

**GCSE  
English  
Language**

# General Introduction

Welcome to your GCSE English course. We hope you enjoy studying with us!

This course of lessons will prepare you for the AQA English Language GCSE 9-1 Specification 8700.

## Course Aims

As well as effective preparation for these exams, this course has the following aims:

- to develop the skills and understanding required for later A-level English study
- to foster a love of language and literature in all its forms
- to enable you to communicate effectively in a wide variety of other subjects and situations.



Oxford Open Learning

## The Course

The Oxford Open Learning GCSE English Language course is set out as follows:

### Module 1: Reading Unseen Literature

- Lesson 1 Approaches to Unseen Prose
- Lesson 2 First Person Narrative
- Lesson 3 Structure: Endings
- Tutor-marked Assignment A**
- Lesson 4 Creating an Atmosphere
- Lesson 5 Finding the Message or Moral
- TMA B**

### Module 2 Exploring Creative Writing and Non-Exam Spoken English Assessment

- Lesson 6 Introduction to Creative Writing
- Lesson 7 Creative Writing: Structure and Organisation
- Lesson 8 Imagined Experiences
- TMA C**
- Lesson 9 Developing Descriptive and Narrative Writing
- Lesson 10 Spoken English Non-Exam Assessment
- TMA D**

### Module 3 Reading Non-Fiction Viewpoints and Perspectives

- Lesson 11 Introduction to Reading Non-Fiction
- Lesson 12 Reading for Meaning and Understanding
- Lesson 13 Travel Writing
- TMA E**
- Lesson 14 Memoirs and Autobiographies
- Lesson 15 Journalism: Opinion Pieces
- TMA F**

### Module 4 Reading Non-Fiction Viewpoints and Perspectives II

- Lesson 16 Autobiographies and Biographies
- Lesson 17 Reportage
- Lesson 18 Speeches and Presentations
- TMA G**
- Lesson 19 'Broadsheet' News Journalism
- Lesson 20 Reading Nineteenth Century Texts
- TMA H**

## Module 5 Presenting Written Viewpoints

- Lesson 21 Presenting Viewpoints – Transactional Writing
- Lesson 22 Structuring A Persuasive Argument
- Lesson 23 Presenting Viewpoints – Writing to Argue and Advise
- TMA I**
- Lesson 24 Creating Viewpoints – Writing to Inform, Explain and Describe
- Lesson 25 Examination Preparation: AQA Paper 1 and Paper 2
- TMA J**

### Exam Practice

**TMA K** (Mock Examination Paper 1)

**TMA L** (Mock Examination Paper 2)

Prose Anthology

Glossary

## Unseen Assessment and Wider Reading

The AQA English Language examination does not require additional set texts or textbooks, as both Language examinations will use unseen prose fiction and non-fiction texts. Throughout the course materials, you will be introduced to a wide range of text types and for non-fiction, you will be given a number of examples of nineteenth century non-fiction texts, which are now a reading requirement of Paper 2.

Although you are not required to have additional materials, it is recommended that you undertake wider reading where and when you can. One approach would be to source and read the novels that shorter extracts have been taken from in Module 1, or to start collecting your own examples of non-fiction texts from everyday sources such as newspapers and internet sources.

For nineteenth century texts, a good starting point is the British Library's 'Texts in Contexts' website, which is designed to introduce students to older texts. There are a number of topic links on the site which change regularly and each link will take you through to scanned copies of real non-fiction texts. For Paper 2, you only need to read texts dated between 1800-1900 to fulfil the older texts requirement.

## The Structure within each Lesson: How to Study

### Front Page

The front page of each lesson shows:

- **The title.**
- **Aim(s)** for the lesson. These set out the position that you should reach after working through the lesson; keep these in mind while reading the lesson material.
- **Context.** This gives a very brief summary and shows how the lesson fits in with the rest of the course. In the Anthology Worksheets, the Context section provides context for the extract or poem included in that lesson.
- **Note.** This indicates specific reading or writing skills required for the lesson.


### Lesson Notes

There then follow the notes; these present the subject material to be studied in the lesson. Read these through carefully several times until you feel that you have understood the broad outline of the theory involved, and then tackle any reading references.

### Activities

For most of this course the work that you will be doing will not be sent to your tutor; it will consist of Activities; these will aid your learning and allow you to check that you are taking in what you have been reading. The important thing to remember is that none of the work that you do in these activities is wasted: all of it will contribute to helping you develop skills, which will later be assessed in your examination. Your activities will give you necessary practice, and careful work on these will contribute more to your eventual performance and success than any other aspect of the course.

Activities are indicated as follows:

<b>Activity 7</b>	Suppose that the speaker of the passage you have just read is a child; collect all the evidence you can from the passage to suggest this and list it.
	

The pencil symbol indicates that you should make your own notes in the space provided (though, of course, you may prefer to make them separately).

### Where do I find the Answers to Activities?

This varies. Some Activities do not have answers at all because they are too open-ended and their purpose is that you should produce a response which is personal to you.

However, most Activities do have 'suggested' answers. These are not the *only* 'correct' answers but they may help you to see how you could improve your own work. Suggested answers are to be found at the end of the lesson, with some also presented immediately following the activity, if required to build responses.

You may be tempted to peek at the answer to the activity before you have made a proper attempt at it. This is to be avoided at all costs. You must discipline yourself *not* to read the next section of a lesson until you have done the activity. To help you manage this we have put the activities in boxes. Think of these boxes as red lights; do not approach them until you are ready to give the activity your best shot, and do not pass them until you have completed the activity.

Reading the answers too early will not be helpful for a number of reasons. The specimen answer tackles the problem in a certain way, and if you have not made your own attempt yet, you will tend to think that that is the only way to do it. There will be other ways, and it is best if you can find one of your own. Remember that the answer is just a 'specimen' or 'suggested' answer.

### Tutor-marked Assignments

After every two or three lessons there is a Tutor-marked Assignment. These are presented in a style similar to that of GCSE level examination questions and should be carried out under timed conditions to give you the best chance of examination practice. These tests will thoroughly check your understanding of the previous few topics. You should send your answers to these tests to your tutor, who will return your marked script together with a set of suggested answers.

### The AQA English Language course

GCSE English Language requires candidates to read and be assessed on response to challenging texts from the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Each text will represent a substantial piece of writing, making significant demands on candidates in terms of content, structure and language.

The examined texts, across a range of genres and types, will support candidates in developing their own writing through the provision of effective models. The texts studied will include literature and extended literary non-fiction, and other writing such as essays, reviews and journalism, from both printed and online sources.

When writing, candidates will be assessed on their ability to write for impact and their capacity to produce clear and coherent written texts.

Candidates will build upon familiarity with a range of fiction and non-fiction texts, and engage with creative as well as real writing contexts. Candidates will have opportunities to develop sophisticated reading and critical thinking skills that encourage genuine enquiry into different topics and themes.

Completion of the GCSE English Language course will enable candidates to read fluently and write effectively. Candidates will be able to demonstrate confident control of Standard English forms and will write grammatically correct sentences. They will show confidence when employing figurative language and analysing texts.

Reading and Writing skills will be weighted equally and assessed across the two examination papers as follows:

### Paper 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing

**Section A: Reading** 40 marks 25% of GCSE

- unseen extract from a literature **fiction** text

**Section B: Writing** 40 marks 25% of GCSE

- 1 extended writing task - **descriptive or narrative** writing

**Method of Assessment**

- written exam: **1 hour 45 minutes**

### Paper 2: Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives

**Section A: Reading** 40 marks 25% of GCSE

- **Comparison** of one **unseen non-fiction** text and **one unseen literary non-fiction** text

**Section B: Writing** 40 marks 25% of GCSE

- 1 extended writing task - **writing to present a viewpoint**

**Method of assessment:**

- written exam: **1 hour 45 minutes**

In addition, a **non-exam assessment** of speaking and listening should allow students to become active listeners and understand spoken language, and to make use of spoken Standard English effectively. The Spoken Language endorsement will be reported on as part of the qualification, but it will not form part of the final mark and grade.

Further details of question types and how marks are allocated across the tasks will be given throughout the course materials.

### The Spoken Language Assessment (optional)

The Spoken Language Assessment, should you choose to do it, requires candidates to:

- give a formal presentation (up to 10 mins)
- respond appropriately to questions and other feedback
- ask questions for clarification
- use spoken standard English

Assuming you pass, you will receive an ‘endorsement’ on your results certificate.

Please discuss it with your tutor if you are keen to undertake Spoken Language assessment. If you say nothing, it will be assumed you are *not* planning to attempt it.

The topic is at the student’s discretion. Choose something that you feel enthusiastic about! As a guide, the duration should be no more than ten minutes. The key requirements are:

- presentations must be formal but may take a wide variety of forms, including talks, debates, speeches and dialogues
- students must identify the subject for their presentations in advance and agree it with their teacher
- presentations must be planned and organised. Students should be advised that that lack of preparation is likely to prevent access to the criteria for the higher grades
- students may use pre-prepared notes, Powerpoint, etc, to assist them during their presentations but this is not a requirement
- as part of, or following, the presentation students must listen to and respond appropriately to questions and feedback
- where the audience is the teacher only, the presentation and dialogue must be designed in such a way that it could have a potentially wider audience than just one person (e.g. it replicates a television interview).

## The Prose Anthology

Some of the lessons in this course (from Lesson 13 onwards) require you to access a Prose Anthology at the back of the coursepack. These are not 'set' texts and they are not required by AQA but they are similar in content and purpose to the ones you are likely to encounter in your examinations. These are the contents of the Anthology:

	page
From <i>A Passage to Africa</i> , George Alagiah	2
From <i>The Explorer's Daughter</i> , Kari Herbert	4
'Explorers or boys messing about? Either way, taxpayer gets rescue bill', Steven Morris	6
From <i>Between a Rock and a Hard Place</i> , Aron Ralston	8
'Young and dyslexic? You've got it going on,' Benjamin Zephaniah	10
From <i>A Game of Polo with a Headless Goat</i> , Emma Levine	12

## Grading: the 9-1 System

The main change from the old exams is in the way the **grading** system works. Instead of a grade between A and G, you will be awarded a grade between 9 (best) and 1 (worst). This applies to all GCSEs. This allows for a little more differentiation, especially at the top end. For many institutions, the new grade 5 is considered as equivalent to the old grade C but different institutions may require a grade 6 – you will need to check.

## Assessment Objectives

When marking exams, examiners assess whether students have demonstrated their ability to meet a set of agreed aims for GCSE English Language. These aims, called **assessment objectives**, are set out on the AQA website.

Below are the assessment objectives for AQA English Language 8700 specification. Assessment objectives are the same across all GCSE English Language specifications and exam boards. These are as follows:

**AO1:**

Identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas  
Select and synthesise evidence from different texts

**AO2:**

Explain, comment on and analyse how writers use language and structure to achieve effects and influence readers, using relevant subject terminology to support their views



**A03:**

Compare writers' ideas and perspectives, as well as how these are conveyed, across two or more texts

**A04:**

Evaluate texts critically and support this with appropriate textual references

**A05:**

Communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style and register for different forms, purposes and audiences. Organise information and ideas, using structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion of texts.

**A06:**

Candidates must use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation. (This requirement equals 20% of the qualification).

Speaking and Listening Non-exam Assessment (NEA) tests the following:

**A07:**

Demonstrate presentation skills in a formal setting

**A08:**

Listen and respond appropriately to spoken language, including to questions and feedback on presentations

**A09:**

Use spoken Standard English effectively in speeches and presentations.

## Using the Internet

All students would benefit from access to the Internet. You will find a wealth of information online on all the topics in your course. As well as the AQA website ([www.aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk)), you should get into the habit of checking the Oxford Open Learning site ([www.ool.co.uk](http://www.ool.co.uk)) where you may find blogs on our English courses. Put it on your Favourites list now!

## And Finally...

Good luck with the course!

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