

## Switching to OCR from AQA

### Introduction

The key content and skills to be covered by all new AS and A Level English Language specifications mean it's straightforward to move to a different exam board.

We've developed our specifications to provide learners with a deep knowledge of how English language works in a variety of contexts. The specifications encourage learners to develop their skills in linguistic analysis and their knowledge of concepts and methods, as well as motivating them to engage creatively with topical language issues. So why choose OCR's AS/A Level English Language?

- Textual analysis of a variety of written, spoken and multi-modal texts is at the heart of the course with 5 of the 6 A Level exam questions directly asking for a learner response to an unseen text.
- Our specifications favour meaningful application of critical and conceptual understanding, above testing learners' theoretical understanding.
- We offer clear, well balanced exam papers. The topics and approaches have been structured to provide learners with the essentials for related higher education courses as well as many transferable, marketable skills.
- The coursework provides the opportunity for independent learning and investigation is an area of particular personal interest.
- We offer a comprehensive range of creative, well researched resources to cover every aspect of the course, from candidate exemplars to guides to delivery of the different topic areas.

### How do I find out more?

- Visit our [AS and A Level Language subject webpage](#) to access the specifications, specimen assessment materials and a wide range of free support materials, from scheme of work planners to skills guides, suggested lesson activities and more.
- We've structured the AS to maximise opportunities for co-teaching with the A Level. You can find out more about co-teachability in our [guide](#).
- Join our conversation on the [OCR English Community](#) and [@OCR\\_English](#) to exchange ideas and share good practice.

[#EnglishLanguage #engchat #englishteacher](#)



## Key differences

| OCR AS and A Level English Language  | AQA AS and A Level English Language   |
|--|---|
| At A Level, 5 of the 6 exam questions <b>ask directly for an analysis of a text</b> printed in the exam paper.   | At A Level, Paper 2 has evaluative questions that either have <b>no textual analysis</b> (Questions 1 and 2) or use the texts as the <b>stimulus for a discursive essay</b> |
| <b>Conceptual understanding</b> is more important than a discussion of theorists.  | The discursive nature of some questions implies the need for <b>specific theoretical reference</b> .  |
| At AS and A Level, learners produce <b>one original writing response</b> on a topical language issue.  | At A Level, learners produce <b>two original writing responses</b> , one in the exam and one for the NEA.   |
| <b>Topic areas are familiar</b> and are clearly delineated in the topic titles, so are reassuring to learners.   | Some topic areas are clear but others are <b>less obvious</b> as to what the questions will be asking, such as 'Textual Variations and Representations and 'Language        |
| <b>A straightforward assessment structure</b> mirrored across both exams.  | Both exams are the same weighting and length but <b>the structure and format differs</b> .  |
| We take an <b>integrated approach to marking</b> so that all AOs are considered at the same time when marking learner responses.                           | The mark scheme suggests that <b>AOs are treated separately</b> as there are separate marking grids for each AO.  |
| We've <b>avoided using scaling factors</b> , to aid straightforward analysis of your learners' results. The marks for exam questions are the actual marks. | <b>A scaling factor is applied</b> to exam questions, meaning individual marks have a different weighting depending on which component they relate to.                      |



## AS ENGLISH LANGUAGE

### Content

All AS Level English Language qualifications require learners to study a wide range of written and spoken forms of English, including electronic and multi-modal texts.

Learners will need to show a broad knowledge and understanding of:

- Phonetics, phonology and prosodics
- Lexis and semantics
- Grammar including morphology
- Pragmatics
- Discourse
  
- Concepts, methods and issues relevant to English language use and linguistics.

| OCR AS English Language  | AQA AS English Language  |
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| <p>Learners study the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of non-fiction texts</li> <li>• Spoken forms of English</li> <li>• Language and gender</li> <li>• Language and power</li> </ul> <p>Learners write a creative response that will relate directly to Language and gender and/or Language and power.</p> | <p>Learners study the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of non-fiction texts</li> <li>• Spoken forms of English</li> <li>• Language use in individual and immediate social contexts</li> <li>• Language diversity:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regional/national variations</li> <li>- Language and gender/occupation</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Learners will write one creative response relating to attitudes on language, based on a stimulus text.</p> |



## Assessment

| OCR AS English Language  | AQA AS English Language  |
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| <p><b>Paper 1: Exploring language</b><br/>50% of AS<br/>Written paper: 1 hour 30 minutes<br/>60 marks</p> <p><b>Section A – Understanding language features in context:</b><br/>Analysis of a single non-fiction text (24 marks)</p> <p><b>Section B – Comparing and contrasting texts:</b><br/>One comparative question on two unseen texts, one of which is always spoken (36 marks)</p>   | <p><b>Paper 1: Language and the individual</b><br/>50% of AS<br/>Written paper: 1 hour 30 minutes<br/>70 marks</p> <p>Learners respond to two texts linked by topic or theme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One question analysing one text (25 marks)</li> <li>• One question analysing the second text (25 marks)</li> <li>• One comparison question on both texts (20 marks)</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Paper 1: Exploring contexts</b><br/>50% of AS<br/>Written paper: 1 hour 30 minutes<br/>60 marks</p> <p><b>Section A – Writing about a topical language issue:</b><br/>One original writing task on Language and gender and/or Language and power (24 marks)</p> <p><b>Section B – Exploring language in context:</b><br/>One essay question from a choice of two, responding to a multi-modal text on either Language and gender or Language and power. (36 marks)</p> | <p><b>Paper 2: Language varieties</b><br/>50% of AS<br/>Written paper: 1 hour 30 minutes<br/>70 marks</p> <p><b>Section A – Language diversity:</b><br/>One question from a choice of two requiring one essay on language diversity in the British Isles using data as a stimulus. (30 marks)</p> <p><b>Section B – Language discourses:</b><br/>One directed original writing task on attitudes to language, based on a stimulus text. (40 marks)</p> |



## A LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE

### Content

All A Level English Language qualifications require learners to study a wide range of written and spoken forms of English, including electronic and multi-modal texts.

Learners will need to show a broad knowledge and understanding of:

- Phonetics, phonology and prosodics
- Lexis and semantics
- Grammar including morphology
- Pragmatics
- Discourse
- Concepts, methods and issues relevant to English language use and linguistics.

Learners will also need to understand different contexts for language use including:

- Historical, geographical, social and individual varieties of English
- Aspects of language and identity.

| OCR A Level English Language  | AQA A Level English Language  |
|---|---|
| <p>Learners study the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of non-fiction texts</li> <li>• Spoken forms of English</li> <li>• Language in the media:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Language and gender</li> <li>- Language and power</li> <li>- Language and technology.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Child language acquisition:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 0-7 years old</li> <li>- Speech only.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Language change               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Features of language use from 1600 onwards</li> <li>- Twenty-first century language use.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Learners will write a creative response that will relate directly to one of the above areas.</p> <p>Learners will conduct an independent language investigation on a topic of their own choosing.</p> <p>Learners will produce an academic poster based on their language investigation.</p> | <p>Learners study the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of non-fiction texts</li> <li>• Spoken forms of English</li> <li>• Language, the individual and society:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Language use in individual and immediate social contexts</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Children’s language development:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Spoken language acquisition</li> <li>- Children’s written text</li> <li>- Theories of child development.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Language diversity and change:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regional/national variations</li> <li>- Language and gender/ethnicity/occupation</li> <li>- Features of language use from 1600 to present day.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Learners will write two creative responses, plus a commentary. One creative response will be based on a stimulus text and the other will be based on one of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the power of persuasion</li> <li>• the power of storytelling</li> <li>• the power of information.</li> </ul> <p>Learners will conduct an independent language investigation on a topic of their own choosing.</p> |



## Assessment

| OCR A Level English Language  | AQA A Level English Language  |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Paper 1: Exploring language</b><br/>40% of A level<br/>Written paper: 2 hours 30 minutes<br/>80 marks</p> <p><b>Section A – Language under the microscope:</b><br/>One two-part question analysing one non-fiction text. (20 marks)</p> <p><b>Section B – Writing about a topical language issue:</b><br/>One original writing task on Language and gender/power/technology/language change. (24 marks)</p> <p><b>Section C – Comparing and contrasting texts:</b><br/>One question requiring a comparison of two texts. One text will always be a transcript of spoken language. (36 marks)</p>            | <p><b>Paper 1: Language, the individual and society</b><br/>40% of A level<br/>Written paper: 2 hours 30 minutes<br/>100 marks</p> <p><b>Section A – Textual variations and representations:</b><br/>Learners respond to two texts from different time periods linked by topic or theme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One question analysing one text (25 marks)</li> <li>• One question analysing the second text (25 marks)</li> <li>• One comparison question (20 marks)</li> </ul> <p><b>Section B – Children’s language development:</b><br/>One question from a choice of two responding to a spoken, written or multi-modal text. (30 marks)</p> |
| <p><b>Paper 2: Dimensions of linguistic variation</b><br/>40% of A level<br/>Written paper: 2 hours 30 minutes<br/>80 marks</p> <p><b>Section A – Child language acquisition:</b><br/>One question analysing a transcript of spoken language. (20 marks)</p> <p><b>Section B – Language in the media:</b><br/>One question analysing one multi-media text that raises issues on Language and gender/power/ technology. (24 marks)</p> <p><b>Section C – Comparing and contrasting texts:</b><br/>One question requiring a comparison of two thematically linked texts from different time periods. (36 marks)</p> | <p><b>Paper 2: Language diversity and change</b><br/>40% of A level<br/>Written paper: 2 hours 30 minutes<br/>100 marks</p> <p><b>Section A – Diversity and change:</b><br/>One evaluative question from a choice of two on either language diversity or language change. (30 marks)</p> <p><b>Section B – Language discourses:</b><br/>Two questions based on two linked texts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One questions analysing how both texts present ideas, attitudes and opinions (40 marks)</li> <li>• One original writing task using the texts as a stimulus (30 marks)</li> </ul>  |



| OCR A Level English Language   | AQA A Level English Language   |
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| <p><b>Component 3: Independent language research</b><br/>20% of A level<br/>Non-examined assessment<br/>40 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language investigation on a topic of learners' own choosing (2000-2500 words) (30 marks)</li> <li>• Academic poster based on language investigation (750-1000 words) (10 marks)</li> </ul> | <p><b>Component 3: Language in action</b><br/>20% of A level<br/>Non-examined assessment<br/>100 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language investigation (2000 words) (50 marks)</li> <li>• One original writing task , plus commentary (1500 words) (50 marks)</li> </ul> |



## Want to switch to OCR?

If you're an OCR-approved centre, all you need to do is download the specification and start teaching.

Your exams officer can complete an [intention to teach form](#) which enables us to provide appropriate support. When you're ready to enter your learners, you just need to speak to your exams officer to make estimated entries then final entries by the specified deadline ahead of the examination session.

If you are not already an OCR-approved centre, please refer your exams officer to the [centre approval](#) section of our website.

## Next steps

1. Familiarise yourself with the specification, sample assessment materials and teaching resources on the [AS/A Level English Language](#) qualification page of the OCR website.
2. Browse the teaching and learning resources including [online delivery guides](#) for teaching ideas and use the [Scheme of work builder](#) to create your personal scheme of work.
3. Get in touch if you'd like specific advice, guidance or support – email [english@ocr.org.uk](mailto:english@ocr.org.uk) or telephone 01223 553 998.
4. Get a login for our secure extranet, [Interchange](#) – this allows you to access the latest past/practice papers and use our results analysis service, Active Results.
5. Sign up to receive [subject updates](#) by email.
6. Sign up to attend a [training event](#) or take part in webinars on specific topics running throughout the year and/ or our Q&A drop-in webinar sessions every half term.
7. Attend one of our free regional [teacher network events](#).

