direct on 0121 628 2950.

Past papers can be ordered through the OCR Publications Department.

For additional information and guidance on the AEA in English, e mail [alevel.english@ocr.org.uk](mailto:alevel.english@ocr.org.uk)

# Top Tips for the Reading Requirements in GCSE English

The Chief Examiner for GCSE English offers some key points:

## Unit 1

Task 1 requires you to identify specific points from a reading passage; credit will be given for the selection of appropriate material; the ability to organise it concisely in order to show an overview of the passage and to use your own words to show that you have understood what you have read.

- At Foundation Tier it is likely that you will be asked to identify some facts and some opinions given in the passage.
- At Higher Tier, although the question may refer to facts and opinions, you will be expected to do more than simply quote examples of each.

Task 2 requires you to analyse and explain HOW writers achieve their effects and purposes:

- this means that you should show that you have a clear understanding of what the writer's purpose is. You should quote from and refer to the passage and then explain how what you have quoted illustrates this purpose;
- merely identifying figures of speech and quoting examples of them is not enough; analysing how these devices affect the reader is what is important.

## Units 2 & 3

- The extract-based questions in Unit 2 will always require you to refer to the rest of the text; in the case of the short stories from *Opening Worlds* this will mean one other story.
- It is likely that one question on each book in Unit 2 may refer to the culture within which the text was produced; your answers to this question should, therefore, show an awareness of how the culture influences characters and events. You should also focus on the writer's use of language and the structure of the story.
- Remember, in Unit 3, you have a very limited time to answer questions on Shakespeare and poetry. Do not try to do too much; close reference (focusing on the question) to one or two scenes of the Shakespeare play is sufficient. Remember also that you must show an appreciation of the ways that poets have used language to gain a good mark in the Poetry questions. Candidates must be able to manage their time well on this paper. Be careful not to spend too much time on one question to the detriment of the other. Remember that both questions are worth equal marks.

## Changes to Set Texts at GCSE

Centres are reminded that there are **changes** to the selections of poetry and short stories from *Opening Lines* and *Opening Worlds* for GCSE English and English Literature for the **summer 2006 examination session onwards**.

In English, the stories set from *Opening Worlds* in June 2006 and subsequent sessions will be the last six stories in the anthology – *The Young Couple* through to *The Winter Oak*.

In English and English Literature, the sections from *Opening Lines* set for examination in summer 2006 and subsequent sessions will be: Section C **or** Section D for pre-1914 poetry; Section G **or** Section H for post-1914 poetry.

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## Availability of Set Texts at GCSE and GCE

When developing specifications, we take great care in selecting specified editions of texts for examination. We make every effort to ensure that our set texts are in print when we publish our lists. Unfortunately, circumstances outside our control sometimes result in publishers withdrawing a text due to their own market needs. This has resulted in specified editions of some texts set for study becoming unavailable. If you experience difficulty ordering a text please contact a member of the English team to discuss alternatives.

Listed below are set texts known to be out of print.

### GCSE English Literature

*The Penguin Book of Modern Women's Short Stories* (ed. Hill, Penguin)  
Penguin can offer permission for centres to photocopy the set stories from this anthology for a small fee. If you would like to find out more about this please e-mail [gcse.english@ocr.org.uk](mailto:gcse.english@ocr.org.uk)

*Selected Poems*, Hardy (ed. Motion, Everyman)  
The set poems are available in the Wordsworth Poetry Library edition; ISBN 1853264024.

*The History of Mr Polly*, H G Wells (Everyman)  
This text is now available through Penguin Classics; ISBN 0141441070

### GCE English Literature

*Granny Scarecrow* by Anne Stevenson (Set for 2708)  
OCR has secured an agreement with the publisher, Bloodaxe Books, that allows centres to produce their own copies in return for a royalty payment. If you would like to find out more about this please e-mail [alevel.english@ocr.org.uk](mailto:alevel.english@ocr.org.uk)

## GCSE INSET events

Following on from a successful autumn round of INSET to support teachers in their delivery of the GCSE English and English Literature specifications, bookings are being taken for the Spring 2006 events. These include a focus on enhancing writing skills for the GCSE English, and how to approach the reading requirements for both English and English Literature. Courses are running in January and February. To book a place, please contact OCR Training direct on 0121 628 2950.

If you find that any of our INSET dates or locations are inconvenient for you, why not consider having a course delivered in your Centre? You may also be interested in acting as a host centre, inviting other local centres to share the experience and cost. Contact OCR Training to discuss your specific requirements.

Interested in other English-related INSET? Mill Wharf Training offers a range of courses to support wider continuous professional development. Forthcoming titles include: 'English GCSE: the busy department's guide to improvement' and 'Managing your first English department'. For more information on these events, visit [www.mill-wharf-training.co.uk](http://www.mill-wharf-training.co.uk) or telephone 0121 628 2910.

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## GCSE RE-SITS

Re-sitting candidates must meet the requirements of the **terminal rule** for GCSE English and English Literature. They **must** sit an examined Unit or Units amounting to **at least 50% of the specification**.

It is important to note that the mark/s for the terminal element of the re-sit will over-ride any previous marks gained for the relevant unit or units.

**Coursework Units cannot count towards the 50%** required by the terminal rule.

When re-sitting, there is no need to carry forward marks for any unit. As long as candidates have met the terminal requirement and are entered for the aggregation code – 1900 for English, 1901 for English Literature – the other units needed to make up the specification will be automatically taken into account.

For instance:

- candidates re-sitting English but not wishing to re-submit coursework should be entered for 2431, 2432 and 1900;
- candidates re-sitting English Literature Scheme A but not wishing to re-submit coursework could just enter 2442 and 1901.

## Virtual Forum – Real Support

Flexible and responsive online teacher support is available all year round for the GCSE specifications and for GCE English Literature through OCR's e-communities.

By joining the community, you will be in touch with English teachers, examiners and professionals throughout the country. You can ask questions that really bother you, share your experiences about teaching the specifications, and recommend teaching strategies and resources to each other.

A recent addition to the GCSE English/English Literature e-community is NQT Toni Atwood. She has found the community to be a great source of information at the start of her professional career. She said: "I have been really impressed with the service. I have asked several questions since joining and always received very prompt, encouraging and informative feedback from other members. It has boosted my confidence as a NQT and I have already made use of the documents available through the community. And even when it's not me asking the questions, there is a lot that I can pick up from the queries raised by other members."

The e-communities are available to everyone, and subscription is free.

Toni added: "I have never used an on-line forum before, but this one is definitely the place to be - everyone is very friendly and supportive. I would definitely recommend others to subscribe as it is an excellent resource – and the more members we have, the greater our bank of knowledge."

To become a member visit:

For GCSE – <http://community.ocr.org.uk/community/english-gcse/home>

For GCE – <http://community.ocr.org.uk/community/englit-a/home>

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## English 21

This is the title QCA has given to their 'big conversation' about the future of the English curriculum. During the spring and summer, in a series of events, forums and consultations, a wide range of students, teachers, parents, employers and other interested parties have explored, argued and debated the question, 'What should the English curriculum look like in 2015 and beyond?'

Some views and provocations can be found on the QCA website, [www.qca.org.uk](http://www.qca.org.uk). In the end, nearly 300 responses were submitted, from a variety of individuals and organisations (including the OCR English team).

## Broaden your Professional Expertise

Examining offers teachers an excellent opportunity to extend their professional experience while learning more about the assessment of the specification. It is also a great way to meet other teachers, and to gain direct access to the senior examiners.

For further details on becoming an examiner for any of the English qualifications, please e-mail [examiner.recruitment@ocr.org.uk](mailto:examiner.recruitment@ocr.org.uk), or telephone 01223 552558. Information on examining is also on the OCR website at [www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk)

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## GCSE – The TERMINAL Rule

Centres are reminded that they must meet the requirements of the **terminal rule** for GCSE English and GCSE English Literature.

The terminal rule is stated in QCA’s general GCSE subject criteria and requires that, at the point of certification in their final session (i.e. when they intend to claim overall subject grades), candidates **must** sit an examined unit or units amounting to **at least 50% of the specification**.

Centres should note that **coursework units cannot count towards the 50%** required by the terminal rule.

Valid Units and combinations of Units that will fulfil this 50% requirement are as follows:

1900 English	1901 English Literature	
	Scheme A	Scheme B
2431 + 2432		
	2442	2446
2431 + 2433		
	2441 + 2444	2445 + 2448
2432 + 2433		

Candidates who have not fulfilled the requirements of the 50% terminal rule are not eligible for a subject grade, even though they may have completed all Units in the specification.

For those Centres following a Linear route, none of this presents a problem as they take all units at the end of the course. The difficulty arises for those Centres who adopt a staged route through the course. In this case, it is best to begin by deciding which unit/units need to be taken at the end of the course to fulfil the terminal requirement. The remaining units can then be taken when wished.