

London Examinations GCE Ordinary Level

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Syllabus

London Examinations GCE Ordinary Level
English Language(7161) May/June 2006 & January 2007

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English Language 7161

This subject may be taken at both the May/June and January examinations.

Introduction

London Examinations GCE O level English Language is a widely respected qualification satisfying the entry requirement in English for businesses and higher education institutions in the UK and worldwide. The syllabus maintains the requirement for a wide vocabulary and accuracy in the use of grammar, punctuation and spelling, while encouraging the student to acquire a range of skills through the study of lively and relevant source material.

Rationale for the Syllabus

The syllabus is intended for all candidates for whom English is to be the language of education and employment. It is intended for both speakers of English as a first language and speakers of English as an additional language. The examination is designed to be accessible and relevant for candidates and is comparable in standard to equivalent international and UK examinations.

The syllabus, specimen paper 2 and mark scheme are available on line at www.edexcel-international.org. In addition, users of the syllabus will find answers to frequently asked questions, further support of teaching materials and regularly updated information to help all teachers prepare candidates for this new syllabus.

Aims

A course in English for this syllabus should enable students to:

- (a) read a range of material from a variety of sources, including literary material, non-literary material and media;
- (b) read for a variety of purposes with understanding and enjoyment;
- (c) use the standard forms of written English for a variety of purposes, such as narration, argument, giving instruction and information, imaginative writing, making reports, demonstrating understanding of content, appropriateness and quality of written expression.

Assessment objectives

Candidates should be able to:

		Section		
		A	B	C
AO1	read with understanding texts of various kinds in standard English	✓	✓	
AO2	select, order and present in writing, information, ideas and opinions from the texts provided		✓	
AO3	use and adapt forms and types of writing for specific purposes, effects and audiences		✓	✓
AO4	write using the standard forms of English with accurate spelling and punctuation		✓	✓
AO5	adopt appropriate styles, exercising care for clarity and quality of expression		✓	✓

The scheme of assessment

Candidates take a single three-hour written paper. The question paper contains a selection of stimulus material, selected from the range of sources listed on page 108, and a series of tasks. The texts used in the stimulus material will be related in theme; the stimulus material may include reading or graphical materials, including facsimiles of leaflets and other realistic material. The stimulus material set for the examination may be detachable, or an insert to the question paper. Candidates should spend about 15 minutes studying this material before answering the questions.

Section A (30%)

This section sets questions about the language and content of the stimulus material. Candidates should spend about 40 minutes on these questions, all of which should be answered.

Section B (35%)

In this section candidates are asked to produce writing directed in terms of purpose, context and audience, based on the material set in the paper. They should spend about one hour on this section.

Section C (35%)

In this section candidates are asked to complete a single task based on a choice of topics related to the stimulus material. They should spend about one hour on this section.

At the end of the examination candidates should spend about five minutes checking their work carefully and making any necessary corrections.

Syllabus Content

Section A

There will be up to ten questions in this section. The questions are designed to assess the candidates' understanding and response in their reading of stimulus material. The questions focus on aspects of content and meaning, as well as features of English usage in the material, and the candidates are asked to show their understanding of significant meaning and detail. Questions may ask them to select information from the stimulus material and present this in short paragraphs or in sets of statements. Marks are given in this section primarily for the content and the understanding shown. However, clarity and careful expression are expected in the answers.

Section B

This section is designed to assess the candidates' ability to write according to specific guidelines in response to given material. They are asked to select relevant information from the stimulus material and to present it for other readers and for other purposes. Candidates may be asked to inform or instruct, to advise or persuade or to express attitudes and they will be asked to use a recognised form of writing, such as a letter, a report or a newspaper article. The length required will depend on the nature of the task set and will be indicated in the question paper. The answers in this section will be assessed for relevant information, for appropriateness of style and approach and for quality and accuracy of expression.

Section C

A choice of questions will be offered in this section. One piece of writing will be asked for; this may be narrative, descriptive, personal, argumentative or discursive. There will be opportunities for candidates to take up themes and topics from the stimulus material, and to

respond to them more imaginatively and personally. Candidates are expected to write between 350–400 words.

Standard English

The syllabus assesses reading and writing in the internationally recognised forms of standard English: either British or American standard forms are acceptable in the candidates' writing. Spelling must be consistent, whether it follows British or American usage.

Grade descriptions

Grades A, B, C, D or E may be awarded to successful candidates. The following grade descriptions describe the level of attainment characteristic of grades A, C and E at Ordinary Level GCE. They give a general indication of the required learning outcomes at the specified grades. The descriptions should be interpreted in relation to the content in the specification; they are not designed to define that content. The grade awarded will depend in practice on the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of the examination may be balanced by better performances in others.

Grade A

Candidates will be able to:

AO1

- demonstrate a clear understanding of the main points of a text
- respond to a variety of styles in texts
- demonstrate full understanding of meaning
- recognise subtleties in inferential meaning
- demonstrate a clear understanding of specific items of vocabulary
- identify specific grammatical features or figures of speech

AO2

- select accurately the major points of argument
- select accurately a good range of supporting points of argument
- distinguish between main points and supporting points of argument
- distinguish clearly between fact and opinion where appropriate
- order appropriately material which has been selected
- present relevant material clearly and coherently in writing

AO3

- write in a variety of styles for given purposes
- write in a variety of forms suitable for given purposes
- demonstrate awareness of the intended audience

AO4

- write accurately using the standard grammatical forms and the idioms of English
- write with confident use of a range of sentence structures
- organise complex material clearly
- write with a wide range of vocabulary
- express ideas with lucidity and precision
- write at an advanced level of accuracy with regard to spelling and to punctuation

AO5

- demonstrate control in sustaining a theme
- demonstrate clarity and consistency of expression
as appropriate to the title chosen:
- demonstrate skill in using narrative structures
- describe vividly with deft use of words and phrases
- write effectively using imaginative and/or personal concepts
- demonstrate skill in persuasive argument
- demonstrate the ability to support alternative views in order to reach a balanced conclusion in argument

Grade C

Candidates will be able to:

AO1

- demonstrate a reasonable level of understanding of the main points of a text
- respond to some styles and tones in texts
- demonstrate some understanding of meaning
- demonstrate understanding of inferential meaning
- demonstrate understanding of some specific items of vocabulary
- identify some grammatical features or figures of speech

AO2

- select accurately some major points of argument
- select some supporting points of argument
- distinguish sometimes between fact and opinion where appropriate
- demonstrate some ability to organise selected material
- present relevant material clearly

AO3

- write in appropriate styles for given purposes
- demonstrate some ability to match form to purpose
- give some attention to the intended audience

AO4

- write standard English competently, with occasional inaccuracies
- write with some variety of sentence structures
- write with some skill in organising material
- write with appropriate vocabulary
- write with generally accurate spelling and punctuation

AO5

- demonstrate some ability to sustain a theme and a consistent style throughout a piece of writing
as appropriate to the title chosen:
- sustain chronological narrative
- describe clearly
- write effective imaginative or personal essays
- make some attempt to persuade in argument
- demonstrate some ability to present a point of view in argument and come to a conclusion

Grade E

Candidates will be able to:

AO1

- demonstrate some grasp of the main points of a text
- understand some of the meaning of a text

AO2

- select one or two points of argument
- present the material selected in a way that can be followed by a reader

AO3

- write simply for a given purpose
- make an elementary attempt to fit form to purpose

AO4

- write at a level of basic coherence in standard English
- write simple sentences
- write with basically accurate punctuation and spell common words accurately

AO5

As appropriate to the title chosen:

- write at a simple level in a suitable style
- begin, partly develop and end a narrative
- convey an idea descriptively at a basic level
- write simple imaginative or personal pieces

Source material

The following indicate possible sources of extracts to be used in the examination papers:

Fiction

novels

short stories

radio or television script

Literary non-fiction:

biography

autobiography

travel accounts

diaries/letters

Advertising material:

leaflets

brochures

display advertisements

Informational material:

encyclopaedia

instructions

pamphlets

reports

summary accounts
 textbooks
 web pages
 newspaper background articles
 online information
 texts of speeches
 transcripts of conversations

Opinions/personal writing:

newspaper editorials
 letters e.g. job applications
 newspaper leading articles
 persuasive speeches or pamphlets

Textbooks and other resources

The following books may be of use to candidates who are studying the O Level English Language syllabus. One book has been written specifically to accompany this syllabus; others may be useful for common skills such as summarising and essay writing.

Edexcel is happy to receive other suggestions from teachers for books which are found to be useful, especially if comments are made on helpful sections of such books.

Author	Title/Edition/ISBN	Publisher
E. Cripps & C. Footman	GCE English Language: A study and revision course for O level (ISBN: 0 521 00989 8)	Cambridge University Press (CUP)
<i>Written specifically to accompany the new Edexcel syllabus</i>		
M. Dunk & G. Wiley	Ideas for English (ISBN: 0 521 36804 9)	Cambridge University Press (CUP)
G. Wiley & M. Dunk	Integrated English: A Course in English Language and Literature (ISBN: 0 521 27517 2)	Cambridge University Press (CUP)
E. Cripps	GCSE English (Longman Study Guides) (ISBN: 0 582 30484 9)	Longman
S. Davies, K. Elliott & R. Hopwood	GCSE English: A Complete Course (ISBN: 0 435 10194 3)	Heinemann
P. Turner	GCSE English in a year (ISBN: 0 340 70134 X)	Hodder and Stoughton

Contact details

See page 2, General Information. The Edexcel website contains frequently asked questions and updates on teachers' queries about this syllabus.