

## Switching to OCR from AQA A

### Introduction

We are really excited about our GCE English Literature qualification. Whether taking on the AS or the full A Level, this fantastic course is a great qualification for those with an interest in the subject. Why choose OCR's English Literature?

- OCR's English Literature specification is enjoyable to teach and learn, giving students the essentials for related higher education courses as well as many transferable, marketable skills
- The course supports the development of the key skills and concepts in the study of literature
- The topics are selected and structured to underpin the knowledge and understanding needed for the next generation of thoughtful and passionate critical readers
- The topics are presented in clear and engaging groupings, helping to broaden the body of literature learners explore in a coherent and interesting journey through the course
- There are many opportunities for personal, tailored choices of texts for study, linking to our flexible assessment model.

### Our offer

- Our English team are passionate about the study of English and education. With a breadth of teaching and assessment experience, we are fully committed to supporting centres' delivery of the OCR English Suite.
- We have produced a wide range of [support materials](#), from teacher guides to delivery guides, lesson elements, practical activities, candidate exemplars and more.
- Join our conversation on the [OCR Community](#) and [@ocr\\_english](#) to talk about and share good practice.

[#English](#) [#Literature](#) [#Alevel](#) [#engchat](#) [#englishteacher](#)



## Key differences

OCR English Literature	AQA English Literature A
<p>Learners are not required to focus narrowly on one genre for each paper – paper one focuses more broadly on Shakespeare, and then drama and poetry pre-1900. In paper 2 there is a topic study, from a choice of 5. The set texts within each topic or genre selection have been chosen carefully so they illuminate one another, but, so long as you choose one of the set texts, you are free to choose freely from the list of suggested texts to enable you to <b>select texts which will most inspire</b> you and your learners.</p>	<p>Learners focus on one genre for each examined component (love through the ages, then WW1 and its aftermath or modern times: literature from 1945 to the present day).</p>
<p>When selecting a Shakespeare text for study, there is a <b>choice of six plays</b>.</p>	<p>When selecting a Shakespeare text for study, there is a <b>choice of four plays</b>.</p>
<p>We have created a <b>straightforward assessment structure</b> so you can focus on teaching the literary texts, rather than needing to spend time coaching learners in how to navigate the exam. We've also avoided using scaling factors, to aid straightforward analysis of your learners' results.</p> <p>The structure of the exams is similar in both papers. Both exam papers are the same length, and include two sections, with section B always being a comparative task.</p>	<p>The structure of the exams differs across paper 1 and paper 2. Paper 1 is a longer exam, and in this exam learners need to compare two unseen poems as well as writing about their studied Shakespeare text AND writing a comparative response to two studied texts. In paper 2, learners are again faced with an unseen extract, which they have to write about in isolation and then answer a linked task comparing two studied texts – as well as writing an essay response to a third set-text.</p> <p>At A level a scaling factor is applied, meaning individual marks have a different weighting depending on which component they relate to.</p>



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<p>In the NEA (non-examined assessment) component, learners complete two tasks, one close reading or re-creative piece, and one comparative essay based on two literary texts. There is <b>no anthology of critical material</b> which must be covered; instead, learners focus on exploring the literary texts in their comparative task, informed by different interpretations, so the focus remains solely on the texts which they have chosen for their NEA.</p>	<p>The NEA component consists of one extended, comparative essay.</p>



## Content

The content within the OCR English Literature specification covers the key skills and concepts of literary study at this level and will be very familiar. We've structured the AS to maximise opportunities for co-teaching with the A Level, and you can [find out more about co-teachability](#) in our guide.

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<p>Learners must study 8 texts in total:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Shakespeare set text (drama) - exam</li> <li>2. Pre-1900 set text (drama) - exam</li> <li>3. Post-1900 set text (drama) – NEA</li> <li>4. Pre-1900 set text (poetry) - exam</li> <li>5. Any post-1900 (poetry) – NEA</li> <li>6. Any set text (prose) - exam</li> <li>7. Any set text (prose) - exam</li> <li>8. Any post-1900 (prose) – NEA</li> </ol> <p><b>Five</b> texts are assessed in the exams, and three in the non-examined assessment*. *One of the three texts studied for NEA must have been first published or performed post-2000</p>	<p>Learners must study 8 texts in total:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Shakespeare (drama) – exam</li> <li>2&amp;3. One pre-1900 (poetry &amp; prose) – exam</li> <li>4,5&amp;6. One post-2000 (poetry, drama &amp; prose) – exam (one 'core', two comparative)</li> <li>7. Any (poetry, prose, drama) – NEA</li> <li>8. Any (poetry, prose, drama) – NEA</li> </ol> <p><b>Six</b> texts are assessed in the exams, and two in the non-exam assessment.</p> <p>As the specification is based on historicist principles, students are required to read widely across a range of texts and connect them across time and topic.</p>
<p>In component 1 you choose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Shakespeare text from a <b>choice of 6</b></li> <li>1 drama text from a <b>choice of 5</b></li> <li>1 poetry text from a <b>choice of 5</b></li> </ul>	<p>In component 1 you choose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Shakespeare text from a <b>choice of 4</b></li> <li>1 poetry text from a <b>choice of 2</b> AQA anthologies</li> <li>1 prose text from a <b>choice of 5</b> (dictated by choice of poetry anthology) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- From the poetry and prose texts, <b>one must be pre-1900</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>



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<p>In component 2 you choose one topic from a <b>choice of 5</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- American Literature 1880-1940</li> <li>- The Gothic</li> <li>- Dystopia</li> <li>- Women in Literature</li> <li>- The Immigrant Experience</li> </ul> <p>You then choose one text from <b>a choice of two</b>, and a further text from a <b>choice of 9</b>.</p>	<p>In component 2 you choose:</p> <p>1 of a <b>choice of 6</b> core set texts</p> <p>THEN</p> <p><b>2</b> texts from a <b>choice of 9</b> if studying prose, a <b>choice of 4</b> if studying drama, a <b>choice of 4</b> if studying poetry for WW1</p> <p>OR</p> <p><b>2</b> texts from a <b>choice of 8</b> if studying prose, a <b>choice of 5</b> for drama, a <b>choice of 5</b> for poetry, for Modern Times.</p>



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<p>The requirement to study a work first published or performed after 2000 is met through the <b>learner's choice</b> of texts studied in the non-examined assessment component – this can be a drama, poetry or prose text.</p>	<p>A second <b>pre-1900</b> text must be studied through the non-exam assessment component.</p>
<p>As you would expect for the study of literature at this level, students are expected to explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the ways writers shape meanings;</li> <li>- the ways texts are interpreted by different readers;</li> <li>- the ways texts relate to one another and to literary traditions, movements and genres, and</li> <li>- the significance of cultural and contextual influences on readers and writers.</li> </ul> <p>These expectations are explored through essay questions which prompt learners to consider these aspects in their readings of the set texts above – so we believe <b>your ability to choose texts and topics which most inspire and enable engagement from your learners</b> is critical to the success and enjoyment of your classes.</p>	
<p>When exploring different interpretations of works, we believe the text and the reader should be the focus. Therefore we do not privilege one particular critical approach to our set texts, or to the non-examined assessment tasks.</p>	<p>The AQA A specification privileges the historicist approach across its examined components.</p>



## Assessment

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<p><b>AS paper 1: Shakespeare and poetry pre-1900</b></p> <p>50% of AS</p> <p>Written paper 1 hour 30 minutes</p> <p>60 marks</p> <p>Shakespeare: one question from a choice of 2. (30 marks)</p> <p>Poetry: one question – one poem or section printed in the exam paper, relating to the collection as a whole. (30 marks)</p>	<p><b>AS paper 1: Shakespeare and poetry</b></p> <p>50% of AS</p> <p>Written paper 1 hour 30 minutes</p> <p>50 marks</p> <p>Shakespeare: one passage-based question and linked essay (25 marks)</p> <p>Poetry: one essay question (25 marks)</p>
<p><b>AS paper 2: Drama and prose post-1900</b></p> <p>50% of AS</p> <p>Written paper 1 hour 45 minutes</p> <p>60 marks</p> <p>Drama: one question from a choice of 2. (30 marks)</p> <p>Prose: one question making links with a thematically linked unseen prose extract. (30 marks)</p>	<p><b>AS paper 2: Prose</b></p> <p>50% of AS</p> <p>Written paper 1 hour 30 minutes</p> <p>50 marks</p> <p>Unseen Prose: one essay question on unseen prose extract (25 marks)</p> <p>Comparing Prose texts: one comparative essay question (25 marks)</p>
<p><b>A level paper 1: Drama and poetry pre-1900</b></p> <p>40% of A level</p> <p>Written paper 2 hrs 30 minutes</p> <p>60 marks</p> <p>Shakespeare: one 2-part question</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>close analysis of an extract (15 marks)</li> <li>consider a proposition (15 marks)</li> </ol> <p>Drama and poetry: 1 question from a choice of 6 (30 marks)</p>	<p><b>A level paper 1: Love through the ages</b></p> <p>40% of A level</p> <p>Written paper 3 hours</p> <p>75 marks (scaling factor x4)</p> <p>Shakespeare: one passage-based question with linked essay (25 marks)</p> <p>Unseen poetry: compulsory essay question on two unseen poems (25 marks)</p> <p>Comparing texts: one essay question linking two texts (25 marks)</p>



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<p><b>A level paper 2: Comparative and Contextual Study</b></p> <p>40% of A level</p> <p>Written paper 2 hours 30 minutes</p> <p>60 marks</p> <p>Close reading: one unseen prose task based on the topic area studied (30 marks)</p> <p>Comparative essay: one essay from a choice of 3 (depending on texts studied) comparing 2 studied texts. (30 marks)</p>	<p><b>A level paper 2: texts in shared contexts</b></p> <p>40% of A level</p> <p>Written paper 2 hours 30 minutes</p> <p>75 marks (scaling factor x4)</p> <p>Section A: one essay question on set text (25 marks)</p> <p>Section B: one compulsory question on an unseen extract (25 marks), one essay question linking two texts (25 marks)</p>
<p><b>Component 3: Literature post-1900</b></p> <p><b>Non-examined assessment</b></p> <p>20% of A level</p> <p>40 marks</p> <p>Close reading or re-creative writing piece with commentary (15 marks)</p> <p>Comparative essay (25 marks)</p>	<p><b>Component 3: Texts across time</b></p> <p><b>Non-examined assessment</b></p> <p>20% of A level</p> <p>50 marks (scaling factor x3)</p> <p>One extended essay – a comparative critical study of two texts, at least one of which must have been written pre-1900.</p>





## 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 to them. When you're ready to enter your students, you just need to speak to your exams officer to:

1. Make estimated entries by 10 October so we can send you any early release materials, prepare the question papers and ensure we've got enough examiners.
2. Make final entries by 21 February

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

## Next steps

1. Familiarise yourself with the specification, sample assessment materials and teaching resources on the [English Literature](#) qualification page of the OCR website.
2. Browse the [online delivery guides](#) for teaching ideas and use the [Scheme of Work builder](#) to create your personal scheme of work.
3. Get a login for our secure extranet, Interchange – allows you to access the latest past/practice papers and use our results analysis service, Active Results.
4. Sign up to receive [subject updates](#) by email.
5. Sign up to attend a [training event](#) or take part in webinars on specific topics running throughout the year and or our Q&A webinar sessions every half term.
6. Attend one of our free [teacher network events](#).
7. When you're ready to plan essay titles with your learners for the NEA component, first take a look at our [Guide to task setting](#).
8. Then submit your tasks using the [Text and Task proposal form](#) before your learners begin work on their tasks.

