



The *word*



Tips for
A2 English



Controlled
Assessment



Functional
Skills –
become
part of the
pilot



New team
members

Welcome to our second issue of *The Word*. We have received many favourable comments about the first one, so a big thank you for those. Our aim through this newsletter is to keep all our English teachers in touch with developments, opportunities and events.

Dialogue is key to our business and, as well as liaising with teachers, we have continued to consult with teaching associations such as NATE and the English and Media Centre as well as with other key organisations such as the Poetry Society and the Royal Shakespeare Company. We continue to talk to them about all aspects of English developments and, most importantly, co-ordinating the most appropriate support for those teaching English.

Poetry has returned to the forefront with the BBC-sponsored Poetry Season and the recent debate over the appointment of the new Poet Laureate. Andrew Motion was one of the guest speakers at our recent Poetry events. One of Andrew's passions is the Poetry Archive, which is a fantastic resource for teachers. Learners can listen to the voices of over 170 poets, spanning 120 years and several continents, free of charge on www.poetryarchive.org

Here at OCR, we are keen to develop a link to this incredible resource in our new GCSE specifications. The 'multimodal' aspect of the archive is making it possible to revive the aural tradition of poetry once again.

We particularly enjoyed sponsoring the NATE Conference in Hinckley, Leicestershire this year and a review is included in this issue. It was a great opportunity for us at OCR to listen to teachers and to take stock of the recently introduced A Levels with you.

The GCSE Expos in July will give us the opportunity to introduce our new specifications in GCSE English, English Language and English Literature, as well as our new texts. These will also be available on our website from 1 July. There are more details of the free Expos on page 10.

We will once again be producing a poetry anthology alongside our new specifications, as well as a series of other exciting resources to help in the classroom. Further news to follow!

If you are a local authority English adviser or consultant, you may find it useful to discuss your individual requirements with our National Curriculum Manager for English, Susan Mercer. You will find more information on page 11.

By the time you receive this, the summer term will almost be over. I hope to meet many of you over the next year, either at our Expos, our various INSET sessions or in local and regional sessions as we begin the first teaching of the new A2 in the A Levels in September 2009 and the planning for the new GCSEs in September 2010.

Paul Dodd
Qualifications Group Manager



Paul Dodd

Creating a buzz at the NATE Conference

We were delighted to be the headline sponsor for one of the major events in the English teaching calendar – the National Association for the Teaching of English (NATE) 2009 Conference.

With a mix of entertaining and creative activities, NATE 2009 provided an uplifting start to the Easter holidays. Held at the Hinckley Island Hotel in Leicestershire, it welcomed more than 200 visitors over its three-day duration, including teachers, lecturers, consultants and researchers on the teaching of English, from primary to post-16.

Notable speakers included: Anthony Horowitz, TV and children's writer; Jean Binta Breeze, Jamaican poet; and QCA's Director of Curriculum, Mick Waters. The Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) and representatives from the Globe Theatre were also in attendance.

The conference had a Shakespearean theme that we enjoyed joining in with. Our stand featured actors dressed in Shakespearean costume who provided performances of entertaining theatre, while a caricaturist immortalised the visitors in a similar Shakespearean style. We also had Qualifications Specialists on hand to provide advice and guidance on specific qualification content.

We offered visitors a different kind of prize draw too, with opportunities to win places at the RSC's As You Like It Study Day up for grabs. Easy to enter, it proved to be very popular.

Emily Almeida-King, OCR Product Manager, said: "Our events team worked really hard to bring your passion for English to life, using the teaching of Shakespeare as a fundamental element. By using caricatures and actors in costume, we were also able to connect with you in a more vibrant and rewarding way."

Such activities on our stand created a buzz for visitors, exhibitors and organisers alike, as Ian McNeilly, Director of NATE, attests: "OCR's presence really added to our conference and the team were more than happy to help with things that were outside their remit. This was a real bonus for us as a charity."

We have established an ongoing collaborative partnership with NATE and we hope that relationship will us to work even closely with teachers.

Got a query about English?

On 1 July, we are launching a dedicated support line for English. So if you would like to speak to one of our subject specialists, Emma Green, David Grant or Helen Hand, about anything relating to English, from Entry Level to A Level, please call **0300 500 1564** after this date.



A Levels

All set for the new A2 qualifications

The autumn term is fast approaching and with it the teaching of the new A2 qualifications. Here are some tips from the Chief Examiners on preparing to teach A2 English Literature, English Language, and English Language and Literature.



English Literature

The A2 units are F663: Drama and Poetry pre-1800 and F664: Texts in Time.

Unit F663: Drama and Poetry pre-1800

This unit, assessed by a two-hour exam, has two sections as follows.

Section A: Shakespeare

Set texts January 2010 – January 2013:

Henry IV Part 1
Twelfth Night
Othello
The Winter's Tale

There are two questions on each text and learners must answer one on the play they have studied.

Section B: Drama and Poetry pre-1800

Set texts January 2010 – January 2013:

Drama	Poetry
<i>Doctor Faustus</i>	<i>The Pardoner's Tale</i>
<i>The Duchess of Malfi</i>	<i>Paradise Lost Book 1</i>
<i>School for Scandal</i>	<i>Donne 'Selected poems'</i>
<i>The Rover</i>	<i>The Rape of the Lock</i>

There will be a choice of six questions, each with a different focus. Learners must answer one question. In their answers, learners must explore contrasts, connections and comparisons between different texts and must refer to one drama and one poetry text.

Tips from Catherine Thompson, Chief Examiner for English Literature

Tip: Section A

Referencing different productions or contrasting performances of Shakespeare will help your learners fulfill A03 – understanding different interpretations.

Tip: Section B

Choose two texts for Section B of Unit F663 in light of connections and comparisons you make between them. Plan teaching to make sure that learners not only understand texts individually, but also connections and comparisons between them, in terms of genre, theme and style.

Unit F664: Texts in Time

This unit is coursework comprising **one** task (3,000 words maximum). This is an extended essay in which learners are required to make a comparative analysis of three texts, which must include one prose text and one poetry text. Texts can be selected from any period, or across periods.

Tip

Our coursework consultancy service to make sure your chosen coursework texts meet the requirements. Contact us here at OCR for more information.

English Language

The A2 units are F653: Culture, Language and Identity and F654: Media Language

Unit F653: Culture, Language and identity

This unit, assessed by a two-hour exam, has four sections as follows.

Learners must answer **one** question from Section A plus **one** question from Sections B, C or D:

Section A: Language and Speech

Learners must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key constituents of language.

Section B: The language of popular written texts

Section C: Language and cultural production

Section D: Language, power and identity

Tips from Laurence Sharpe, Chief Examiner for English Language

- Section A requires the study of the application of phonology and prosody.
- Section B will be drawn from non-canonical sources.
- Apart from Section A, all answers require detailed application of lexis, morphology, grammar and discourse.
- Historical language can appear in any part of the paper.
- Data will not be drawn from sources pre-1800.

Unit F654: Media Language

This unit is coursework comprising **two** tasks (3,000 words in total):

Task 1: Independent investigation (comparison and analysis)

Task 2: Original writing and commentary.

Tips

- A2 coursework builds on tasks completed at AS Level.
- A good grounding in key constituents of language is required for the analytical task.
- The summer break before the second year is an ideal time for wider reading.
- Familiarity with a range of text types is good preparation for original writing.
- Create opportunities for learners to experiment with writing for a range of audiences.

English Language and Literature

The A2 units are F673: Dramatic Voices and F674: Connections across Texts

Unit F673: Dramatic Voices

Learners study **two** drama texts as a pair, linked by theme, approach or setting.

Set texts January 2010 – January 2013:

Dr Faustus with The Crucible
Hamlet with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead
The Duchess of Malfi with Top Girls

Section A: Analytical comparison of an extract from each of the chosen pair of set texts.

Section B: An essay based on one of the chosen set texts. This must explore a proposition that raises an issue central to the integrated study of language and literature.

Tips from Duncan Williams, Chief Examiner for English Language and Literature

- Develop a sense of drama.
- There must be a comparison of paired texts.
- It is important not to jettison AS skills.

Unit F674: Connections across Texts

This unit comprises **two** tasks (3,000 words in total):

Task 1: Analytical Study

An analytical study of one further substantial text in combination with a selection of related texts

Task 2: Original Creative Writing with Commentary

A creative piece in any form, arising from the study in Section A, with a supporting commentary.

Tips

- This is an opportunity to:
 - Range outside the canon
 - Question/challenge orthodoxies
 - Synthesize.
- Learners need to include a spoken text.
- Original/creative writing could be a small section.



GCSE

Change is on the agenda – with controlled assessment

In the last newsletter we provided a supplement on the proposed changes to GCSE and what they mean for you. If you missed this or would like to read again about the changes, you can download the overview from www.ocr.org.uk/English/gcse2010. In this issue we take a specific look at controlled assessment...

In the new GCSE English, English Literature and English Language specifications to be accredited by QCA in winter 2009, controlled assessment will replace the current, internally assessed, coursework components.

As you may have some queries about this change and what controlled assessment will mean for you as a teacher, we have answered some frequently asked questions below.

How much will controlled assessment be worth?

In English and English Language, controlled assessment will be worth 60% of a candidate's final mark. This will include 20% speaking and listening, as well as writing and responses to written (and, in English Language, spoken) texts. In English Literature, it will account for 25% of a candidate's final mark.

Why is controlled assessment being introduced by QCA?

There are a number of reasons. Firstly, it allows learners the opportunity to produce an original response without the drawbacks of 'over-preparation'. It also allows greater control, while still allowing centres more control than is offered in examined units. Your centre decides when your learners do the assessment, and you can contextualise tasks to meet your own learners' needs.

Another advantage is that you can be confident that work is authentic, which will mean improved reliability and validity.

Who sets the task?

This is done by awarding bodies, except for speaking and listening, where guidance will be offered. Tasks will change every year, and will be released in the late spring to allow you to prepare for teaching them in the following academic year. Texts will remain in place for longer periods.

How much time will controlled assessment take?

Different tasks will have different amounts of time allocated to them, and centres will be informed about these by the awarding body. You will be advised of the amount of time you should spend preparing learners for each task, as well as a set time limit for completion of the final response after formal teaching has stopped.

Although the time for completing the final response will be set, centres can decide when this time is allocated, and how to split the time. For example if four hours are allowed, you may wish to have learners use this as one session, or split the time up throughout several different sessions (e.g. four one-hour sessions). This allows centres to work controlled assessment around their existing timetables.

When can I do controlled assessment?

The task can be completed in Years 9, 10 or 11, but you must make sure that you do the correct task for that academic year. You can complete the task at any point in the academic year, provided that you meet the deadline for submission.

How will it be supervised?

The final response to the task must be closely supervised, either by the class teacher or another supervisor. It is up to you whether you wish to use your classrooms or make other arrangements. If you choose to divide the allowed time between several sessions, you must ensure that all work is handed in at the end of each session and held securely. Learners may not

bring notes in with them to these final response sessions, and teachers must not comment or give feedback on the work while it is being completed.

Can learners word process their final responses?

Yes, if facilities exist for them to do this securely. Internet access must be disconnected and work must be stored securely so that the learner cannot access it between sessions. The same supervision rules apply as above.

How will controlled assessment responses be marked?

Teachers will mark it, much as they do now, using mark schemes supplied by the awarding body. We will provide extensive support for the tasks that are set in that year. Work will then be moderated by the awarding body.

Can I access ongoing support?

Rest assured that we will provide extensive guidance on controlled assessment at all stages of the process. We will also help centres in specific tasks that are being set for a particular year.

When can I see some controlled assessment tasks?

Some specimen controlled assessment tasks will be available in early July as part of the specimen material available for the new specification.

Want to see draft specifications?

They are coming soon. You will be able to look at them on our website from **1 July 2009**.

The new OCR GCSEs – making them work for you

With our comprehensive development work progressing as planned, the new OCR GCSEs will be ready for first teaching in September 2010. You can find out more on our website at www.ocr.org.uk/english/GCSE2010

It's all happening on 1 July

If you would like to see draft specifications and/or specimen assessment materials (SAMs), these will be available at the Expos (see page 10 for details) and via our website from 1 July.

Also from 1 July, you will be able to give us your feedback on the draft specifications and SAMs a survey on our website. We really appreciate your input and you will find the survey at www.ocr.org.uk/english/gcse2010

Want to make a difference?

We have conducted a large survey of English teachers on set texts and have been changing set texts lists in line with feedback we have already received. Now is an ideal time for you to influence the next stages of development and tell us what you think of the proposals. If you would like to comment, please complete the survey detailed above.

The support you need

As ever, great support is at the heart of our work and the following will be available to support you with the new specifications:

- INSET
- Specimen assessment material
- Adaptable schemes of work
- Adaptable lesson plans
- Teacher handbooks
- A guide to controlled assessment and curriculum planning
- Course books from publisher partner Oxford University Press
- Guidance on the changes.

Watch this space for more details!



Functional skills

Getting to grips with functional skills

Since the last issue of the newsletter, many of you will have become aware that the proposed link between the achievement of a GCSE grade C and a Functional Skills pass at Level 2 has been severed. Functional skills does, though, remain an integral part of the new GCSE – being mapped throughout the new specification – and is available as a standalone qualification as well as part of the new Diplomas and Apprenticeships.

An engaging approach to learning

Functional skills are practical skills in English to help learners get the most out of work, education and everyday life.

Using an engaging and 'real life' context approach, Functional Skills English encourages learners to be confident when using the essential skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing in everyday life.

Become part of the functional skills pilot

We are looking for teachers to be part of our functional skills pilot. It will enable you to get ahead and help shape and influence this new qualification with us, as a committed and leading UK awarding body.



Entry Level

Looking ahead to 2010

Our Entry Level English qualification is being re-developed for first teaching in September 2010. It is being designed to align closely to the GCSE English and English Language specifications, which are also under development.

Here are some key dates:

- **31 July 2009** – the specification will be sent to QCA for accreditation
- **30 November 2009** – final accreditation from QCA
- **September 2010** – first teaching of OCR Entry Level English.

If you have any comments or suggestions about the form that the new Entry Level English specification might take, they would be very welcome. Please email them to andrew.bradford@ocr.org.uk

Dates for your diary

Don't miss the **2010 GCSE Expos**

These FREE regional events provide an excellent opportunity for you to learn about our new GCSE English, Maths and ICT specifications, including the changes to them.

It's also a chance to find out more about functional skills and the range of support we offer. If you would like to provide us with valuable feedback and influence the final stages of development, there will be an opportunity to do so.

Come to one of these useful events and you can:

- Listen to presentations for English, which will outline the changes and support we will be developing for you
- Meet subject specialists
- Speak with publishers and other support partners
- Receive information about **FREE** training events for GCSE English in your region.



To find out more about our 2010 GCSE English Expo events or to book your place, please visit www.ocr.org.uk/eventbooker

Expo dates

North East – 1st July 2009

North West – 3rd July 2009

London – 6th July 2009

Midlands – 10th July 2009

South West – 14th July 2009

To register your interest in finding out more about our 2010 GCSE English Expo events visit

www.ocr.org.uk/eventbooker



Look what's coming: **core support** for GCSE

You can look forward to the following core support from us for GCSE:

- Teacher's handbook
- OCR guide to curriculum planning for English
- Guide to controlled assessment
- Sample schemes of work and lesson plans booklet
- A poetry anthology.

Watch this space for details!

Calling **all** local authority English advisers and consultants

We are always looking for ways of offering you the best support we can. As part of this, we want to keep you up to speed with developments and provide you with what you need to update the schools in your area.

Our National Curriculum Manager for English, **Susan Mercer**, has been working very hard to make contacts with schools, local authority advisers and consortia. She has already arranged a series of meetings throughout the rest of the year and she looks forward to meeting many of you at these.



Call her on **07711 832798** or email her at susan.mercer@ocr.org.uk if you would like her to come and talk to you about the new GCSE and/or Entry Level qualifications or any other English issues

News in brief

Latest news from Oxford University Press

As well as making the 2010 changes simple, OCR, Oxford University Press and English teachers have been developing a unique partnership. This means your feedback will be central to the new specifications and resources – which have been designed by teachers to enhance your creativity and expertise.

If you would like an Evaluation Pack, please sign up for one now by visiting www.OxfordSecondary.co.uk/ocrenghish or calling **01536 741068**.



Get *involved* in writing support materials

We pride ourselves on offering help and guidance all the way and we work with teachers to provide materials that support our specifications. Is writing these materials something you would like to be involved in? If so, please email us at english@ocr.org.uk to register your interest.

Meet the team

We would like to introduce you to some more members of our English team.

Paul Norgate Chair of Examiners

Paul chairs Question Paper and Awarding Committees for OCR English qualifications – Entry Level, Functional Skills, GCSE, A Level and AEA. He is also responsible for quality and standards in all these schemes.

An English teacher for 27 years (secondary and higher education, both in this country and abroad), Paul has worked for Cambridge Assessment (and its predecessors) since 1974, and full-time for OCR since its foundation in 1998.

Georgie Billings Qualifications Manager

Georgie has recently joined the team and is assisting in the GCSE development in English, as well as taking responsibility for several A Level English qualifications.

Before joining OCR, Georgie worked as a test developer and as an English teacher.

OCR Customer Contact Centre

Vocational qualifications

Telephone 024 76 851509
Facsimile 024 76 851633
Email vocational.qualifieditions@ocr.org.uk

General qualifications

Telephone 01223 553998
Facsimile 01223 552627
Email general.qualifieditions@ocr.org.uk

Head office

1 Hills Road, Cambridge CB1 2EU
Telephone 01223 552552
Facsimile 01223 552553

K1249/0906/OC607/6K

