

Review of Standards in GCE A level English Literature

2005 and 2009



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Executive summary

The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) undertakes a rolling programme of reviews across high profile GCSE and GCE A level subjects to monitor whether standards in assessment and candidate performance have been maintained over time.

This report details the findings for GCE A level English Literature in the years 2005 and 2009. The previous review for this subject compared the years 2002 and 2005.

The study compared subject specifications, assessment materials and candidate work from the five awarding organisations awarding this qualification in the years being reviewed (the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance [AQA]; the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment [CCEA]; Edexcel; Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations [OCR] and WJEC¹) by collecting the views of a number of subject specialists.

The study found the following:

- The demand of qualifications varied between awarding organisations due to the amount of choice available to candidates within the specifications and through varied schemes of assessment (including the opportunities to choose between coursework and question papers).
- Formulaic questions in some specifications reduced demand in 2009 when compared with 2005.
- Questions that focused on extracts of texts reduced challenge; this is because candidates did not have to demonstrate their knowledge across a whole text. This feature was apparent in both 2005 and 2009.
- The level of achievement at key grade boundaries was stable between 2005 and 2009, although there were differences between awarding organisations.

¹ WJEC were formerly known as the Welsh Joint Education Committee. In Welsh WJEC is CBAC: as the review was conducted in English all references to the awarding organisation are as WJEC.

Section 1: Introduction

Context

In his *Review of Qualifications for 16–19 Year Olds* (1996), Lord Dearing made several recommendations to ensure that ‘there is a basis and accepted procedure... for monitoring and safeguarding standards over time’. In the same year, the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA), one of our predecessors, and the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) jointly recommended that there should be:

a rolling programme of reviews on a five-year cycle to ensure examination demands and grade standards are being maintained in all major subjects.
(*Standards in Public Examinations 1975 to 1995*, page 4, 1996)

As a result of these recommendations Ofqual, in collaboration with the regulators for Wales (the Department for Education and Skills [DfES]) and Northern Ireland (CCEA), introduced a programme to investigate standards in A level and GCSE examinations by systematically collecting and retaining assessment materials and candidate work to enable standards reviews to cover two or more years.

The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 formalised Ofqual’s role in undertaking such reviews by including a statutory objective ‘to secure that regulated qualifications indicate a consistent level of attainment (including over time)’.

The aim of this programme is to report on our work in meeting this objective and to inform future developments in qualification and subject criteria to support meeting this objective in the future. This aim is met by:

- analysing the nature of the requirements different assessments make on candidates
- comparing the levels of performance required for a particular grade in different assessments
- considering how these two elements relate to each other.

About the GCE A level English Literature qualification

In 2005 and 2009, very similar numbers of candidates took the GCE A level English Literature specifications being reviewed, just over 43,000 in each year. A detailed breakdown of candidate entry numbers and cumulative percentage pass rates can be found in [Appendix G](#).

Our immediate predecessor, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), most recently conducted a standards review in GCE A level English Literature using materials from 2000 and 2005; the results were published in a report in February 2007 that is available on our website at www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/qca-07-3100_standards_Alevel_eng_lit.pdf .

The key findings have been taken into account as part of our work on this review. They were as follows:

- In 2005 the minimum number of texts required by the subject criteria was the same as in 2000. However, there was a greater level of prescription in 2005 regarding the genres and periods that the texts must address.
- The schemes of assessment from 2005 were more focused than in 2000, with units tending to address genres in specific periods.
- There was concern in 2005 that the routes through the specifications were not sufficiently comparable as the coursework and examinations differed considerably in the nature of the opportunities provided for candidates to demonstrate their ability.
- The standards of performance were considered to be comparable across the awarding organisations at the grade A boundary in 2005 but were less comparable at the grade E boundary (Edexcel demonstrated stronger candidate performance).

All GCSEs and GCE A levels are based on criteria set by the regulators of qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Qualification criteria explain the general aims of studying a qualification and outline the essential skills, knowledge and understanding required. They also stipulate the structure of the qualification and how it should be assessed and graded. Where more than one awarding organisation offers a qualification, the regulators also produce specific subject criteria to ensure consistency between the different specifications.

Assessment objectives are specified within subject-specific criteria documents and outline what candidates must be required to do in the course of the qualification. Specifications must require candidates to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding through the specific assessment objectives in the relevant programme of study. The assessment objectives can often be assessed and weighted differently by awarding organisations, within certain parameters.

The process for producing both qualification and subject-specific criteria is the same. A change in criteria can be prompted by a significant change in government policy (for example, changes to the National Curriculum) or as part of a programme of periodic updates. The regulators develop draft criteria and these are then subject to

public consultation so that the views of teachers, awarding organisations, subject associations and other learned bodies; higher education and other interested parties can be taken into account. Once the consultation outcomes have been given due consideration, the criteria are finalised by the regulators and published. Awarding organisations then follow the criteria to develop specifications. These specifications are subject to a review process conducted by the regulators (known as accreditation) to ensure that the specifications meet the relevant criteria prior to learners undertaking the qualification.

The criteria for GCE A level English Literature in both 2005 and 2009 remained the same, as published in 2000. Revised subject criteria were published in 2006 and were first taught in September 2009. Assessment materials and candidate work that use these criteria will be first collected for a standards review in 2013.

Methodology of the review

Standards reviews examine different specifications within a qualification, their associated assessment instruments and candidate work by collating and analysing the views of a number of subject specialists. The following sections of this report detail the process of collecting and processing this information. In these studies, demand is measured against that of the other specifications under review and includes consideration of:

- specification-level factors such as assessment objectives, content and structure
- assessment-level factors such as what content is assessed and how, the weighting of each component and how the assessments are marked
- candidate performance-level factors, including how the candidates responded to the assessments and the grades they received as a result.

The demand of an assessment or qualification can be defined in a wide variety of ways and is linked to the purpose of the qualification. The demand of an assessment or qualification is related to:

- the amount and type of subject knowledge required to be assimilated
- the complexity or number of processes required of the candidates, the extent to which the candidates have to generate responses to questions from their own knowledge, or the extent to which resources are provided
- the level of abstract thinking involved
- the extent to which the candidates must devise a strategy for responding to the questions.

Provision of assessment materials and candidate work

Each of the five awarding organisations offering the qualifications being reviewed (AQA; CCEA; Edexcel; OCR and WJEC) was asked to provide specification materials for GCE English Literature (from the specification with its largest entry in summer 2009).

Details of the requirements for assessment materials and candidate work are given in [Appendix A](#), and in summary include:

- the current specification
- all associated question papers
- final mark schemes
- the 2009 Chief Examiner's Report and grade boundaries, overall and by unit (both raw and scaled)
- mark distributions, grade descriptions and assessment grids
- any other information that was routinely supplied to centres
- all the assessment work carried out by a sample of candidates whose final grade lay at or near the judgemental grade boundaries for the qualification being analysed.

The equivalent materials that had been collected and retained for the previous review were retrieved from our archive of assessment materials and candidate work.

Full details of the materials supplied by awarding organisations can be found in [appendices E](#) and [F](#).

The review team

Seventeen reviewers, experts in GCE A level English Literature, were contracted by us to undertake the review. These reviewers were sourced through three main channels:

- a subject expert recruitment exercise carried out by us in November 2009, advertised via *The Times Educational Supplement* and our website and newsletter
- nominations made by awarding organisations involved in the review
- nominations made by subject associations and other learned bodies invited to participate in the review.

A full list of reviewers can be found in [Appendix J](#).

Reviewers were contracted as a *lead reviewer*, a *specification reviewer* or a *script reviewer* (all awarding organisation nominees and subject association nominees were *script reviewers*).

Analysis of the specifications and assessment materials

The lead reviewer and specification reviewers (specification review team) conducted detailed home-based (individual) analyses of the awarding organisations' materials, using a series of forms that can be found via the comparability page on our website at www.ofqual.gov.uk/research-and-statistics/research-reports/92-articles/23-comparability

These analyses are designed to describe the demand of the specification. Each reviewer completed analyses for a subset of the specifications available, in order for there to be at least three different views on each specification. The lead reviewer then produced a report that brought together the views of the reviewers on each of the awarding organisations. The specification review team was given the opportunity to discuss the conclusions made by the lead reviewer at a follow-up meeting. These findings are presented in Section 2 of this report.

Analysis of candidate performance

In order to assess candidate performance, all reviewers were brought together for a two-day meeting to analyse candidates' scripts (pieces of candidate work as supplied by the awarding organisations). This process is referred to as a script review. This started with a briefing session to ensure that all the reviewers had a common understanding of the methodology and the judgement criteria.

The scripts were organised into packs for consideration during the review. Packs were organised by grade (only grade boundaries A/B and E/U were analysed, as grades B, C and D are calculated arithmetically after grade boundary marks for grades A and E have been set during the awarding process carried out by the awarding organisations).

As far as was possible, given the collection of scripts available, packs contained 12 scripts at the same grade, with at least one script from each awarding organisation from 2005 and 2009 (the remaining two scripts were selected at random).

Reviewers were then asked to rank the 12 scripts in each pack from best to worst, on a data entry sheet, and to make comments on the scripts as necessary. Each reviewer completed a maximum of 14 sessions over the two-day residential script review.

Over the duration of the script review a plenary session was held for reviewers to discuss the script review process and the quality of the scripts that were being analysed.

Data analysis

We use a software package called FACETS to analyse the results from the datasheets produced during the script review. FACETS uses a Rasch model (often classified under item response theory) to convert the qualitative ranking decisions made by reviewers into a single list that reflects the probable overall order of the sets of candidate work, from best to worst.

We use this list, alongside the qualitative comments made during the candidate work review process and findings from the specification review, to inform Section 3 of this report.

Section 2: Subject demand in GCE A level English Literature

Overview

Specification reviewers considered the specification documents, Chief Examiners' Reports and question papers with associated mark schemes from each of the awarding organisations from 2005 and 2009. Details of the specifications included in the review are given in [Appendix D](#).

In summary, the following findings emerged:

- There is a large variation between the different awarding organisations in terms of length of examinations, perceived demand of some units, use of closed text examination and question phrasing. This variation makes comparison between awarding organisations very difficult.
- Some examination questions appear predictable and questions are often formulaic. One awarding organisation set identical questions in 2005 and 2009 for some units. This is an important issue since it was perceived to significantly reduce the demand of the 2009 examination set by this awarding organisation.
- CCEA's format of examination papers, phrasing of questions and use of the closed text examination reduce the level of demand when compared with the other awarding organisations.
- The way in which the weightings of some assessment objectives within specific units had been made was considered to be unclear in some cases. Specifications would benefit from these explanations being made clearer. It was felt that some awarding organisations had different interpretations of assessment objectives AO4 and AO5, which meant that some of the examination questions lacked clarity when focusing on these objectives.

Findings

Assessment objectives

The assessment objectives were the same in 2005 and 2009 for each awarding organisation. The way in which each awarding organisation assigned the weighting of particular assessment objectives to individual units in 2005 did not change in the 2009 specifications. This means that some of the issues identified in the previous standards review of English Literature remain, for example because the allocation of percentages for assessment objectives to units was highly specific: for example, in AQA Unit 1, AO4 was allocated a 2.5 per cent weighting. It is difficult to confirm if these highly specific ratios appear in practice in question papers and mark schemes.

There was also a great deal of variation in how the different awarding organisations referenced the assessment objectives in the examination papers. In some cases the weighting of the assessment objective was reflected in the framing of the question, which made the focus of the assessment clear to candidates. Some awarding organisations (WJEC and CCEA) took this further by providing explicit guidance to the candidates in relation to the assessment objectives. The detail and amount of guidance given to candidates by different awarding organisations was too far-ranging; in some cases information explaining the assessment objectives in the question papers appeared to give candidates a very structured approach to tackling some papers.

Specification content

There has been no significant change in demand between 2005 and 2009; most changes are minor referencing changes of individual texts only. Overall, there is a good range of texts for centres to choose from, reflecting the different periods and genres of literature. Candidates are required to study a minimum of eight texts. These must include a minimum of four texts at AS level (covering prose, poetry and drama, one text by Shakespeare and at least one other text published before 1900). At A2 level, there is a minimum of four further texts (covering prose, poetry and drama, including at least one text published before 1770 and at least one other text published before 1900).

The choice of texts for study has been designed to provide a good range of reading experience, and all of the awarding organisations include texts of real quality, stimulus and demand. Texts are changed on a rolling programme and, in the main, individual texts are replaced with others of a similar level of challenge. This was not thought to be the case for AQA in Unit 5 for 2009.

AQA replaced its texts for 2009, and the new texts offered significantly less challenge than the text pair from 2005. The 2005 choice of texts (Unit 5) included *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* and *Catch 22*, and this was replaced by *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *Northern Lights* in 2009. *Northern Lights* is a popular Key Stage 3 text, and neither text offered the same level of reading demand as the 2005 texts. This is because *Northern Lights* is a popular text for much younger learners, and, therefore, can be read and understood on a simple level. This is not the case with the other two texts. Although *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* does consider challenging issues, again it can be understood on a simpler level. This is not the case with *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* and *Catch 22*, which have more challenging vocabulary and a complex narrative structure.

There is generally an appropriate progression from AS to A2 level in terms of challenge and skills. This is particularly apparent through the demand of many of the text choices and the way in which elements of comparison are managed in most of

the synoptic A2 units. There was thought to be some difference in the level of demand between awarding organisations for particular units, although the demand within the same awarding organisation appears largely to have stayed at the same level across time.

Aspects that reflected differences in the level of demand included: opportunities to study additional texts; how the closed text units were designed and managed; and to a lesser extent the duration of examinations and coursework requirements, for example word count. In most cases any differences in demand found in individual units within a specification were thought to be balanced out when the specification was considered as a whole. Two awarding organisations, however, exhibited clear differences in demand. OCR was thought to be more challenging in some aspects, and CCEA appeared significantly less demanding than other awarding organisations in several respects. CCEA was judged to be much less challenging owing to the large amount of rubric² and guidance given to candidates and the use of extended extracts in closed book examinations (this is further exemplified in the part of this report that considers question papers).

The use of closed text examinations is an issue with awarding organisations. Examination papers that give large extracts of the text, such as those of CCEA, reduce the examination demand and challenge of a closed text examination on candidates. This practice can be contrasted with the Edexcel synoptic Unit 6, which is a closed text examination and offers a choice of two questions per text, both of which require candidates to write about different parts of the text and have a secure knowledge of the text without the use of supporting extracts.

For example, consider the following question:

‘The bad end unhappily, the good unluckily. That is what tragedy means.’ In the light of this definition of tragedy, compare and contrast your two novels in some detail.

To answer this question successfully candidates must have a good understanding and detailed knowledge of their set texts since they do not receive any extracts to look at in the examination.

Examination papers for closed text examinations that give large extracts of text for candidates’ consideration do not fully test the candidates’ skills in managing a paper that by definition should not allow access to the text or significant parts of it.

² Instructions or guidance given to candidates on the examination paper

Scheme of assessment

The scheme of assessment remained largely the same in 2005 and 2009; see the table in [Appendix B](#).

Assessment units are generally related to a genre or time period, thereby allowing the coverage of the stipulated literature provision. This means that some of the units are very similar across awarding organisations, for example the study of Shakespeare, whereas differences appear between other units, such as the composition of the synoptic unit.

All awarding organisations allow centres some flexibility to choose from a range of texts within a unit. This choice is increased in many coursework units, with some allowing a free choice of text within some guidelines such as genre or time period. Some awarding organisations require text choices for coursework to be agreed by them, although others do not. This means the scheme of assessment depends largely on the guidance of individual centres in allowing candidates to select their own texts for some of the (coursework) units and in choosing whether to take examination or coursework options (or, in the case of OCR, both options). The choice of texts and options within each unit varies from awarding organisation to awarding organisation. In most units there is a very wide range of texts, although CCEA A2 level Unit 4 offers a choice of one out of four poetry texts, which is a more limited selection compared with other awarding organisations that typically offer five or more choices of text.

In the specifications offered by OCR and Edexcel, candidates who make certain text choices for an AS unit are given the opportunity to revisit them in A2. For example, Edexcel candidates studying *The Return of the Native* in Unit 2 AS have the opportunity to revisit this text in Unit 6 as one text in a paired text choice. However, this is not the case with all the texts in Edexcel Unit 2 and, therefore, can alter the number of texts studied by candidates.

The largest differences between schemes of assessment relate to the varying options and examination lengths that each awarding organisation offers. All awarding organisations offer some choice in methods of assessment. Centres select the pathway through the specification that suits their candidates best, choosing from either coursework or examination methods of assessment, where this is an option. In OCR, for one unit it is indicated that candidates can be assessed for both the examination and coursework option, taking the best result. This is not highlighted as an option by other specifications.

The total word count for coursework is potentially double if the candidates take OCR instead of CCEA. There is also a difference of 1 hour 50 minutes between the awarding organisations with the longest total examination time (AQA) and the shortest (CCEA), although candidates taking CCEA will have taken a compulsory

coursework unit. CCEA appeared significantly less demanding than other awarding organisations, in part owing to assessment practices such as large extracts of text published in the closed text examination and the excessive degree of support and scaffolding of questions in examination papers.

Options

Options are different units or assessments that candidates (and centres) can choose from within a specification. The optional routes for each awarding organisation in 2005 and 2009 are provided in [Appendix C](#).

The majority of the texts within each awarding organisation remained the same in 2005 and 2009. Generally, the level of challenge remained consistent within each awarding organisation for the time period, even when texts were changed, with the exception of one change of paired texts for AQA in 2009 (see the sub-section *Specification content* above for further details). Texts set for examinations were generally of an appropriate level of demand and provided a suitable increase in challenge from GCSE to A level. Awarding organisations generally offered a good range of stimulating text choices.

All specifications offered some choice between coursework and examination routes, although, for OCR and CCEA, candidates must take one of the units as a coursework piece. The parity of coursework or examination route in the specifications was concerning because the options offered very different assessment opportunities for candidates. Differences between awarding organisations are further increased by the range of word counts, and because some awarding organisations allow the opportunity to write about more than one text for particular units. Mark schemes for individual awarding organisations were different for the coursework and examination options. This is appropriate since the tasks and nature of the assessment are different, but it does make comparison between examination and coursework options for the same unit very difficult. These factors mean that there is considerable variation in the choices offered across the awarding organisations and within each awarding organisation.

Because of these concerns, optional coursework and question papers are not permitted under the revised criteria that came into effect following the collection of these materials.

Question papers

Generally, question papers showed a consistent standard of demand in both 2005 and 2009. The use of questions focused only on extracts in some units by awarding organisations reduced demand in 2005 and 2009, because candidates did not have to demonstrate their knowledge across a whole text. Extract-focused questions do

not always test the candidate's ability to move from looking at a specific part of a text to showing their knowledge across a whole text.

Although the standard of questions set was at a similar level of demand in each year, there are serious issues with formulaic phrasing and the narrow range of some questions. Additionally, there are some real differences between awarding organisations in question phrasing and the level of demand that they make on candidates.

The questions for each awarding organisation look as if they made a similar demand on the candidates from 2005 and 2009. In the case of several awarding organisations there is a great deal of duplication in question setting; in some instances, identical questions were set in 2005 and 2009.

One example of this is OCR, which used many of the same questions in 2005 and 2009. In Unit 2708, many of the questions are identical. For example, the following question appeared in both 2005 and 2009:

Franklin's Tale 1(b): 'Love wol not be constrained by maistrie.' Considering in detail one or two passages, discuss the significance of 'maistrie' in your reading of *The Franklin's Tale*.

A large degree of predictability was found in the questions used by many of the awarding organisations, for example for Shakespeare for AQA and WJEC in 2005 and 2009. The content of the questions for CCEA was also very similar and the themes for questions in the synoptic paper were nearly identical.

There was a large degree of predictability in the extracts and unseen texts set for AQA Unit 6. The unit should include a range of unseen texts, as the specification stipulates 'close detailed study of unseen texts from a range of periods and genres'. However, both years appear to follow a common and possibly predictable format: three poems (one by Wilfred Owen), one extract of drama and one non-fiction text. It might also call into question whether a sufficient 'range' of texts is being examined. Wilfred Owen's war poetry is likely to have been experienced by many of the candidates at Key Stages 3 and 4, making the choice of his famous poems as an unseen text undemanding.

The majority of the awarding organisations do phrase examination questions in suitable ways that enable candidates to engage and understand the issues. However, CCEA's questions provide a great deal more structure, guidance and rubric than any of the other awarding organisations. They are also phrased much more simply, with many fewer technical terms and references to critics' viewpoints (and, where these are used, they are fully explained afterwards). This guidance by CCEA is excessive and potentially distracting to the candidate. Many of the questions give so much guidance and stipulation that the independence and

challenge offered to the more able candidate to engage with the question and offer their own insightful, independent response is lost. It should be noted that such a degree of guidance is not present in any of the other awarding organisations' question papers, which leads to the CCEA papers giving those candidates an experience of A level assessment that is very different to that of other candidates (even though the texts they are studying might be the same as for other awarding organisations).

For example, consider the following part of a question for Unit 1:

Using the extract indicated below as a starting point and with reference to other appropriately selected parts of the play, **construct an argument** in response to the above statement. In your argument, consider the two bullet points given below in coming to your own conclusions:

- Reasons for thinking that the conflict in the play is between men and God
- Reasons for thinking that the conflict in the play is only between men...

This explicit guidance does not allow the candidates much opportunity to shape or structure their own response and reduces their independence.

In addition, with CCEA, some of the advice to the candidates about marks being awarded and the decision to give particular proportion of marks to particular aspects also appeared to reduce the level of independence and challenge for the candidates. For example, from the same question: 'N.B. One quarter of the marks for this question are available for your use of the extract'. This explicit guidance appears to suggest a restrictive response that is followed through in the mark scheme, where candidates cannot access above a certain number of marks if they have not considered the extract in sufficient detail. For example, in the mark scheme for Assessment Unit A2 2A: 'Candidates who do not make effective use of the given passage as a starting point are not to be awarded more than 24 marks'. This appears a little restrictive.

Many awarding organisations use extract questions that refer the candidate to a particular scene or moment in a text; however, in some cases this reduces the level of challenge, as candidates do not need to have a good detailed knowledge and overview of the whole text. While extract questions can be useful for focusing candidates on a particular area and relating this to the text as a whole, too many questions allowed candidates to give only a partial response to a small part of a text. Candidates need the scope to write about whole texts rather than focus on one or two extracts only. This was particularly the case with some of the Shakespeare examination papers. Many of the awarding organisations selected this as the closed text examination, yet managed to include large extracts of the Shakespeare play in the examination, and focused questions on these specific extracts. This undermines the role and function of the closed book examination. This was particularly an issue

with CCEA, where both closed text examinations published key extracts of the text for comment (as an introduction to moving to consideration of the text as a whole). In the case of the poetry with some texts (*Wife of Bath*), a very large amount of the set text was given. This does not offer the same level of challenge as other awarding organisations in closed book examinations. It could be questioned whether allowing both closed text examinations to publish long extracts or whole, named poems meets the aspect of the assessment criteria relating to closed text examination demands.

Mark schemes

Awarding organisations approached mark schemes in different ways. The best practice included clearly targeting specific assessment objectives, clear progression between bands and examples of indicative comments to help markers to understand the types of responses that are representative of work in each band. Edexcel was thought to show good practice in the construction of its mark schemes.

Overly generic mark schemes that did not include indicative comments of content, such as those used by AQA, were thought not to offer sufficient guidance. In some of CCEA's mark schemes, some of the comments appeared to focus on selecting negative aspects of candidates' work, which was not thought to be constructive: for example, 'excessive misspelling, errors of punctuation and consistently faulty syntax in answers should be noted on the front cover and drawn to the attention of the Chief Examiner'.

Coursework

This section describes assessments other than traditional examinations that contribute to the final grade awarded. All awarding organisations offered coursework in 2005 and 2009. For CCEA and OCR it was compulsory for one of the units, in the case of the other awarding organisations it remained an option. The coursework demands set by each of the awarding organisations were consistent between 2005 and 2009.

There is a wide variety of options between awarding organisations and the differences in how they have chosen to offer and implement coursework make demand across the awarding organisations uneven. For example, in CCEA's AS it is compulsory to take coursework for AS Unit 3; however, candidates may write about 'at least one text'. Some candidates will thus write about more than one text and this ability to widen the breadth of the coursework texts studied makes it appear difficult to judge comparability in demand between candidates for the same awarding organisation in the same year. This is also the case for OCR Unit 2711, whose guidance notes that 'comparison between texts is not a requirement in this unit, though candidates who study more than one text may wish to do so and can be

given credit within the scope of the assessment'. It is difficult to gauge how credit will be given, as this is not made clear in the specification.

All awarding organisations offer a range of support services for teachers in the setting of coursework questions. However, for most, it is optional for centres to check the suitability of their questions with the awarding organisation. As WJEC states: 'If in doubt about an internal assessment then it is always possible to consult the centre's moderator' (2009). The CCEA specification notes that 'the teacher should ensure that the work undertaken has a clear focus', which is clearly important for the success of the coursework task. Unlike an examination, which is externally set, the success of coursework setting depends very much on centres and their own judgements. Given that many candidates complete the coursework options; this means that a large amount of the course is to a great extent determined by the centre/teacher. Two of the awarding organisations offer the option of 'personal composition' or 're-creative tasks' that are not offered by the other awarding organisations. There was not sufficient information about these non-traditional approaches in the specifications to make clear judgements about their demand on candidates and how they compare to the more traditional coursework approach.

It is also difficult to judge the relative demands of a coursework task compared with an externally assessed examination. For example, AQA offers two units where coursework may be taken as an option instead of an examination – yet the practical demands of each assessment appear quite different. Both Unit 2 Shakespeare AS and Unit 5 Literary Connections use similar (but not identical) mark schemes, focusing on the same assessment objectives and skills; however, the demands of the two tasks are very different. Coursework for Shakespeare is a 2,000-word coursework task with a relatively free choice of text/task (subject to assessment criteria and coursework adviser guidance), whereas for the Shakespeare written paper, candidates have a choice of two questions to be completed within one hour from a choice of three plays. Some of the Shakespeare questions for this examination do allow candidates to focus on a limited amount of the text. For example:

The Tempest (2009). Explore Shakespeare's presentation of good and evil in the play.

You may confine yourself to **two** episodes or range more widely if you prefer.

Some of the guidance to centres regarding teachers' advice on drafts of coursework is ambiguous. This is further highlighted by the varied information that awarding organisations give regarding the minimum and maximum word limits. Some awarding organisations put the onus on the centre: for example, OCR guidelines state (page 6): 'A folder guideline length 1,500–2,000 words, maximum 3,000'; it would be clearer for centres if the guidance were precise, and this would result in greater consistency of demand.

Section 3: Standards of performance

Overview

At grade A, AQA's scripts in both 2005 and 2009 were all (with the exception of one script) ranked by the review team in the bottom half in terms of judged candidate performance at the grade boundary. At the same grade, both CCEA and Edexcel's scripts were evenly spread throughout the script ranking order. For both WJEC and OCR, over 80 per cent of their scripts were ranked in the top half by reviewers.

At the grade E boundary (merging both the 2005 and 2009 scripts for the respective awarding organisation), reviewers judged the AQA and CCEA scripts to be broadly well distributed within the rankings, while 85 per cent of both the Edexcel and OCR scripts were in the best performing half, and over 75 per cent of the WJEC scripts were in the worst performing half, as benchmarked against the respective grade descriptor.

Coursework elements improved the quality of sets of candidates at both grades A and E. Some of the tasks that had been set for coursework, where candidates were awarded a grade E, were harder than those tasks set for candidates that had achieved a grade A, suggesting that the tasks for coursework could have hindered the candidates' abilities to perform. Coursework tasks across the awarding organisations varied considerably in terms of their level of demand.

Findings

Process

Reviewers considered candidate work from all the awarding organisations in 2005 and 2009. Details of the materials used can be found in [Appendix F](#), script ranking position details can be found in [Appendix H](#) and tables and graphs of candidate performance can be found in [Appendix G](#).

Interpreting the graphs

The graphs below show the spread of the candidate work, as produced by the FACETS software. The centre point indicates the measure related to the relevant ranked script and the error bar whiskers represent the standard error of measurement (SEM) to the corresponding measure. The difference between sequential measures demonstrates the strength of the difference in the ranking position, therefore, large differences would illustrate that scripts were less close in terms of similarity of candidate performance than small differences. Therefore, there could be a larger difference in judged candidate performance between scripts ranked 1 and 2 than between 2 and 3 (the difference in candidate performance is not necessarily the same between ranked positions).

The SEM illustrates the level of confidence that the measure is accurate: the greater the SEM, the smaller the confidence levels. Therefore, large *whiskers* mean that there is less confidence that the measure was accurate. The *whiskers* illustrate the level of confidence, with upper and lower points at which the measure could lie.

The FACETS software will usually produce a rank order, even when there is little difference between the quality of the candidate work considered in the review. This is due to the natural slight variability between candidates who get the same mark. In these cases the rank order would show a relatively even spread of candidate work from different awarding organisations throughout the rank order.

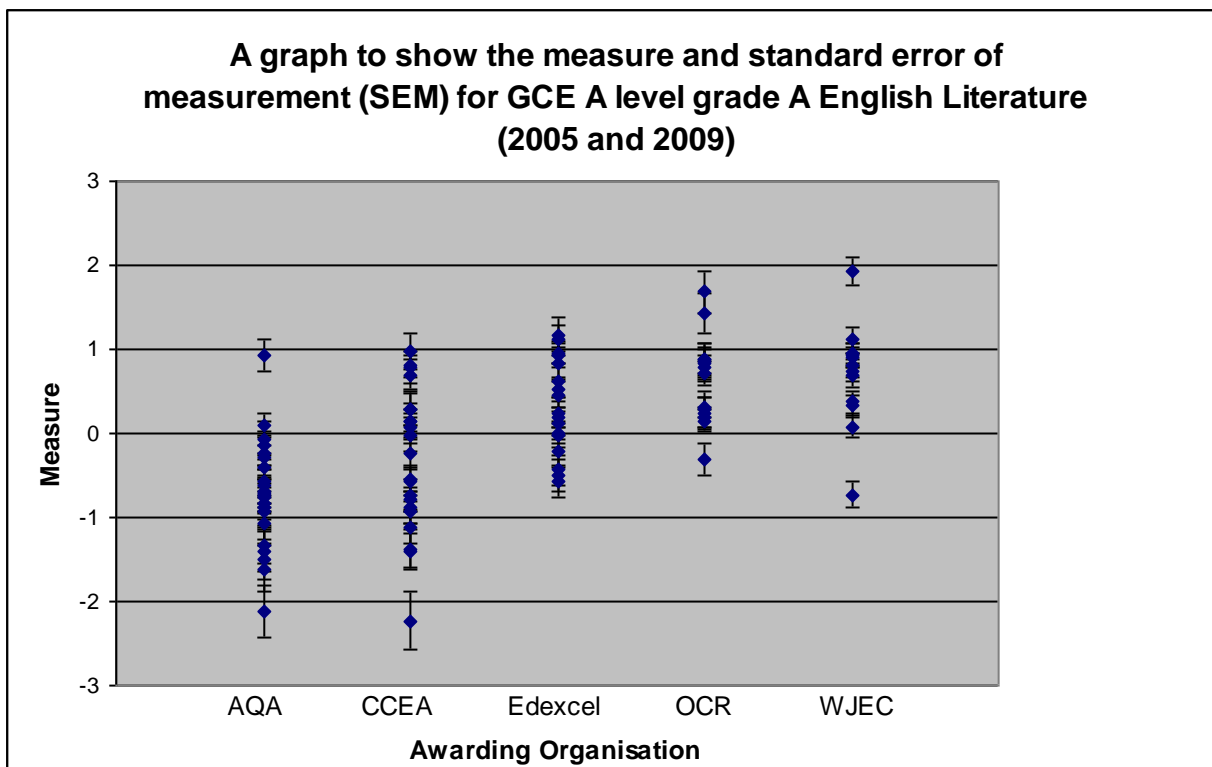
The scripts have been separated by awarding organisation for ease of reference, represented in alphabetical order across the horizontal axis (but can be found as a continuous inter-awarding organisation list in table format in [Appendix I](#)).

Performance at the GCE A level grade A boundary in 2005

Similar to the script ranking in 2009 (see below), the majority of AQA's scripts were ranked in the bottom half for the grade. While almost 60 per cent of CCEA's scripts were ranked in the bottom quartile for this grade and year, this represented only four candidate scripts, with the remaining three scripts falling within the middle quartiles. Edexcel's scripts were relatively evenly spread across the quartiles, as were WJEC's (although only five WJEC scripts were used in the script review).

Performance at the GCE A level grade A boundary in 2009

All of AQA's scripts at this grade boundary and year were in the bottom half of the reviewers' rankings, suggesting that candidate performance at the grade boundary may not be as good as that from other awarding organisations. CCEA's candidate scripts were distributed relatively evenly in the rankings and the majority of Edexcel's scripts were ranked within the top half by the review team. All of OCR's scripts were ranked within the second best-performing quartile, suggesting a consistent standard. However, it should be noted that there were significantly less scripts available for the study compared with AQA and CCEA. WJEC's scripts were all ranked within the top half of the rankings. However, there were also fewer scripts than for other awarding organisations. It should be noted that the uneven number of scripts provided could have skewed how the results can be interpreted.

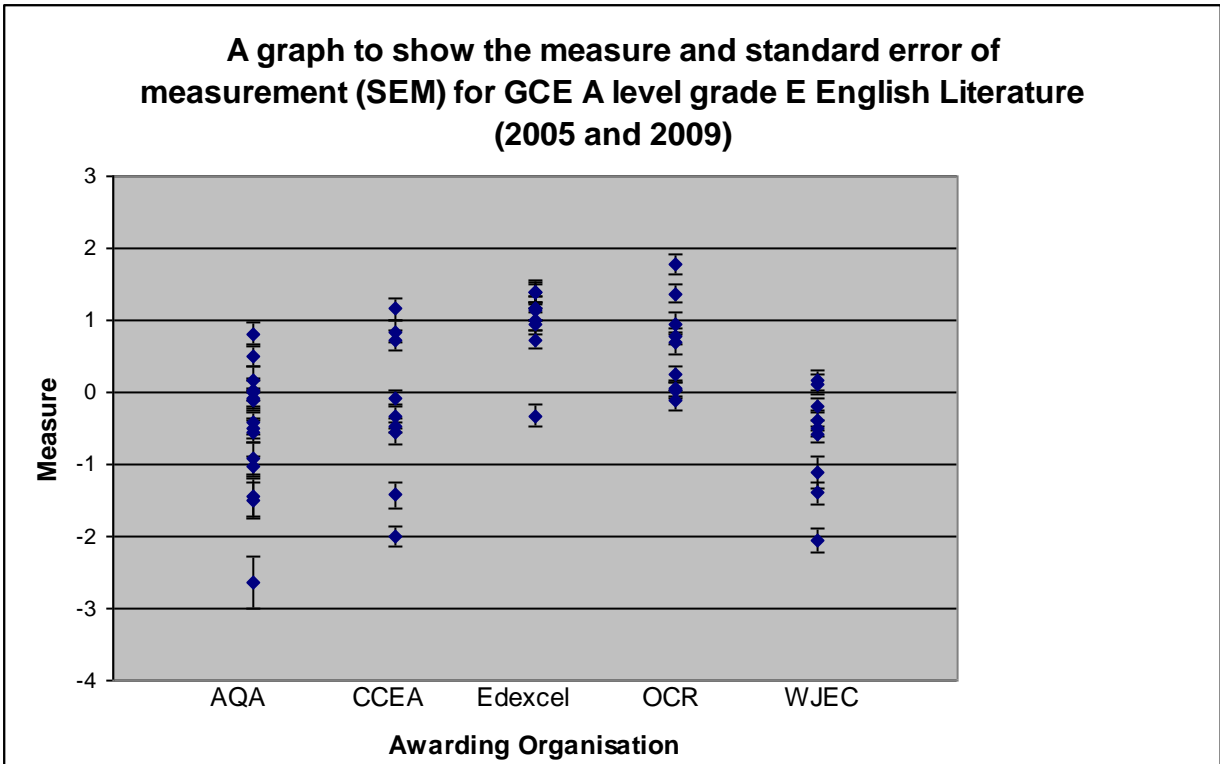


Performance at the GCE A level grade E boundary in 2005

The AQA scripts used within the review for this category were reasonably well distributed through the ranking positions; however, the CCEA scripts (only three were suitable for use in the review) were all ranked within the bottom half of the ranked script positions. 80 per cent of the Edexcel and OCR scripts ranked within the study at this grade and, for the over time element, were judged to be in the top half in terms of candidate performance, as judged against the grade descriptor. In contrast, the majority of WJEC's scripts were in the bottom half of the ranking positions.

Performance at the GCE A level grade E boundary in 2009

Similarly to their judged candidate performance in 2005, the AQA scripts reviewed were ranked evenly throughout, suggesting consistency in script performance quality at the grade boundary. CCEA's scripts were also distributed evenly within the ranking positions. All of Edexcel's scripts in this category were ranked in the best candidate performance quartile, thus demonstrating a high quality of candidate achievement at the grade boundary. While OCR's scripts were all ranked in the top half, WJEC's were ranked in the bottom half.



Recommendations

This report has detailed our work in analysing the demand of qualifications across different years within GCE A level English Literature.

The next review of GCE A level English Literature is currently scheduled to take place in 2013, based on 2009 and 2012 materials. Some of the issues identified in this report have already been addressed in the revised criteria for GCE AS and A level English Literature. First teaching of these specifications was in September 2009. The review in 2013 will be able to judge whether the changes to the criteria have had an impact on the issues raised above.

In particular, this report recommends that the following be monitored closely:

- the amount of choice available to candidates within the specifications and through varied schemes of assessment (including the opportunities to choose between coursework and question papers)
- the prevalence of formulaic questions
- the prevalence of questions that focus on extracts rather than whole texts.

Appendices

Appendix A: Provision of assessment materials & candidate work at GCSE and GCE levels for the National Archive (annual inclusion and standards reviews)

Section 1: Specification of requirements

1.1 Each awarding organisation should draw the materials for each subject from the specification with their largest entry in summer 2009, unless that selection severely limits the range of examination components available. Where there are several entry options, materials should be drawn from the largest option only, unless Ofqual were exceptionally to agree other arrangements.

1.2 (With regards to GCSE)- where there are both modular and linear (non-modular) examinations in a subject, the awarding organisation operating the modular scheme with the greatest number of candidates (amongst all awarding organisations) should include that modular scheme, even if it is not a specification within the awarding organisation's largest entry. Similarly, the awarding organisation operating the linear scheme with the greatest number of candidates should include that linear scheme. If an awarding organisation runs both the largest entry linear examination and the largest entry modular examination in a subject, it will therefore provide two sets of materials, including candidate work, where required.

1.3 The following materials should be supplied:

- a) Current specification: all associated question papers and final mark schemes.
- b) The 2009 chief examiners' report (CER) and details of awarding procedures particular to the specification supplied.
- c) An indication of how the specification's content and assessment criteria and objectives have been met in each question paper supplied. This may take the form of a grid. For objective tests this should include faculty values, discrimination indices and a specification grid detailing what grade each question was targeted at, as well as an indication of what percentage of candidates got a particular question correct when it was targeted at the grade they got overall.
- d) Unit or component mark distributions (with grade boundary marks shown). It should be clear whether the marks are on the raw or uniform mark scale.
- e) Grade boundaries, overall and by unit (both raw and scaled).
- f) Candidate work as specified in Section 2.

g) Complete data record showing for each candidate selected the raw mark; final mark; weighted or uniform mark; grade for each component/unit (including any non-archived component/unit) and overall grade; and, where relevant, tier of entry.

Where appropriate, materials a)–e) may be supplied in electronic form.

Section 2: Candidate work

2.1 The work submitted should include the examination scripts, the internal assessment, and any oral/ aural examinations (with examiner mark sheet) where these are routinely recorded. In addition, for modular specifications, the examination papers of module tests should be supplied.

2.2 The sample should be of the original work of the candidates. Photocopies of work should only be used where it is impossible to send the originals and with agreement in advance by Ofqual. Candidate and centre names and numbers should be removed wherever they appear in a candidate's work, unless they form an integral part of the work, for example, within a letter.

2.3 Where an awarding organisation's specification has a relatively small entry or where, for some other reason, it is proving difficult to find sufficient candidates who fulfil the criteria, the awarding organisation should contact the Ofqual officer responsible to agree how best to finalise the sample.

2.4 All internal assessment submitted should be that of the particular candidates selected for the sample. If, for any reason, this proves to be impossible, the awarding organisation should contact the Ofqual officer responsible to agree appropriate alternative measures.

2.5 The sample of scripts retained for each specification (option) should be taken from candidates whose final mark lay at or near the subject grade boundaries for A/B, C/D and F/G for GCSE and A/B and E/U for GCE A-level qualifications. At each boundary, each awarding organisation will supply the externally and internally set and marked assessments of fifteen candidates. Candidates selected should be those whose performance across units is not obviously and significantly unbalanced.

2.6 In tiered subjects, where the same grade boundary may feature in two tiers, separate sets of candidate work for the boundary should be provided from each tier.

In addition for AS/A level specifications:

2.7 Where awarding organisations have to supply candidate work for an A level specification, two samples are required: one for the AS and one for the A2 units.

2.8 For AS level, the work of 15 candidates whose mark for the AS is at or close to the UMS boundary for an AS grade A (240) or grade E (120) should be supplied.

Candidates selected should be those whose performance across the three AS units is not obviously or significantly unbalanced. Candidates should have taken at least two of the three AS units in the June examination series.

2.9 For A level, the sample comprises the A2 work of 15 candidates who have gained c240 UMS marks at A or c120 UMS marks at E on their A2 units. Candidates selected should be those whose performance across the three A2 units is not obviously or significantly unbalanced. Candidates selected will ideally have also gained an overall A level mark which is at or close to the UMS boundary for an overall A level grade A (480) or grade E (240). Candidates should have taken at least two of the three A2 units in the June examination series.

2.10 The set of AS and A2 units provided should also be a valid combination for A level.

2.11 Where coursework forms a compulsory sub-component within a unit, that coursework should also be collected. Where a unit has optional sub-components, the highest entry option should be supplied. The candidates chosen for the sample should, as far as possible, have a performance across the components of the unit which is not obviously unbalanced.

Appendix B: Schemes of assessment

Awarding organisation	Maximum amount of coursework options	Maximum amount of examination
AQA	2 units, max 2,000 words and 2,500 words Total 4,500 words	If coursework option not taken, 10 hours 30 minutes
CCEA	Coursework is compulsory for one unit (1,500 words) and 1,500 words Total 3,000 words	If the one optional coursework unit is not taken, 8 hours 40 minutes
Edexcel	2 units, 1,500 words and 2,500 words Total 4,000 words	If coursework option not taken, 9 hours
OCR	2 units, max 3,000 words and 3,000 words Total 6,000 words One coursework task must be completed for Unit 2709	If coursework option not taken, 9 hours 15 minutes. There is the option to complete coursework and examination for one unit
WJEC	Coursework is optional. 2 units, 1,500–2,000 words and 2,000 words Total 4,000 words	If optional coursework units not taken, 9 hours 45 minutes

Appendix C: Optional routes for each awarding organisation in 2005 and 2009

AQA

Component title	Weighting (%)	Time allowance	Type of assessment	Comments
Unit 1 – The Modern Novel	30% (of the total AS marks)	1 hour	Written	The aim of this unit is to provide candidates with an introduction to the detailed study of one modern novel, written in the second half of the 20th century. The written unit tests Assessment Objectives 1, 2i, 3 and the first part of 4. The unit enables the candidate to meet the core requirement for the study of one work of prose.
Unit 2 – Shakespeare	30% (of the total AS marks)	No time allocated for coursework 1 hour for written examination	Coursework and written	The aim of this unit is to introduce candidates to a detailed study of one Shakespeare text by offering as much freedom as possible in choice of text and assignment.
Unit 3 – Texts in Context	40% (of the total AS marks)	2 hours		The aim of this unit is to introduce candidates to the study of two texts (one poetry, one drama), with an emphasis on the context of the writer and the reader and of how interpretation of text changes through time and according to circumstance.
Unit 4 – Texts in Time	40% (15% of the total A level marks)	2 hours	Written	The aim of this unit is to examine the study of two texts in detail. As a whole, this unit tests Assessment Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5ii fairly equally, but the assessment pattern for each question is different.

Unit 5 – Literary Connections	20% (15% of the total A level marks)	No time allocated for coursework, or 1 hour 30 minutes for written examination	Coursework and written	This unit may be taken either as coursework or as a written unit. Whichever assessment route is followed, candidates will study two texts for the purposes of comparison. This unit assesses Assessment Objectives 1, 3 and 4 fairly equally, with AO2ii as the dominant AO.
Unit 6 – Reading for Meaning	40% (20% of the total A level marks)	3 hours	Written	This written unit tests the skills, knowledge and understanding developed throughout the course, demonstrating candidates’ understanding of the connections between the different elements of the subject. It tests Assessment Objectives 1, 2ii, 3, 4 and 5ii fairly equally.

CCEA

Component title	Weighting (%)	Time allowance	Type of assessment	Comments
Module 1- The Study of Poetry Written After 1800 and The Study of 20 th Century Dramatists	40%	2 hours	External	Open book examination and annotated text: Rubric: A choice of two questions, (a) and (b), will be set on each text. Candidates will be expected to answer one question from Section A (Poetry) and one question from Section B (Drama) on selected texts.
Module 2- The Study of Shakespeare	30%	1 hour	External	Closed book: Rubric: A choice of two questions, (a) and (b), will be set on each text. Candidates will be expected to answer one question on a selected text.
Module 3- The Study of Prose Written Before 1900.	30%	No time allocated	Internal	Internal Assessment:
Module 4- Response to Unseen Poetry and the Study of Poetry Written Before 1770	15%	2 hours 30 minutes	External	Closed book examination: Rubric: In Section A, candidates will be expected to provide a personal and analytical response to poetry that will involve comparing and contrasting two poems. In Section B, a choice of two questions, (a) and (b), will be set on each text. Candidates will be expected to answer one question on a selected text. In general, the questions on this paper will require candidates to base their responses on a named poem and one other poem chosen by them. All named

				<p>poems will be printed in a booklet accompanying the question paper. For Chaucer and longer poems from other poets, extracts will be referred to in the question and will be printed in a booklet accompanying the question paper.</p> <p>Candidates will be asked to refer to other appropriately selected parts of the poem.</p>
Module 5 The Study of Twentieth Century Prose	15%	1 hour 10 minutes for examination OR no time allocated for coursework	External or coursework	<p>The requirements for each assessment unit are set out below.</p> <p>Assessment Unit A2-2a. Rubric: A choice of two questions, (a) and (b), will be set on each text. Candidates will be expected to answer one question on a selected text. Style of examination: open book..</p> <p>Rubric: One assignment based on at least one prose text written after 1900. If a candidate opts for internal assessment, the text selected for study must be chosen from the list of texts prescribed for A2-2a. Students will be expected to write an assignment of approximately 1,500 words.</p>
Module 6 – Drama	20%	2 hours	External	<p>Rubric: Candidates will be expected to answer one question on one of the three synoptic options provided. Style of examination: open book.</p> <p>A single question will be set (no choice) on each pair of texts, which will require</p>

				<p>candidates to reassess their critical perspectives of these set texts and the connections between them. The stimulus for this reassessment will involve consideration of unseen literary critical material that will offer views of the texts or aspects of the texts.</p>
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Edexcel

Component title	Weighting (%)	Time allowance	Type of assessment	Comments
Unit 1 – Drama and Poetry (6391)	20%	2 hours	Written	Open text. Choice of plays and poetry selections. Candidates must answer one question on each of drama and poetry. Two types of question: directed to one extract and requiring students to select appropriate extracts to answer the question.
Unit 2 – Prose (6392)	15%	1 hour	Written	Closed text. Choice of novels – candidates answer on one chosen from five, and choose one of two questions on that.
Unit 3a – Shakespeare in Context (6393/01)	15%	No time allocated	Coursework	Choice of five plays. 1,500 words. May be one study or two, one of which may be personal composition arising from textual study.
Unit 3b – Shakespeare in Context (6393/02)	15%	1 hour	Written	Examination option: same five plays. Two types of question: directed to one extract and requiring students to select appropriate extracts to answer the question. Candidates answer on one play chosen from the five, and choose one of two questions on that.
Unit 4a – Modern Prose (6394/01)	15%	No time allocated	Coursework	Coursework option: 2,000–2,500 words. May be one study or two, one of which may be personal composition arising from textual study. Choice of texts.
Unit 4b – Modern Prose (6394/02)	15%	1 hour	Written	Examination option: one of five named texts. Open text. One question on one text.
Unit 5 – Poetry and Drama (6395)	15%	2 hours	Written	Open text. Four sections, A–D – students choose from A+C, A+D or B+C, one question on each.

Unit 6 – Criticism and Comparison (6396)	20%	2 hours	Written	Synoptic unit: A Unprepared work; B Comparative work. One question from each. Choice between prose and poetry unprepared. Choice from six areas of study: poetry, prose or drama; at least one of three named texts in each area is pre-1900.
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OCR

Component title	Weighting (%)	Time allowance	Type of assessment	Comments
Unit 2707 – Drama: Shakespeare	30% (for AS) 15% (for A2)	1 hour 30 minutes	Written	Closed text. Choice of four Shakespeare plays. Two questions to be answered – one from each section. Section A: on one extract. Section B: one essay on same play – choice of two questions for each play.
Unit 2708 – Poetry and Prose	40% (for AS) 20% (for A2)	1 hour 30 minutes	Written	Open text: approved edition. Two questions to be answered: one poetry and one prose. One essay must be on a pre-1900 text. If there are many poems in a collection, then a list of selected poems is provided for those that might be used for the extract in Section A.
Unit 2709 – Literature Complementary Study	30% (for AS) 15% (for A2)	No time allocated	Written	Free choice of text – any genre. Must be of appropriate demand. A folder of 1,500-2,000 words (maximum 3,000), consisting of two items of writing on one text. One is on a passage or passages, one on a whole text. Can include either a critical appreciation of a passage or a 're-creative response', which must relate to a particular passage (AO2i – in the style of...). They cannot write two whole text pieces – this point was picked up in the Chief Examiner's Report.
Unit 2710 – Poetry and Drama pre-1900	15% (A2)	2 hours	Written	Closed text. 6 poetry and 6 dramas – have to do one of each (one from Section A and one from Section B). One answer must be on a pre-1770 text. This unit is to show greater depth and progression from AS (giving opinions).

Unit 2711 – Prose post-1914	15% (A2)	No time allocated	Coursework	Either two pieces of writing or one extended piece on one or more texts – prose or non-fiction: 3,000 words max. Has to show an understanding of the genre. Comparison not required, but credit is given for comparing.
Unit 2712 – Prose post-1914	15% (A2)	2 hours	Written	Open text. Section A: two questions – one passage-based, one essay, either on the same text or on two different texts from prescribed list. Section B: two essays on each text.
Unit 2713 – Comparative and Contextual Study	20% (Advanced GCE)	2 hours 15 minutes (reading)	Written	Synoptic. Study one of the five topic areas. Answer one question from Section A and one question from Section B, on the same topic. Section A: Unseen passage (poem, prose, drama); Section B: choice from three essays, each covering at least two texts. Two questions in each focus on a set text; the third option allows choice of focus. Incorporates wider reading.

WJEC

Component title	Weighting (%)	Time allowance	Type of assessment	Comments
ELit1 – Shakespeare	30% (15% of Advanced)	1 hour	Written	Text edition not specified. Choice from four plays (Othello, Henry V, King Lear, Merry Wives)
ELit2 – Choice of Text	30% (15% of Advanced)	1 hour 30 minutes for examination. No time allocated coursework	Coursework and written	Study of a single text, showing different interpretations of it. Text to be taken into the examination – two questions on each text. Candidates required to answer one question in two parts. Coursework option folder of 1,500–2,000 words. Exploring an approved text in relation to various critical opinions. Choice of one of six texts. Range of genres: prose, poetry, play. Coursework text must be approved by the awarding organisation.
ELit3 – Poetry (20th Century) and Prose (pre-1900)	40% (20% of Advanced)	2 hours	Written	Two questions on poetry (20th century), open text, or prose (pre-1900), open text. Two questions are set on each text, choice to do one question. Some questions refer to specific passages. Choice of six poetry and six prose. Challenging texts.
ELit4 – Poetry (pre-1900)	15%	1 hour 15 minutes	Written	Choice of two questions per text. Challenging texts: Chaucer, metaphysical poets, Keats, etc. Total six texts.
ELit5 – Comparison of Texts	15%	1 hour 30 minutes	Coursework and written	Study one pair of texts, answer one question on that pair from a choice of two questions. Questions will focus on relationships and comparisons between texts. Internal assessment 2,000 words – one text must be prose. Modern prose appears to be the choice – choice of six pairs.

ELit6 – Drama (pre- 1770)	20%	2 hours 30 minutes	Written	Candidates to answer one question on a text. Choice of two questions. Focus on contextual influences. Question will be followed by previously unseen linked material (poems or prose post-1770). Candidates to compare the linked material to an aspect of the play studied in the light of a critical view. Choice of one of four plays.
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Appendix D: Details of A level specifications reviewed

		Awarding organisation and specification codes				
		AQA	CCEA	Edexcel	OCR	WJEC
Year	2005	5741(AS)*	A5110*	9180*	7828*	6890*
		6741(A2)*				
		5746 (AS)				
		6747 (A2)				
	2009	5741(AS)*	A5110*	8180(AS)*	3828(AS)*	6890*
		6741(A2)*		9180(A2)*	7828(A2)*	

* Indicates the specification code that was reviewed

AQA offered an alternative GCE A level English Literature in 2005 (Lit B). For the purposes of this review, the specification with the largest total entry from each awarding organisation was selected; in the case of AQA this was the Lit A specification.

Appendix E: Details of A level scripts reviewed

		Awarding organisation									
		AQA		CCEA		Edexcel		OCR		WJEC	
		Year	2005	2009	2005	2009	2005	2009	2005	2009	2005
GCE A level	Grade										
	A	15*	15*	12*	15*	10*	15*	15*	15*	15*	15*
	E	10**	12**	8**	12**	10**	7**	10**	6**	5**	6**
		15*	15*	3*	10*	15*	13*	10*	5*	14*	6*
		9**	6**	3**	6**	5**	4**	5**	4**	6**	3**

* Number of candidate scripts (candidate work) received from the awarding organisation

** Number of candidate scripts used in the script review

Appendix F: Availability of specification materials for the purposes of this review

Materials	2009					2005				
	AQA	CCEA	Edexcel	OCR	WJEC	AQA	CCEA	Edexcel	OCR	WJEC
Specification	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Question paper	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mark scheme	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chief Examiner's Report	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mark distribution	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗
Grade boundaries	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Grade descriptions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Assessment grids	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

- ✓ Material was available and was used in the review
- ✗ Material was not available and was not used in the review

Appendix G: Candidate achievement by grade

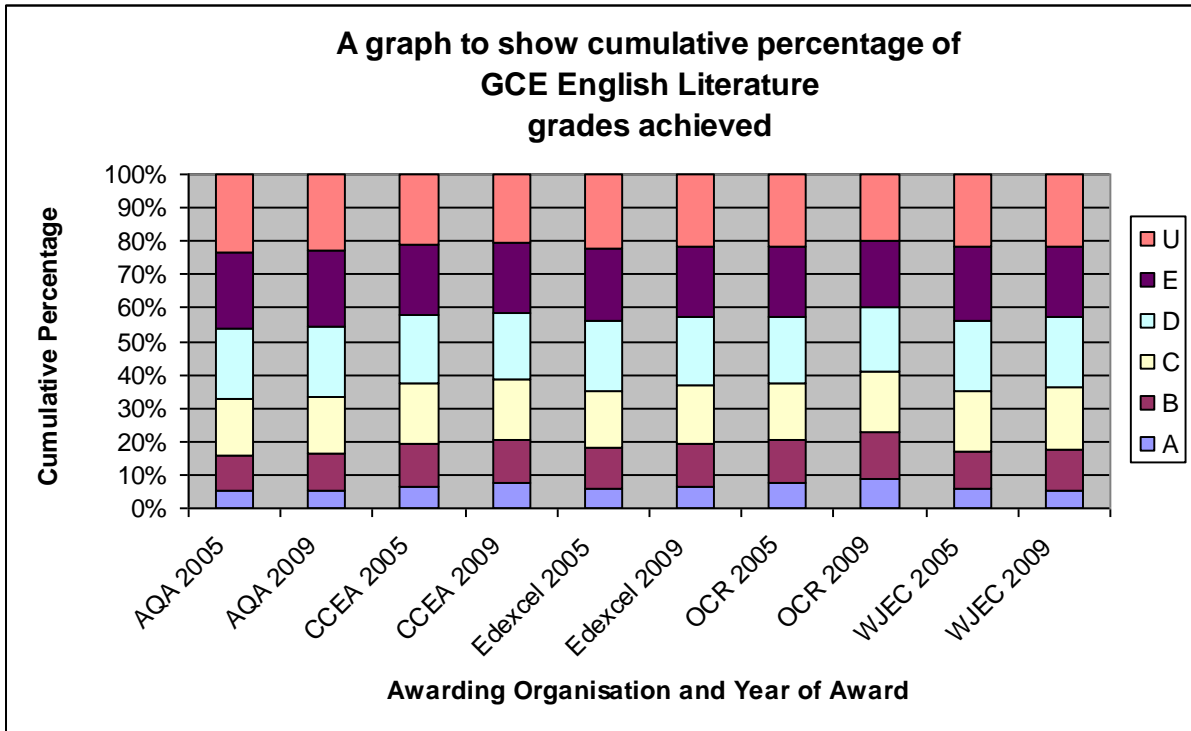
Percentage of grades awarded by awarding organisation for GCE A level English Literature, 2005 and 2009

Awarding organisation and year	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total candidate entries
AQA 2005	22.1	23.5	26.3	19.2	7.5	1.4	20,442
AQA 2009	22.9	25.1	26.8	17.5	6.5	1.2	19,556
CCEA 2005	31.9	29.2	25.1	11.2	1.9	0.7	1,799
CCEA 2009	35.8	27.3	24.3	10.2	2.0	0.4	1,728
Edexcel 2005	27.5	26.2	24.1	15.6	5.6	1.0	8,698
Edexcel 2009	31.0	27.0	24.0	13.5	3.7	0.8	8,203
OCR 2005	34.4	25.9	20.7	12.3	5.7	1.0	8,540
OCR 2009	43.2	28.1	17.8	8.5	2.0	0.4	7,711
WJEC 2005	25.5	27.8	29.2	14.1	3.2	0.2	4,401
WJEC 2009	25.2	32.3	29.4	11.2	1.6	0.3	5,815

Cumulative percentage of GCE A level English Literature grades achieved, 2005 and 2009

Awarding organisation and year	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total candidate entries
AQA 2005	22.1	45.6	71.9	91.1	98.6	100.0	20,442
AQA 2009	22.9	48.0	74.8	92.3	98.8	100.0	19,556
CCEA 2005	31.9	61.1	86.2	97.4	99.3	100.0	1,799
CCEA 2009	35.8	63.1	87.4	97.6	99.6	100.0	1,728
Edexcel 2005	27.5	53.7	77.8	93.4	99.0	100.0	8,698
Edexcel 2009	31.0	58.0	82.0	95.5	99.2	100.0	8,203
OCR 2005	34.4	60.3	81.0	93.3	99.0	100.0	8,540
OCR 2009	43.2	71.3	89.1	97.6	99.6	100.0	7,711
WJEC 2005	25.5	53.3	82.5	96.6	99.8	100.0	4,401
WJEC 2009	25.2	57.5	86.9	98.1	99.7	100.0	5,815

NB: the information relating to AQA's candidate achievement in both 2005 and 2009 are for Lit A only.



Appendix H: Script ranking positions summaries

NB: where possible, quartiles have been split with equal numbers of scripts.

Numbers of data pairs statistically analysed in the script review

Number of data pairs analysed		Number of blank lines	Number of missing/null observations
Grade	A	15,522	0
	E	14,861	1

Grade A GCE A level English Literature scripts (86 in total)

Awarding organisation	2009	2005	Overall total
AQA	13	10	23
CCEA	12	7	19
Edexcel	7	10	17
OCR	6	10	16
WJEC	6	5	11

Awarding organisation	2009 (%)	2005 (%)	Combined
Quartile 1 (21 scripts)			
AQA	0.00%	10.00%	4.35%
CCEA	16.66%	0.00%	10.53%
Edexcel	28.57%	30.00%	29.41%
OCR	0.00%	70.00%	43.75%
WJEC	66.66%	40.00%	54.55%
Quartile 2 (22 scripts)			
AQA	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
CCEA	33.33%	14.28%	26.32%
Edexcel	57.14%	20.00%	35.29%
OCR	100.00%	20.00%	50.00%
WJEC	33.33%	20.00%	27.27%
Quartile 3 (21 scripts)			
AQA	30.77%	40.00%	34.78%
CCEA	25.00%	28.57%	26.32%

Edexcel	14.28%	50.00%	35.29%
OCR	0.00%	10.00%	6.25%
WJEC	0.00%	20.00%	9.09%
Quartile 4 (22 scripts)			
AQA	69.23%	50.00%	60.87%
CCEA	25.00%	57.14%	36.84%
Edexcel	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
OCR	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
WJEC	0.00%	20.00%	9.09%

Grade E GCE A level English Literature scripts (52 in total)

Awarding organisation	2009	2005	Overall total
AQA	6	9	15
CCEA	6	3	9
Edexcel	5	5	10
OCR	4	5	9
WJEC	3	6	9

Awarding organisation	2009 (%)	2005 (%)	Combined
Quartile 1 (13 scripts)			
AQA	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
CCEA	33.33%	0.00%	22.22%
Edexcel	100.00%	60.00%	80.00%
OCR	25.00%	40.00%	33.33%
WJEC	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Quartile 2 (13 scripts)			
AQA	33.33%	22.22%	26.67%
CCEA	16.66%	0.00%	11.11%
Edexcel	0.00%	20.00%	10.00%
OCR	75.00%	40.00%	55.56%
WJEC	0.00%	33.33%	22.22%
Quartile 3 (13 scripts)			
AQA	33.33%	33.33%	33.33%
CCEA	16.66%	66.66%	33.33%
Edexcel	0.00%	20.00%	10.00%
OCR	0.00%	20.00%	11.11%

Review of standards in GCE A level English Literature

WJEC	66.66%	16.66%	33.33%
Quartile 4 (13 scripts)			
AQA	33.33%	44.44%	40.00%
CCEA	33.33%	33.33%	33.33%
Edexcel	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
OCR	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
WJEC	33.33%	50.00%	44.44%

Appendix I: Tables to show the measure, Standard Error of Measurement (SEM) and infit t values of the ranked scripts

NB: SEM of above 2 indicates that judgements were not quite fitting the expected pattern. The same can be said of the infit t values. Where there are measures and standard errors in brackets it indicates that the Facets Winstep analysis software is indicating that whilst that script was worst than all others it was ranked against, it may not be worse than other information that could be inputted (potentially).

The scripts are listed by candidate performance, with the lowest first.

English Literature: GCE grade A				English Literature: GCE grade E			
Measure	SEM	Awarding organisation	Infit t	Measure	SEM	Awarding organisation	Infit t
-2.23	0.34	CCEA	0.97	-2.64	0.35	AQA	1.01
-2.12	0.3	AQA	0.86	-2.06	0.16	WJEC	1.05
-1.61	0.28	AQA	0.97	-1.99	0.14	CCEA	1
-1.5	0.23	AQA	0.98	-1.5	0.24	AQA	1.01
-1.4	0.22	CCEA	1.02	-1.45	0.26	AQA	1
-1.4	0.24	AQA	1	-1.42	0.18	CCEA	0.97
-1.37	0.22	CCEA	0.93	-1.4	0.16	WJEC	1.08
-1.33	0.22	AQA	1.08	-1.11	0.23	WJEC	0.84
-1.11	0.21	CCEA	1.1	-1.03	0.15	AQA	0.94
-1.07	0.23	AQA	1.05	-0.92	0.22	AQA	0.99
-0.94	0.14	CCEA	1.09	-0.58	0.11	WJEC	0.95
-0.94	0.21	AQA	0.99	-0.56	0.15	CCEA	1.03
-0.89	0.2	AQA	0.87	-0.55	0.15	AQA	0.96
-0.88	0.19	CCEA	1	-0.51	0.14	AQA	0.94
-0.83	0.19	AQA	0.96	-0.5	0.1	WJEC	1.05
-0.79	0.15	CCEA	1.01	-0.46	0.1	CCEA	0.99
-0.75	0.21	AQA	0.97	-0.43	0.15	AQA	1.11
-0.74	0.19	AQA	0.97	-0.39	0.14	WJEC	1.02
-0.73	0.19	CCEA	1.04	-0.34	0.15	CCEA	0.96
-0.73	0.15	WJEC	1.03	-0.32	0.14	Edexcel	0.97
-0.71	0.22	AQA	0.82	-0.19	0.1	WJEC	1.01
-0.7	0.18	AQA	0.98	-0.11	0.15	AQA	1.02
-0.61	0.22	AQA	0.86	-0.1	0.14	OCR	1.02
-0.57	0.19	AQA	0.91	-0.07	0.13	AQA	0.96
-0.57	0.19	Edexcel	1.03	-0.07	0.1	CCEA	0.99
-0.56	0.18	CCEA	1.11	-0.01	0.2	AQA	0.91

-0.54	0.14	CCEA	1.02	0.03	0.15	AQA	1.07
-0.5	0.2	Edexcel	0.98	0.04	0.11	OCR	1
-0.44	0.18	Edexcel	1.04	0.05	0.11	OCR	0.97
-0.41	0.18	AQA	1.02	0.11	0.15	WJEC	0.99
-0.31	0.19	OCR	1.02	0.17	0.14	WJEC	1.02
-0.28	0.14	AQA	1.02	0.18	0.19	AQA	0.98
-0.24	0.2	CCEA	0.99	0.25	0.12	OCR	0.99
-0.23	0.19	AQA	1.02	0.49	0.14	AQA	0.94
-0.22	0.19	Edexcel	0.99	0.69	0.15	OCR	1.03
-0.14	0.17	AQA	0.99	0.72	0.15	CCEA	0.88
-0.06	0.2	AQA	0.99	0.73	0.12	Edexcel	1.03
-0.02	0.14	Edexcel	0.99	0.78	0.12	OCR	0.97
-0.02	0.2	CCEA	0.99	0.81	0.15	AQA	1.01
0.01	0.13	Edexcel	1	0.84	0.15	CCEA	1.01
0.06	0.18	CCEA	0.96	0.95	0.15	OCR	1
0.08	0.13	WJEC	0.93	0.95	0.15	Edexcel	0.96
0.1	0.13	AQA	0.99	1.01	0.15	Edexcel	1
0.12	0.2	Edexcel	1.18	1.13	0.13	Edexcel	1.01
0.14	0.21	CCEA	1.09	1.16	0.16	Edexcel	1.05
0.15	0.13	CCEA	1.02	1.16	0.16	Edexcel	0.95
0.15	0.13	OCR	1.05	1.16	0.15	CCEA	0.93
0.18	0.14	OCR	1.02	1.37	0.13	OCR	1.03
0.19	0.13	Edexcel	1.06	1.38	0.13	Edexcel	0.97
0.25	0.18	Edexcel	1.05	1.39	0.16	Edexcel	1.06
0.25	0.19	OCR	0.97	1.39	0.13	Edexcel	1.02
0.28	0.19	CCEA	1.01	1.78	0.15	OCR	1.05
0.28	0.22	OCR	1.11				
0.29	0.2	CCEA	1.05				
0.31	0.13	OCR	0.99				
0.33	0.13	WJEC	0.97				
0.37	0.13	WJEC	1.03				
0.45	0.18	Edexcel	0.95				
0.53	0.14	Edexcel	1				
0.63	0.2	Edexcel	1.02				
0.68	0.13	WJEC	1				
0.7	0.18	CCEA	1.07				
0.71	0.14	OCR	1.03				
0.75	0.14	WJEC	0.97				
0.78	0.15	OCR	0.99				
0.79	0.19	CCEA	1.04				
0.8	0.14	CCEA	0.99				
0.81	0.14	WJEC	1.06				
0.84	0.19	Edexcel	0.92				

0.84	0.19	OCR	1.03
0.86	0.14	OCR	1.06
0.87	0.2	OCR	0.9
0.87	0.19	OCR	0.98
0.91	0.12	WJEC	1.01
0.92	0.14	WJEC	0.97
0.92	0.14	Edexcel	1.01
0.93	0.2	AQA	1.11
0.96	0.12	WJEC	0.98
0.96	0.13	Edexcel	0.97
0.98	0.22	CCEA	0.9
1.11	0.15	WJEC	0.98
1.13	0.15	Edexcel	0.98
1.16	0.23	Edexcel	1.01
1.43	0.23	OCR	0.93
1.68	0.25	OCR	0.95
1.93	0.17	WJEC	1

Appendix J: Review team

Review team		Organisation
Lead reviewer	Caroline Bentley-Davies	Ofqual reviewer
Specification reviewers	Russell Carey	Ofqual reviewer
	Pam Taylor	Ofqual reviewer
	Jennifer Stevens	Ofqual reviewer
Script reviewers	Jennifer Bailey	Ofqual reviewer
	David Birch	Ofqual reviewer
	Carol Leach	Ofqual reviewer
	Tom Banks	Ofqual reviewer
	Alison Woollard	Ofqual reviewer
	Angela Nyangon	Ofqual reviewer
	Luke McBratney	AQA
	Elmer Kennedy-Andrew	CCEA
	Margaret Walker	Edexcel
	David Johnson	OCR
	Cary Archard	WJEC
	Moyra Beverton	National Association for the Teaching of English (NATE)
Ian Brinton	English Association	

Appendix K: Grade descriptors (applicable to both 2005 and 2009)

GCE A level grade A descriptor

Candidates demonstrate a comprehensive, detailed knowledge and understanding of a wide range of literary texts from the past to the present, and of the critical concepts associated with literary study. Their discussion of texts shows depth, independence and insight in response to the tasks set, and they analyse and evaluate the ways in which form, structure and language shape meanings. Where appropriate, candidates identify the influence on texts of the cultural and historical contexts in which they were written. They are able to make significant and productive comparisons between texts enhance and extend their readings, and are sensitive to the scope of their own and others' interpretations of texts. Their material is well organised and presented, making effective use of textual evidence in support of arguments. Written expression is fluent, well-structured, accurate and precise, and shows confident grasp of appropriate terminology.

GCE A level grade C descriptor

Candidates demonstrate secure knowledge and understanding of a range of texts from different periods and of different types, and make use of some of the critical concepts relevant to the study of literature. Candidates comment perceptively on texts in response to the tasks set. They respond to some details in the ways authors use form, structure and language to create meaning, as well as showing some awareness of contextual influences. They relate their own judgements to those of others as appropriate in developing interpretations of texts. They are able to pursue comparisons between texts in order to show how texts can illuminate one another. Their material is clearly organised and presented, and incorporates examples to help sustain a line of argument. Written expression is accurate and clear and shows a sound use of appropriate terminology.

GCE A level grade E descriptor

Candidates demonstrate some knowledge and understanding of a range of different texts and comment on them in response to the tasks set, sometimes supporting their views by reference to the links between meanings and authors uses of form, structure and language. Candidates note the possible effects of context and may show some understanding of how other readers interpret the texts. They can draw out broad lines of similarities and differences between texts, not necessarily within a wider critical framework. Their written work is generally accurate in conveying statements and opinions, sometimes supported by reference to the texts, and shows the use of some terminology appropriate to the subject.

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