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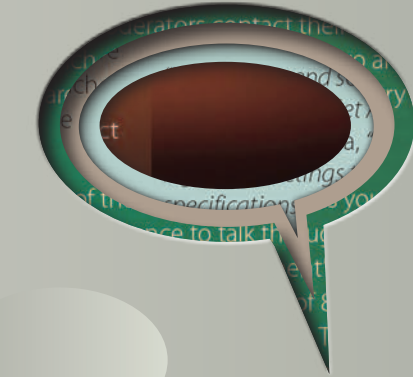
Word

Helping you bring English to life

Autumn 2012

September 2012 ou

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OCR 

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English A Levels are going to change
– what would you like to see?



Welcome to the autumn edition of The Word. This issue has lots of support in terms of curriculum planning for the new academic year as well as other wide-ranging news.

In terms of the English team, I would like to welcome Eleanor Sleight as a new Qualifications Manager. Ellie will be looking after GCE English Language, GCE English Language and Literature and Entry Level.

Jo Hebblewhite will be transferring to GCSE English Literature to take over from Andrew Bradford who has recently moved over to become Chair of Examiners for English. I would like to thank Paul Norgate for all his work as Chair and wish him a happy retirement.

We are now in the early phases of GCE development and we have been informed by the Regulator that it is likely that the new GCE English Literature will be introduced in September 2014. We will be speaking to a range of centres, conducting focus groups and consulting with Higher Education as we develop this new specification. This links on from the ideas and thoughts in the last edition of The Word where I looked at Developing a Future Programme of Study. We would welcome any thoughts or views on this as we move forward in what will be an important development. At our last HE forum we shared some proposals with representatives from a range of Universities, FE colleges as well as secondary school teachers. As always the feedback was very thought provoking.

You can get involved today, see page 19 to share your views and take part in our set text survey.

It was good to meet many of you at the NATE Conference in York and at our first OCR English Conference in London. Both of these events were well attended and provoked lively discussion in a range of areas. The OCR English Conference, was a great success and this will now be an annual event. We are beginning our preparations for 2013.

Paul Dodd

Qualifications Group Manager

Eleanor Sleight

Qualifications Manager

I have responsibility for Entry Level English, GCE English Language and GCE Language and Literature.

Having worked at OCR for five years, I have experience of numerous assessment processes and practices. I have been a Qualifications Manager, working alongside the other English Qualification Managers, for over a year. Literature has always been a passion of mine throughout my education and beyond.

As the English and Maths team online marking expert, I am currently project managing the process of moving English to our online marking system for January 2013. This is an exciting project that will enable teachers to access detailed feedback on candidate performance including reports which can be used for internal reporting.

GCSE English – June 2012 Session and the Ofqual Report

You may have been aware that the release of the GCSE English and English Language results in June 2012 brought with it major concerns from many schools. At OCR we were aware of some potential issues prior to the release of these results and we were on hand to support schools through what proved to be a difficult time. Although these issues were not focused on OCR but other awarding bodies, we had some schools who were concerned with their results. This issue particularly affected candidates on the C/D border, especially those candidates who had sat sole English.

The new specifications which were certificated for the first time this summer, brought with them significant changes in structure (two subjects rather than one), content (requirements regarding literary texts and Spoken Language) and assessment (the introduction of controlled assessment). Consequently, our Standards team, who are responsible for the setting of grade boundaries and the Awarding procedure, found it particularly complex to establish the overall standard for these new specifications. Direct comparison between the new and legacy units was not straightforward. We worked closely with the Regulator, Ofqual, in light of their comparable outcomes approach to these new specifications and overall outcomes for OCR candidates were similar to those in legacy specifications.

As a result of the concerns nationally, Ofqual decided to review the awarding process. The outcome of this report can be found on the Ofqual website but in simple terms the following conclusions were reached by the Regulator:

- The correct results were delivered in GCSE English in June 2012 and January 2012 and there is a need for Awarding Bodies to emphasise that grade boundaries can change from session to session in future communications.

- A one-off November 2012 session will be available to those candidates who certificated in June 2012. Entry will be available in all units, the 2012 Controlled Assessment tasks will be used and the session will be free. The January 2013 will still be available.
- All Awarding Bodies will be asked to produce further exemplar materials with commentaries to help schools in the marking of their controlled assessment work. This will be available from OCR in three forms. We intend to place these resources on the website, present them both in interactive sessions and in our autumn regional groups. Further details about these will be available shortly.

Here at OCR we recognise that some teachers are concerned with their outcomes from June and we have a responsibility to support them through this period of uncertainty, to explain what the major issues were and what is needed to ensure that students are properly prepared for future sessions.

Please contact us either directly at english@ocr.org.uk or through our Customer Contact Centre on 01223 553998 if you have any issues or concerns as we move forward. I hope the explanation above clearly outlines the issues that arose and what OCR has done to rectify them.

Paul Dodd
Qualifications Group Manager



The Speaking and Listening moderator cometh!

A Day in the Life of a GCSE English Speaking and Listening Moderator

After 15 years as a Speaking and Listening moderator, Robin Hodgkinson shares his experiences...

Are English departments quaking in their boots? Not usually, because our aim is to advise, support and encourage, as well as celebrate, good practice in schools.

Indeed the moderator is often seen as the human face of the awarding body – perhaps the only board representative that a school might see. Advisory visits can be particularly beneficial in very small schools where perhaps a solitary English teacher may be toiling away in lonely isolation.

Each year OCR determines which centres will be visited (usually on a three year rota) and moderators contact their assigned schools to arrange the visit, which should last between two and three hours. Many moderators are practising teachers, so they try to visit two schools in a day.

If your school is one of the lucky chosen ones you will receive an email or phone call in advance to talk through the visit. The visit itself consists of discussion about the department's approach to Speaking and Listening, followed by an observation of 8-10 students undertaking the three speaking and listening disciplines. There will be a discussion on marking and a quick look at the department's record-keeping systems.

So the day arrives. A cup of coffee and an informal chat later, usually any teacher nerves about the visit have dissipated. Some centres are able to arrange for the whole department to come "off-timetable", others perhaps a couple of staff.

Having watched the students in action, there is usually slight trepidation as I ask the question: "So the first activity – what mark would we give?" Sometimes there are wide variations in the marks between teachers – Speaking and Listening is not an exact science and it is a question of balancing the criteria.

Hot topics for discussion are often band borderlines, teacher intervention to move an activity into more complex areas, and, this year, what is acceptable as a Real Life Context activity. Often I am impressed by departments who take an imaginative stance and provide challenging and interesting activities.

Over 15 years of visiting schools there have been many highlights. My favourite? The young lady, with a simple addition of a bonnet and shawl, delivering a lecture on Motherhood as Mrs Bennett from *Pride and Prejudice*. When I asked a question, she stared at me and replied: "Well it's quite obvious you have never brought up children." As a moderator I know my place!

Focus on Speaking and Listening resources

If you are looking for ways to prepare your students for their Speaking and Listening assessments, then the GCSE English for OCR series can help.

The Student Books and OxBox CD-ROMS can be used together to provide engaging teaching ideas and plenty of opportunities for students to practice their skills.



GCSE English Language for OCR Student Book

OxBox activities link to the Student Books, offering valuable opportunities to put their learning into practice

We would be happy to come in to your school and demonstrate all of the fantastic features which make the OxBox such a flexible and easy-to-use organisation and planning tool. Email fiona.lloydwilliams@oup.com for more information.

The Record and Playback function allows students the chance to practise and review their performance and identify how to improve

We are offering 50% off all Student Books, until the 31st July. To find out more or to email your order email fiona.lloydwilliams@oup.com with your name, school address, title and number of copies. All of the titles in the GCSE English for OCR are available on inspection, free for 30 days.



English Language OxBox

OCR A Level English Conference: Language, Literature and Learning –

Fuelling your teaching, developing your subject knowledge

"We were delighted to be able to offer a range of workshop sessions on key elements of A Level teaching, with all the buzz of a conference atmosphere. Teachers seemed very pleased to have practical activities and approaches, alongside lectures by noted academics. The conference offered a real mix of subject knowledge, classroom practice, and pedagogy."

**Barbara Bleiman,
Director of the English and Media Centre**

July saw the first OCR A Level English Conference take place in London, presented in association with the English and Media Centre. Through a range of lectures from guest speakers and workshops delivered by subject experts, including four workshops delivered by the English and Media Centre, the aim of the day was to inspire teachers of all three A Levels in English and leave them feeling refreshed, invigorated, and confident about teaching new texts in September.

The feedback from the event was extremely positive. From comments on the day, we know that the teachers who

attended loved the opportunity to hear from experts in their field delivering the lectures – actor and writer

Ben Crystal's lecture on Shakespeare and Performance was the standout success. We also heard fascinating talks from Lyndall Gordon, academic and biographer, on Emily Dickinson's family and the influence of her life on her poetry; Peter Childs exploring the work of contemporary novelist Ian McEwan; and Matthew Steggle on *Volpone*, a popular text on both the English Literature and English Language and Literature specifications

The sessions from the English and Media Centre all focused on particular elements of teaching and learning, with interactive sessions focused on practical approaches to take back to the classroom across a range of units in our English A Levels. These included approaches to teaching narrative, setting up effective comparisons at A2, stretch and challenge at A2, and English Languages basics for beginners. These were received rapturously – and we were delighted

that OCR was able to take some of the EMC's renowned and inspiring approach to teachers of our specification.

Meanwhile, OCR's own subject experts delivered workshop sessions on a variety of best practice topics, including how to read texts with a Language and Literature approach, using dramatic performances to highlight different textual interpretations, the use and selection of contextual materials and re-creative writing.

The Conference was such a success that we are already planning our second! We'll be taking into account feedback from those who attended, and because we know there were some teachers who couldn't make the date, we'll be scheduling it earlier in the academic year. So watch this space for updates on the OCR English Conference 2013.



Thinking ahead

Additional resources for English

OCR continues to support teachers delivering our GCSE English qualifications, with a range of useful and exciting resources. We know that you welcome support in planning the delivery of our qualifications, are keen to help your learners prepare for assessment and are interested in creative ways of delivering the course.

With that in mind, we have produced a free learner progress tracker tool to help you to see how each of your learners is progressing through the qualification – based on mock test results. This spreadsheet-based tool is simple and easy to use, it contains all of the unit specific mark allocations and it calculates the total mark for you. Use this tool to collate your learners' results so you can see how they're doing and address any areas that require attention.

We have also produced a suite of mock A680 papers for you to use as practice assessments for your learners, helping you to understand how well learners' can apply their learning under exam conditions and prepare them for their final assessment.

As we progress through the 2012/13 academic year and start to think about 2013/14, you might find it useful to look at some of our resources to help you with your planning and preparation.

We'll be working to develop more resources to support you in the coming year and your feedback is an important part of making sure that we are meeting your needs. Please email resourcesfeedback@ocr.org.uk with your comments and suggestions.

Available resources

- **Schemes of work** and **lesson plans** with links to useful resources.
- **Teachers' handbook** – a useful user guide for the qualification.
- **Curriculum planning guide.**
- **Planning for English GCSEs.**
- **Candidate style answers** with examiner commentary to help you understand what examiners are looking for when they mark.
- **Virtual Visions DVD** offering creative interpretations of some of the poems within the anthology, supported by guidance notes.
- **Speaking and Listening training** film footage with training notes. Available on Interchange now.



Centre spotlight Tottenham High School

Delia Dolman
Head of English

Situated to the north of the Greater Manchester town of Bury, Tottenham High School is a Community Comprehensive school catering for the educational needs of just over 900 boys and girls aged 11 to 16.

English is a compulsory subject for all students from Year 7 to Year 11. In Year groups 7, 8 and 9, pupils study English as a subject across three skills competencies, notably speaking and listening, reading and writing. A variety of topics are studied, including writing non-fiction, reading novels, poetry and drama scripts, and the study and performance of Shakespeare.

Currently, from Year 10 the school has eight sets of students studying GCSE English; six sets following the OCR dual English Language and Literature award, the other two focused on the single English award.

Students at the school receive their English education from seven full-time teachers, one part-time teacher and a teacher of English and Art. Delia Dolman is the head of the school's English faculty.

In 2010, the school decided to review its English GCSE offering to see if it could find an alternative and potentially better English GCSE than it was already providing to its students.

"We weren't unhappy with our existing set-up, but as the specifications were changing it made sense to look at other exam bodies and what they could offer," explains Delia. ***"We particularly liked the GCSE English qualifications designed by OCR. The specifications were clear, pragmatic and straightforward. Among other aspects we were impressed with the extensive range and variety of texts and topics available."***

Delia cites the Spoken Language section as one such feature, where students must observe the language of a public figure selected from three contrasting alternatives: Barack Obama, Eddie Izzard and Ronnie Corbett. After listening to a speaker, pupils then consider how texts are structured and the key features of speech, how the speaker establishes a rapport with the audience and how language is used to create impact.

The teachers were also pleased with the Shakespeare and film component in OCR's English Literature GCSE – comprising *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, *Merchant of Venice*, and *Romeo and Juliet* – with students required to respond to one task requiring comment, criticism and analysis of aspects of the play and of linked scenes from the film, audio or live performance.

"Some of our students find it a challenge to interpret and analyse Shakespeare, but on the whole most of our students enjoy studying the texts and his plays," says Delia.

As well as Shakespeare, the OCR English Literature set text list includes both literary heritage poetry, a selection of modern drama, prose from different cultures and contemporary poetry.

"The poetry and prose are quite a mix of classic and contemporary," says Delia, ***"with students able to study a variety of texts such as *Of Mice and Men*, *Macbeth* and *Lord of the Flies*."***





And it isn't just the variety of texts that appealed to Delia and her teaching staff. ***"The OCR qualification provides us with a no-nonsense approach – students simply have a straightforward study of the chosen poetry."***

Because the selection of texts for schools is comprehensive, at the outset of the courses the school's English teachers pooled their ideas to decide which to teach.

"We have quite a mix of teachers here – some with many years of experience and others who are relatively new to the profession," explains Delia. ***"So we all have our favourite texts and topics, but we work as a team to provide uniformity for our students."***

"We all decided to teach the same texts, to enable us to share our ideas and planning and make the standardising of assessment more straightforward."

This approach means that all of the school's students begin their GCSE English courses with the same texts at the same time, but equally there is flexibility to study alternative texts later on in the course.

As well as providing schools with this flexibility, OCR's specifications provide students with the ability to alter their course of study.

"There are limitations to this," explains Delia. ***"There is some crossover but students can't move from one course to another at any time – some coursework tasks are different. There is some overlap, which is better than none at all!"***

The OCR GCSE English specifications are designed for co-teaching and to be compatible with each other as far as possible. The skills involved link with those required for Entry Level, and they are designed to prepare students for OCR A Levels in English Language and Literature.

"The connectivity between the qualifications is really useful, especially if we find at an early stage that one of our students is underperforming or over performing and ideally needs to pursue an alternative GCSE," says Delia.

Controlled assessments are taken by students on prearranged dates; planned before the start of the academic year.

"With students having so many dates and assessments from many of their subjects, it is better for them to know in advance when the assessments are," says Delia. ***"Also, we are fortunate to have the support of Jayne Rishton, our excellent examinations officer, who helps us to ensure the assessments run smoothly."***

Delia adds that students tend to do their best when undertaking controlled assessments: ***"Perhaps it's not as polished as it would be if they were doing their coursework at home, but they do tend to raise their game when it's coursework time."***

Since taking on and teaching OCR's GCSE English qualifications, the school has benefited from a range of support provided at OCR events, by OCR staff and through a range of teaching resources, many of which are available on the OCR website.

"We always send someone on the OCR Get Started and Get Ahead training courses," says Delia, ***"and I've been along to regional meetings to learn more about the specifications."***

"We've also had direct support from an OCR qualifications manager and OCR sent a representative along to our school to help us understand how the qualifications are moderated. If ever I have a question, it is always answered quickly by phone or email."

"And there are plenty of resources available on the OCR website, including past papers and transcripts."

To find out more about OCR's English qualifications, visit: www.ocr.org.uk or www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/subjects/english/

To find out more about Tottington High School, visit: www.tottington.bury.sch.uk



Ronnie Corbett photo © BBC

"We particularly liked the GCSE English qualifications designed by OCR. The specifications were clear, pragmatic and straightforward."
– Delia Dolman

The 2012-13

OCR Professional Development Programme

– more accessible, more cost effective, same valued content

Here at OCR we are constantly looking for ways in which we can improve the support we offer to teachers. Most recently we have been considering the increasing challenges that schools face in releasing teachers for INSET, and appreciate that many of you have been unable to attend training before. By moving our events online OCR can make its professional development programme more accessible and convenient for all.

What to do next?

- Check out our self-managed learning at www.ocronlinetraining.org.uk
- Visit ocr.org.uk/training to keep up to date with all the latest information about our new programme
- Sign up for updates at ocr.org.uk/updates and be the first to find out about our exciting Professional Development Programme.

Need more help?

You can contact our team at professionaldevelopment@ocr.org.uk who will be happy to help.

www.ocr.org.uk/professionaldevelopment

From September 2012 our new improved programme will include:

FREE online professional development units available when and where you want them

Self-managed learning – *the training you want, when and where you want it.*

If you want to better understand the specification or keep abreast of information about previous examinations and important changes then these are for you.

- **Available online on-demand 24 hours 7 days a week** – view the training at a time and place to suit you
- **Self-contained learning** – manage your own learning, getting a more focused and personalised service
- **Breadth and depth** – comprehensive coverage of many aspects of the qualification
- **All qualifications** – more subjects will be available than traditional INSET
- **Topical and fast turnaround** – always up-to-date, reflecting the latest information and advice
- **Repeat access** – no need to remember everything in one go, view the training as often as you want
- **Easier format** to share the information with your colleagues

FREE live web broadcasts of professional development events

Live Broadcast – *information and training straight to your classroom.*

Through webinars, studio discussions or multi-site broadcasts these events will give you a chance to have your questions answered directly by OCR's qualification and assessment experts.

- **Interactive** – you can submit your queries prior to or during the broadcast for an immediate response
- **Live** – hear advice and guidance straight from OCR staff and senior assessors, with options to attend in person or watch online
- **Skills improvement** – focusing on improving your delivery skills and understanding of OCR qualifications
- **Participation options** – options to attend some live events or just watch online
- **Repeat access** – sessions are recorded for those that can't make it or want to view again

A series of 'not to be missed' premier professional development events

Large-scale, subject-specific events focused on keeping you up to date with the latest developments in your subject area, innovative classroom delivery and reigniting your passion for teaching.

- **Professional development** – new insights and ideas from leaders in their field
- **Networking** – opportunities to interact with a large number of subject specialist teachers
- **Cost effective** – reduced cost for teachers to attend these high impact events
- **Prestigious venues** – relevant and interesting, subject-related venues
- **Key-note speakers** – your chance to hear the latest from leaders in your subject
- **Cutting edge content** – keeping you up to date with the latest thinking in your subject area

Face-to-face – A portfolio of more traditional INSET events.

Training sessions to help you understand and manage Controlled Assessment, Coursework and to support some vocational courses.

Upcoming courses

AS/A Level English Literature (H071/H471): Understanding the coursework units (F662 and F664)

Tuesday 27 November 2012 - Full day event, London

Course code: AFENAB

A Level English Literature (H071/H471): *Mary Shelley and Frankenstein*

Friday 23 November 2012 - Full day event, Chawton House

Course code: AFENAD

Coming soon to a centre near you!

GCSE English Support Meetings - twilight events held in centres throughout the Autumn 2012 term

Course code: AFENAA

Find out more about our new courses and book your place online at www.ocreventbooker.org.uk

On-Screen assessment On-screen, On-demand

OCR Functional Skills from September 2012

What's the point of teaching functional skills if on-screen tests don't assess in a functional way?

We don't think there is one.

That's why we have taken the time to develop truly functional on-screen assessment.

At last! An on-screen, functional skills assessment designed with the student in mind. Our functional skills assessments are going on-screen, on-demand.

- ✓ **Truly functional approach** to assessment
- ✓ Available for English, Maths and ICT at Level 1 and 2 (subject to accreditation)
- ✓ On-demand, 24/7* for your convenience
- ✓ Comparable with our paper-based assessment
- ✓ Existing paper-based assessments still available and without change.

Interested in finding out more? We are planning a range of support, plus opportunities for you to learn more about this exciting new development. Make sure you don't miss out on the latest news by signing up for updates (see below). *Remember to select English, Maths, ICT and/or Apprenticeships within 'subject' area, then Functional Skills from the 'type.'*

Visit ocr.org.uk/fs

Sign up to receive latest news, information and support developments at ocr.org.uk/updates

*Excluding the Christmas holiday period

Three thousand is the magic number

Unit F662 and Unit F664 – Coursework Submissions Word Limits

Moderators always comment on the exciting range and variety of work they see from centres, and the quality of coursework submissions is generally to be applauded. However, in the June 2012 series there was a significant increase in the number of F662 and F664 coursework folders submitted for moderation which exceeded the 3000 word limit. Over-length coursework folders cause problems for moderators and centres alike, and can slow down the moderation process significantly, not to mention the potential distress that can be caused by the requirement to remark students' work if it is found to be longer than the regulations allow.

Please be reminded that the OCR GCE English Literature specification and Coursework Guidance released to support Units F662 and F664 state that:

The maximum length of coursework folders for submission should be 3000 words.

The 3000 word limit does not include titles, footnotes, quotations and bibliographies.

If a folder is submitted which exceeds the 3000 word limit, moderators will return the work to the centre, and the folder will need to be remarked.

How can I stop my students from writing too much?

- Tell students the 3000 word limit (and regularly reinforce it).
- Tell students that the word limit will be strictly enforced – by their teachers and by OCR.
- Tell students that extra words can't be assessed towards their AS or A Level.
- Ask students to write two word counts on the front of their essays – one including and one excluding titles, footnotes, quotations and bibliographies
- Refuse to accept over-length essays for marking.

How can I ensure that my students don't submit over-length coursework essays?

Write a good essay title

It is good practice to devise a title which enables students to access the Assessment Objectives by answering the question or task set. For example, even for the short Critical Piece for F662, a task gives students the opportunity to create an argument to

focus and shape their analysis of their extract and discussion of the wider text. OCR's free Coursework Consultancy service can be accessed through an online webform at www.ocr.org.uk/teachers/consultancy/ where you can get your texts and tasks approved, or you will receive feedback on how to improve them.

Do some work with students on planning and writing an argument

Get students to show the direction of their argument in their essays using clear discourse markers. Work on how to compare one or more texts within a paragraph, and how to show the progression of their argument from one section of their essay to the next. The tighter their argument and the more focused their discussion, the less likely students will be to veer off course and overwrite.

Teach students drafting and editing processes

Coursework essays are meant to be polished pieces. Students should expect to produce multiple drafts, and to hone and polish their writing as part of that drafting process. Taking out a few superfluous words in each paragraph will lead to a more tightly written piece overall.



Remind students to keep the focus on their set texts

Contextual issues can sometimes be distracting, especially if students want to show their knowledge of a particular time period or issue. Remind students to keep the focus on critical analysis of their chosen texts and to use critical and contextual material in support of their argument.

Discussion in footnotes counts towards the word count

If it is important enough to be included on the page, they should write the point in to their argument. If it's a tangential point, they can afford to lose it altogether.

One of my students has submitted an essay that is over-length. What do I do?

If a student submits work over the 3000 word limit, the Coursework Guidance for these units states that the teacher should rule off where the 3000 word limit is reached, and stop marking after that point.

All this advice is given within the spirit of the specification – we want students to enjoy writing their coursework essays and for their achievements to be recognised.

Good luck!

Gemma Hewitt

Qualifications Manager – A Level English Literature

Changes to A2 Set Texts

The texts listed below will be examined for the first time in the June 2013 series. We expected you to start teaching these new texts in September 2012 to candidates taking their A2 examinations for the first time in June 2013.

GCE A Level English Literature – Unit F663: Drama and Poetry Pre-1800

Section A: Shakespeare (choose one play)

- A Midsummer Night's Dream
- Antony and Cleopatra
- King Lear
- The Tempest

Section B: Drama and Poetry pre-1800 (choose one drama text and one poetry text)

Drama	Poetry
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• John Ford – 'Tis Pity She's a Whore• Ben Jonson – Volpone• John Webster – The White Devil• Richard Brinsley Sheridan – The Rivals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Geoffrey Chaucer – The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale• John Milton – Paradise Lost Book Nine• Andrew Marvell – Selected Poems• William Blake – Songs of Innocence and Experience

F663 is a closed text examination. You can make your own choice of edition for each set text – we do not prescribe editions.

GCE A Level English Language and Literature – Unit F673: Dramatic Voices (choose one pairing)

- Ben Jonson – Volpone
with David Mamet – Glengarry Glen Ross
- William Shakespeare – As You Like It
with Tom Stoppard – Arcadia
- Thomas Middleton/Cyril Tourneur – The Revenger's Tragedy
with Martin McDonagh – The Lieutenant of Inishmore

F673 is a closed text examination. You can make your own choice of edition for each set text – we do not prescribe editions.

NEWS IN BRIEF

FREE eBooks until 2014 For A Level qualifications

Help your students fulfil their potential with **FREE** eBooks, available to order now. Our **FREE** A Level eBooks offer in partnership with Hodder Education and OUP has been extended for a further two years until 2014.

Over 375,000 free AS and A2 eBooks have been ordered by cost-conscious schools and colleges since the scheme kicked off last September.

- 65% of subject heads confirm that their students benefit from being able to study independently and out of the classroom by accessing free eBooks.
- eBooks benefit teachers who use them to plan and prepare lessons.
- Over 70% of centres found the eBooks easy to order.

Over 70 titles of **FREE** eBooks are available to all schools and colleges teaching A Levels, not just those that currently use OCR's AS and A2 qualifications.

Following feedback from centres we've also made improvements to our service making it easier for you to order and access your eBooks.

Order your FREE eBooks today at www.ocr.org.uk/ebooks/order



**FREE
eBooks**

A reminder about SPAG

Just a reminder that from the January 2013, additional marks are to be awarded for spelling, punctuation and grammar in GCSE English Literature only.

This additional 5% will be assessed in Unit A662 - Modern Drama. Your students will notice little change apart from an instruction on the front of both the Higher and Foundation Tier papers about it.

As English teachers are experienced in the assessment of SPaG (we cover it already in English and English Language teaching), we would expect little change to your overall teaching. However, a reminder to your candidates sitting A662 would be worthwhile.

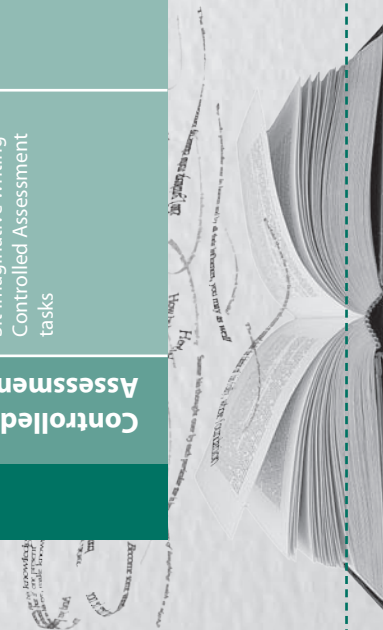
Speaking and Listening film footage now available online:

The 2012 – 2013 clips are now easily downloadable from the GCSE English and GCSE English Language subject pages on the OCR website. They are stored under 'Support Materials'. The guidance notes are also stored in the same place.

TWO YEAR GCSE PLANNER

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND ENGLISH LITERATURE – MODEL 2 – LINEAR STRUCTURE

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	June Module	Summer 2
Year 10	<p>Exam work</p> <p>Work on Information and Ideas Paper – A680</p>	<p>Read and study Modern Drama text for Literature Unit – A662</p>	<p>Read Shakespeare Text for study and view linked texts – A661</p> <p>Take Controlled Assessment Task</p>	<p>Look at contemporary poems for Literature study or unseen – A664</p>			
	<p>Controlled Assessment</p> <p>Speaking and Listening Task One – A652</p>	<p>Work on Imaginative Writing Skills – A651</p>	<p>Read Shakespeare Text for study and view linked texts – A661</p> <p>Take Controlled Assessment Task</p>	<p>Speaking and Listening Task Two – A652</p> <p>Read two poems or selection for Literary Heritage Poetry CA Task – A661</p> <p>Take Controlled Assessment Task</p>	<p>Introductory work on Spoken Language Study – A652</p>		<p>Spoken Language study – A652 and either complete Controlled Assessment Task or sit task on return in Year 11 after student research</p>
Year 11	<p>Exam work</p> <p>Look at final selection of contemporary poems for Literature or unseen – A664</p> <p>Work on Information and Ideas paper – A680</p>	<p>Autumn 2</p> <p>Read and study Literary Heritage prose text – A664</p>	<p>Spring 1</p> <p>Read and study Different cultures text – A663</p>	<p>Spring 2</p>	<p>Summer 1</p> <p>Revise for Literature units – A662/A663/A664</p> <p>Revise Language Unit – A680</p>	<p>June Module</p> <p>Sit A662 A663 A664 A680</p>	<p>Summer 2</p>
	<p>Controlled Assessment</p> <p>Work on Imaginative writing unit – A651</p> <p>Sit Imaginative writing Controlled Assessment tasks</p>		<p>Speaking and Listening Task Three – A652</p> <p>Complete Speaking and Listening work</p>	<p>Complete controlled Assessment task for Extended Literary Texts – A651 using any of the texts studied or the generic tasks</p>		<p>Enter CA Units</p> <p>A651 A652 A661</p>	



English A Levels are going to change – *what would you like to see?*

Have your say – get in touch with Hester Glass, Curriculum Leader for English at OCR.

The reform of A Levels is getting underway, and once Ofqual's consultation closes in September, we will know more about what changes we need to make to the structure of English A Levels. It is likely that English Literature will be in the first round of re-development, for first teaching from 2014, so although there are still unknowns about Ofqual's criteria, we have begun on our own consultations with teachers and have started making plans for the future.

At the end of last term, Gemma Hewitt (Qualification Manager for A Level English Literature) and I visited, and talked on the phone, with twenty schools and sixth-form colleges to discuss our current A Level English specifications. It was a fascinating, informative, and very encouraging consultation, which gives us a clear sense of the direction of travel. But we'd like to find out more...

We found a lot of enjoyment and satisfaction with the A Level Literature specification and a strong commitment to the spirit of the qualification. English teachers like the clear structure and progression from AS to A2, the freedom and flexibility of the coursework, the traditional approach, teaching whole set texts, and students' opportunities to develop their critical independence. There is clear consensus that the qualification provides students with excellent preparation for further study of English.

But, we are not complacent – it is always important to explore alternative approaches, address issues, and keep listening to teachers and students. We also know that too much change too quickly can be counter-productive, and there may be good reasons to preserve much of our current approach.

Some teachers of Literature commented that changing texts after three years puts too much pressure on planning and resourcing, and there was also some querying of set text choices. Others felt the specification was content heavy, and there should be increased focus on learning the practical

skills of literary criticism. The benefits of an unseen paper were discussed by some and others would like to see further opportunity for creative responses to texts.

Do you agree? What would you like to see? If you teach an A Level specification from a different Awarding Body we would like to hear from you too.

So, please get in touch. We aim to gather the views of as many teachers as possible about A Level English for the future. **What do you most like or dislike in your current specification? What texts do you love or hate to teach? What support do you most value? What would have the 'wow' factor for you in a new A Level English qualification?**

We're focusing on English Literature now, but development of A Level Language and Lang/Lit will soon follow – so comments and suggestions about all English qualifications are very welcome. We'd also like to hear from you if you're interested in a potential new A Level in Creative Writing.

If you would like to share your views and possibly get more involved, for example, by taking part in a focus group, please complete the *Expression of Interest* form below. We will then contact you, and all of your comments and suggestions will feed directly into re-development.

And a huge thank you to those of you who have taken part so far; your feedback has been invaluable and we'll keep in touch!

WIN an Amazon Kindle!*

Which A level text do you want to teach?

Get involved with our online set text survey at surveymonkey.com/s/OCRalevelenglish. Ten minutes of your time will give us invaluable information about the A level texts YOU want to teach!

*See T&C's at survey surveymonkey.com/s/OCRalevelenglish

A Level English Consultation: Expression of Interest Form

Please post to: Hester Glass, Curriculum Leader – English, OCR, 1 Hills Road, Cambridge CB1 2EU

Or email to: english@ocr.org.uk (please include *FAO Hester Glass – A Level English Consultation* in the subject line of your email)

I would like to take part in OCR's English A Level Consultation.

Name:

Position:

School name and address:

.....

.....

Email:

School telephone:

Mobile (optional):

I would like to share my views on – (*tick one or more boxes*)

(Note: you don't have to teach the current OCR specification to take part)

- A Level Literature**
- A Level Language and Literature**
- A Level Language**
- A Level Creative Writing** (potential new qualification)
- I would also be interested in taking part in a focus group to discuss new qualifications.

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