

GCSE (9–1) and A LEVEL

# ENGLISH

J351, J352

H070, H470, H072, H472, H074, H474

## Moving from modular to linear qualifications

Version 1



# MOVING FROM MODULAR TO LINEAR QUALIFICATIONS

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*In transitioning to the newly reformed GCSEs and A levels for first teaching from 2015 onwards, as well as getting to grips with new specifications and sometimes new subject knowledge, there is also an impact on the way knowledge development and assessment opportunities are structured. The structure of all new GCSEs, AS and A levels is moving from a modular towards a linear course structure. The linear approach means that learners take all exams at the end of the course, which gives more time for teaching and learning.*

We have produced this guide to support teachers who are moving from modular to linear qualifications. It is particularly aimed at teachers who teach GCSE and A Level. Following reforms announced by the UK government, both these qualifications are moving from a modular (or unitised) structure to a linear structure.

The trend towards linear qualifications is an exciting development for teachers and learners. Linear qualifications give teachers more freedom to plan the course and set the pace of study. This guide is designed to highlight things you will need to think about when moving from a modular course to a linear one, and suggests ways forward in planning, teaching and learning, and assessment.

# MODULAR AND LINEAR COURSES: WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES?

## Organisation of content, concepts and skills

Modular	Linear
Content is divided into a number of self-contained units.	Content is viewed as a whole – there is a more holistic approach.
Content units have well-defined and precise boundaries.	Content will usually be divided into different sections but these will not be totally self-contained.
Content is divided into a number of bite-sized chunks with no links between different topics.	Links between content are emphasised and encouraged.
In many subjects, each unit focuses on a limited range of concepts and skills.	The key concepts and skills usually underpin the entire course.

## Exams and resits

Modular	Linear
Learners can be examined on individual units during the course, in both in the first and second years of a two-year course, or even across a three year programme of study. Therefore, a learner could sit exams in different units on 3 different occasions.	Learners sit all the exams at the end of the course. (If there is coursework, it may be completed during the course but will not be externally assessed or moderated until the end of the course.)
Each unit exam tests only the content, concepts and skills in one unit.	All components of the specification are assessed at the end of the course. So each exam paper is likely to test a range of concepts and skills, and questions are likely to link topics from different parts of the course.
Some synoptic assessment is included, usually in a unit in the second year of the course. This is designed to help learners develop a holistic understanding of the subject, and retain content covered in the early units.  Learners can resit individual units and many learners do this while they are completing later units. They are usually awarded the better mark achieved in the two sittings of that unit.	The synoptic element happens naturally because the key concepts and skills underpin the entire course.  Learners cannot sit parts of the assessment during the course of their programme of study. However, they can resit the assessment in its entirety at a later date (and in some specific instances may be able to resit individual components).

# IMPACT ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

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## ***Modular specifications***

With modular specifications you had to make fewer decisions about the order to teach units and how much time to spend on each one. Modular specifications often provided a clear framework. The topics, concepts and skills for each unit were clearly defined and had to be covered by the time of the unit exams. This means that teaching and learning focussed on just one part of the course at a time. Thus what to teach, and when to teach it, was clear.

Some learners found the short-term goals set by modular examinations manageable and motivating. They only had to cope with a limited number of topics, concepts and skills at any one time. Knowing that there was always an exam not far away encouraged them to work hard and not let things drift.

## ***Linear specifications***

With linear specifications, you have greater freedom to plan the two-year course. You can choose the order of topics and set a pace of study that is appropriate for your learners. There is more teaching time available for a linear specification, because less time is taken up preparing for and taking externally set and marked examinations.

A linear specification also allows more time for learners to internalise and practise concepts, and build up their skills, before their external examinations. Research has found that many learners reach a higher standard at the end of a linear course than if they had studied a modular course.

Linear courses also encourage learners to refer to, and build on, knowledge that they have acquired early in the course, so that they arrive at the examination period with a much more holistic view of their subject. Modular courses, on the other hand, can make it more difficult for them to acquire a coherent picture of their subject, instead perceiving it as a series of disconnected fragments.

Many teachers say that, when teaching a linear specification, they notice a distinct change at some point during the course – often during the second term of the second year – when most learners seem to begin to see the subject holistically. This can be an exciting time for both learners and teachers.

It marks a moment when many learners take a significant step forwards in their understanding of the subject, and develop a much deeper appreciation of how various concepts link together. Their intrinsic abilities can show a dramatic improvement during this period. They begin to write much more perceptive answers to questions. They may find it easier to remember facts, because these are now seen as fitting neatly into an overall picture of the subject.

Linear specifications also bring coherence to assessment. The content, concepts and skills in the exam papers do not have to be isolated from each other, and learners may be able, where appropriate, to transfer knowledge, understanding and skills across these papers.

#### Key Benefits

The removal of modular exams has a significant impact on teaching and learning:

- teaching is not constantly interrupted by assessments at the end of short modules
  - knowledge, understanding and skills can be developed over a longer period of time
  - key concepts and skills can be taught and revisited throughout the course, and links made between topics, leading to deeper learning
  - there is time to innovate and explore those interesting side-roads that are adjacent, but not necessarily central, to the specification content
  - without constant pressure from modular exams, weaker learners are given time to develop and stronger learners can read around the subject, pursue their individual interests and develop their skills as independent learners.
- This increases learners' motivation and leads to deeper thinkers.

# PLANNING AND TEACHING A LINEAR SPECIFICATION

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*Many teachers welcome this shift as an opportunity to take back control of teaching and learning. It allows you to use, and improve, your professional skills. Linear specifications also require that a more holistic approach is taken to course planning. The course needs to be thought about and planned as a whole. The relationship between different topics, regular revisiting of concepts and skills, and opportunities for formative assessment all need to be considered and planned.*

## **Content**

Planning content coverage for a linear specification is more complex than planning for a modular specification. With the modular approach, the unit content need not be revisited once the unit examination is taken. The planning for a linear specification needs to be more holistic. Because all the examinations are at the end of the course, no topic can be forgotten about at any stage of the course. In simple terms:

***think about the best order to teach topics***

***include opportunities for revisiting topics***

***allow time for revision.***

Linear specifications provide greater opportunities for all of these activities because less time is spent on preparing for and taking unit examinations. More time is available for more careful and thorough coverage of the course, and for encouraging deeper, and more joined-up, learning and thinking.

## **Sequence of topics**

There are generally many different ways that the teaching of a subject could be organised. Although many teachers will decide to follow the sequence of content as it is set out in the specification, there is no need to do this. It is important to consider progression, so that 'easier' topics are covered earlier in the course, and 'more difficult' ones dealt with later. Topics that include knowledge and concepts that will be used in other topics should come early in the course. Many teachers find that they do not always get the order and timing exactly right when teaching a linear specification at first. Adjustments may need to be made during the course. After completing the course for the first time it is always a good idea to evaluate the order and timing and make necessary changes for subsequent cohorts. We make sure that plenty of support is available for OCR teachers during this process. There are usually opportunities to discuss planning with trainers and other OCR teachers at our training events, during webinars, at teacher networks, and on the subject-specific discussion forums [online](#). We provide delivery guides, as well as having the Schemes of Work Builder tool available on our website for our GCSE, AS and A Level subjects that offer guidance on planning and sequencing of topics.



## Concepts and skills

There are often key concepts and skills that underpin the entire linear specification. There will also be concepts and skills that are closely related to a particular topic and also relevant to other parts of the specification. Even when a concept or skill is related to only one topic, learners should be given opportunities to revisit it to enhance their understanding.

Careful thought needs to be given to the development of learners' understanding and skills across the two years. This is very different from planning for a modular specification where a particular skill or concept might be restricted to one unit. In a linear specification, the whole range of learners' skills and understanding need to be developed throughout the course. This might involve covering a particular skill when teaching a part of the content where that skill will not be assessed in the exam. For example, in a history exam, learners might not be required to analyse historical sources in questions about the period 1919 to 1939, but this skill should still be developed during the teaching of that topic. Otherwise, learners could go for months without any further development of the skill. Learners make progress in understanding and skills by being able to revisit them regularly and by having a reasonably long period of time to make progress. Linear specifications give learners two years to learn and develop and the entire two years should be used.

## Helping learners to see the subject as a whole

In a linear specification, where all the content will be assessed at the end of the course, teaching and learning need to ensure that content covered early in the course remains in each learner's mind right up to the final examination period. There are several tactics that can help with this.

For example:

- You should constantly encourage learners to make links between the area of the subject that they are currently learning about, and topics covered earlier. This can be done in various ways, such as by oral questioning in class that starts from the current topic and leads learners back to earlier ones; or by setting tasks that ask learners to draw together ideas from past and current topics. This not only keeps earlier topics 'alive' in learners' minds, but also helps them to begin to see the subject as a whole.
- Some teachers like to plan their scheme of work as a 'spiral', where a topic is covered at a fairly simple level early in the course, and then revisited and dealt with at a higher level later on.
- Interim tests can revisit earlier topics. These tests can be quite short – perhaps a 10-question quick quiz on a topic covered one or two terms ago – or longer, more formal written assessments.

### ***Schemes of work***

The format of schemes of work will vary from centre to centre and between subjects, but give a useful representation of the structure and timing of the intended sequence of teaching and learning. Suggested patterns of teaching and learning have been provided in the co-teaching guides for AS and A level and posted on the OCR community pages.

### ***On-going assessment***

Modular specifications give learners short-term goals and regular feedback through the summative results of unit examinations. Linear assessment provides opportunities for longer-term development of understanding and skills without the distractions of unit examinations and the accompanying retakes, but progress needs to be monitored through regular formative assessment.

You can build opportunities for periodic assessment into the scheme of work, including:

- formal tests similar to the final examination papers
- diagnostic tests focussed on specific knowledge or understanding
- exercises focused on part of the content or a particular concept or skill
- contributions to group work or class debate
- ongoing Assessment for Learning giving formative feedback to students

You can create opportunities for peer and self-assessment. These assessments identify progress, areas of strength and areas that need development for a whole class or, more often, for individual learners. You can use them to inform future teaching and learning. They are also useful for identifying areas that need a special focus during later revision and they provide useful evidence for reports to parents and construction of profiles for individual learners.

### ***Revisiting***

Linear specifications also make revisiting topics possible. Learners' understanding of a topic is often improved enormously when they are given the opportunity to revisit that topic. This can be achieved in several ways:

- by approaching the topic through different issues and questions from those used when it was first covered
- by exploring its links with other topics in the specification
- by exploring it at a higher conceptual level.

Revisiting is especially important for topics covered in the first year of the course. Learners' level of understanding of a topic will often be fixed at the level they were operating at when they covered that topic. Once their conceptual understanding has developed, it is likely that a 'revisit' to a topic later in the course will develop a more sophisticated grasp of the topic. Additionally, given the synoptic nature of the terminal assessment, revisiting is essential in order to help learners make links between the different topics they cover in the linear course.



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# PREPARING FOR THE EXAMINATIONS

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*All OCR specifications outline the course content, and contain assessment objectives and the forms of assessment so you can see how the exams are structured. The specifications for each subject can be found on our website at [www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk)*

## **Revision**

Taking all the examinations at the end of the course means that learners spend less time being formally assessed. It also means that time needs to be left towards the end of the course for revision.

Revision has a different purpose from 'revisiting'. Revisiting is for deepening and extending learners' knowledge and understanding. Revision is more about consolidating what learners already know and understand, and helping them to use this to fulfil the requirements of exams.

It is important that learners revise by applying their knowledge and understanding to exam questions rather than just trying to memorise their notes. The greatest weakness of learners' exam answers is often not their lack of knowledge, but their failure to use it relevantly. Learners should also become thoroughly familiar with the layout and organisation of the exam papers to minimise the danger of misinterpreting the instructions given in the question, such as answering both questions in an 'either...or' section. They should also be clear about the different types of questions that appear and the different requirements of these questions.

Learners should also be aware that assessment in linear specifications tends to be more holistic than in modular assessment. This means that they have to be ready to make links between different parts of the specification and to use their understanding and skills across a range of contexts.

## **Interim assessment**

It is important that learners are given the experience of 'mock exams' – taking all, or nearly all the exam papers, in surroundings as close to the real exams as possible – at least in 'exam conditions'. In addition to the sample assessment material provided before the start of first teaching of new specifications, OCR also provides practice papers for many components – these can be found on Interchange, in the Past Paper section.

## **Past papers and examiner reports**

Past papers, mark schemes and examiner reports are available on our website and the most recent papers are available on Interchange. These are very useful for mock exams, interim assessment and for obtaining detailed information on how an exam was marked, and how learners tended to perform on each question. Often the examiner will comment on how well learners coped with a question or will point out common errors.

### ***Example candidate responses***

Example candidate responses are available for most OCR AS and A Level subjects on the relevant subject pages. They contain examples of exam questions and candidates' answers at different levels of performance. They also include a commentary from an examiner on why an answer achieved the number of marks or band awarded. You can use the example candidate responses to help you guide your learners in how to write good answers in response to particular types of examination questions.

Read more about the opportunities and pitfalls in using past papers as your own Periodic Assessments in a blog from Neil Wade, one of OCR's Subject Specialists: <http://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/insights/are-past-paper-questions-always-useful-neil-wade/>

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# THE ENGLISH SUITE

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## GCSE (9–1) ENGLISH LANGUAGE (J351)

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*The move from modular to linear assessment in GCSE (9–1) English Language provides a greater opportunity for teachers to construct a course to suit the needs and interests of their learners. The focus on unseen texts and the removal of controlled assessment means that there is now more freedom in the types and range of texts that learners can engage with during the course. This presents a great opportunity to encourage wide reading, which will not only improve learners' knowledge and understanding of different texts, but also help to increase their enjoyment of reading, particularly if texts are chosen with engaging themes in mind. The removal of controlled assessment also means that there is more time to focus on developing reading, writing and spoken language skills so that learners feel confident and fully prepared for assessment at the end of the course.*

### Planning

The GCSE (9–1) English Language is flexible enough to suit three, two or one year linear delivery. We have produced various curriculum planners to support different delivery timescales:

- [Three year delivery for both GCSE specifications](#)
- [Two year co-teachable delivery](#)
- [Two year thematic delivery](#)
- [One year delivery](#)

GCSE (9–1) English Language builds on the knowledge and understanding gained at Key Stage 3 with increased focus on higher order skills such as comparison and evaluation. The skills, particularly for reading, work in a progressive fashion and can therefore be easily built upon during the course. These skills include:

- Understanding the information and ideas presented in texts
- Understanding how these ideas are conveyed – language and structural analysis
- Comparison
- Evaluation

The transition between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 can also be made easier by the gradual introduction of different types of texts of increasing challenge.

In developing their writing skills, it is likely that most of the work will be building on what learners have been studying since Key Stage 2, particularly in terms of developing grammatical accuracy.

The OCR GCSE English Language ['Journeys' Delivery Guide](#) provides some engaging activities to develop and consolidate reading and writing skills and build learner confidence.

There are many crossover opportunities between the GCSE (9–1) English Language and GCSE (9–1) English Literature specifications. As GCSE English Language has no set content, centres delivering both specifications may find it useful to structure the course based around their choice of Literature set texts. The reading and writing skills needed for GCSE English Language can then be developed through the study of these set texts, and complemented with additional 19th- 21st century non-fiction and literary texts.

The tables below provide some suggestions of how the GCSE English Language course could be structured around the study of the GCSE English Literature set texts.

<p><b>GCSE English Literature J352 Component 1</b></p> <p>19th century prose (set text).</p>	<p><b>GCSE English Language J351 Component 1</b></p> <p>19th century non-fiction texts to contextualise the themes of Literature set text</p> <p>Comparison of 19th century non-fiction and 19th century prose fiction</p> <p>Sections of set text (e.g. opening chapters) can be treated as unseen before being studied in detail</p> <p>Analysis of language and structure</p> <p>Writing in different forms, for different audiences and purposes.</p>
<p><b>GCSE English Literature J352 Component 1</b></p> <p>Modern prose or drama (set text)</p> <p>Comparison of set text extract with a thematically linked unseen extract.</p> <p><b>GCSE English Literature J352 Component 2</b></p> <p>Chosen poetry cluster (set text)</p> <p>Shakespeare play (set text)</p>	<p><b>GCSE English Language J351 Component 2</b></p> <p>20th &amp; 21st century prose fiction extracts linked to themes of Literature set text</p> <p>Comparison of thematically linked unseen texts (non-fiction and literary)</p> <p>Sections of the set text (e.g. opening chapters/ scenes) can be treated as unseen before being studied in detail</p> <p>Analysis of language and structure</p> <p>Writing in different forms, for different audiences and purposes</p> <p>Creative writing.</p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/> <p>Analysis of language and structure</p> <p>Creative writing.</p>

## Teaching and learning

The GCSE English Language course should aim to build learners' confidence in engaging with a wide variety of unseen texts. With freedom to choose texts and themes that will appeal to specific groups of learners, it is possible to tackle this unseen requirement in a way that's manageable.

The use of unseen texts should develop not only reading skills, but writing skills too. The development of writing skills is most effective when it is contextualised in some way. For example, learners could produce a creative writing piece as a re-creation or extension of a text they have been studying. Throughout the course, learners should be encouraged to use the knowledge and understanding gained from wider reading to improve their own writing and to understand that the development of reading and writing skills are intrinsically linked.

Almost any text can be used to help develop learners' skills in preparation for assessment. A good starting point can be to use extracts of texts you'll be familiar with from previous teaching at GCSE Level (e.g. *Of Mice and Men*) to develop awareness of language choices and to use as the basis for comparison with a text which may feel more unfamiliar to the learner (e.g. in genre or historical period). Increasingly unfamiliar texts or texts of increased challenge can gradually be introduced across the course. Wider reading can also be encouraged with the use of reading lists which cater to different learners' interests.

A thematic approach can also help learners in tackling unseen texts. One area of the specification that learners are likely to find most challenging is getting to grips with 19th century non-fiction, as these texts are likely to be the least familiar to them both culturally and linguistically. Teachers may adopt a thematic approach looking, for example, at working conditions in the 19th century and in the modern world, using a 21st century non-fiction text. This kind of approach gives learners an anchorage in how they approach unseen texts, balancing what is familiar to them with what is likely to be least familiar. This can also be usefully linked to the learner's study of a 19th century novel in the GCSE English Literature course, helping to illuminate aspects of the context of the text.

By the end of the course learners should be familiar with a wide range of non-fiction and literary texts from the 19th-21st centuries.

## Assessment

Learners will need to demonstrate the skills they have learnt throughout the course and apply these to the unseen texts within an exam context. We have produced additional Practice Papers, available via [OCR Interchange](#) so that centres can build in assessment opportunities at regular intervals throughout the course. This provides the opportunity for learners' progress to be tracked and measured.

The two GCSE (9-1) English Language exams provide an integrated focus. In each exam, the unseen texts are thematically linked and provide a foundation for the writing section. The use of unseen material allows learners to draw on analytical skills developed in both OCR GCSE (9-1) English Language and GCSE (9-1) English Literature.

## Revision

Assessment preparation for GCSE (9–1) English Language will involve consolidation of the skills learners have developed throughout the course. It is important that learners understand what is required of them in the assessment and they may find it useful to consider the Assessment Objectives in terms of accessible 'skills checklists' that they can audit, develop and review throughout the course.

Teachers may also find it useful to go through the annotated sample assessment materials with learners to help them to understand the requirements and approaches to each question. These are available on the [GCSE English Language webpage](#).

Other revision strategies include:

- Themed pointers based on the text pairings for each exam to aid comparison and exploration of texts
- group annotation of texts
- 'speed dating' activity - learners 'sell' responses to different texts
- Review knowledge of subject terminology
- Interactive revision using external resources, such as BBC Bitesize
- Review characteristics of different text types e.g. informative, persuasive.



## GCSE (9–1) ENGLISH LITERATURE (J352)

*The move to linear assessment for reformed GCSE (9–1) English Literature courses means that you have greater opportunity and freedom to move away from 'teaching to the test' and to think about curriculum enrichment, for example, encouraging wider reading to enhance students' enjoyment of set texts. Underlying your course planning and preparation, is making sure that your students are confident and equipped for the final exams at the end of the two year course; outcomes are, of course, paramount, and we're committed to supporting you help your students achieve their potential in English. It's important for teachers and students alike to have clarity about the end goals, and, particularly in a linear model, to make sure that students stay motivated throughout the course.*

### Planning

We have a number of suggested schemes of work for you to use or adapt, building on both a discrete approach to teaching the new GCSE (9–1) English Literature course or alternatively taking a more integrated approach to combining key elements and skills of GCSE (9–1) English Language and English Literature courses. These can be found under [GCSE English Literature subject page](#) under 'Teaching and Learning Resources – Curriculum planners'.

Delivering the new GCSE (9–1) is a new process for all, and you may well find that after the first exam series in summer 2017, you want to re-visit your schemes of work as a team in order to review the order you approach the texts in, or to build in more focus on particular skills, or to develop further co-teachability opportunities with GCSE (9–1) English Language.

Teaching a linear course does lend itself to starting your planning by thinking about students' readiness at the end point, and working backwards, rather than just moving through the course in bite sized chunks, from one assessment to the next. There are a number of simple strategies that you might want to consider, as part of your curriculum planning:

Start with a modern text – modern prose or drama – this is an accessible, positive way in to teaching English Literature at GCSE level.

Cover the poetry content in two chunks i.e. 7 poems (from your chosen themed cluster from the OCR set text poetry anthology Towards a World Unknown) early in Year 10 and a further 8 later in Year 10 or early in Year 11, building on and linking to the 7 poems that were initially introduced. NB It doesn't have to be the case that you cover them in strict chronological order as they appear in the anthology, either, it might be more interesting to mix up the selection.

Use the 19th century novel as a springboard into exploring unseen 19th century non-fiction texts, by sourcing material which illuminates the context of or issues in your chosen novel. Starting by simply exploring the content of these extracts, focussing on comprehension, and then applying their understanding to the characters or themes being studied, will help students to build confidence with the language and style of these texts early on.

Key Stage 4 will very much be building on Key Stage 3 achievement, and many centres are choosing to introduce the Key Stage 4 curriculum either in the final term of Year 9 or even for the whole year. This could be through giving students a taste of a variety of 19th century texts and extracts, both fiction and non-fiction – OCR has a number of rich resources designed with co-teachability in mind – for example the GCSE English Delivery Guide based on [Journeys](#) or the OUP Student Books and Teacher Companion produced to specifically support teaching and learning of the new OCR GCSE (9–1) English Language course. See [OUP OCR GCSE English resources](#)

## Teaching and learning

New for GCSE English Literature examinations from summer 2017, is the inclusion of unseen texts in the final exams, which need to feature in comparison questions (not necessarily one unseen text being compared with the other). Unique to OCR, students compare a studied text with an unseen text in the same genre in each exam, enabling fresh and personal connections to be made between an extract from their familiar, studied text and a thematically linked unseen text. This enables candidates to evaluate and respond critically to texts in a fresh and personal way and takes away the 'fear factor' of tackling a comparison task based entirely on unseen texts.

### How to approach set texts

As mentioned above in the Planning section, it's useful to think about and map out the whole course before you begin teaching, rather than just moving from one text to the next. This gives you greater flexibility and opportunity to think about how and where to build in the key skills needed for the final exams, integral to covering all the set texts.

The move to closed text exams, and questions which require candidates to show understanding of and engagement with whole texts can seem daunting. We've developed a set of practical, creative tools to help support you, including:

- Introductory guides to new set texts e.g. [DNA](#), [Never Let Me Go](#)
- Delivery guides focusing on what's new or what's changed e.g. Approaching unseen texts, Comparing texts
- An interactive, free digital poetry anthology at <http://english.ocr.org.uk> with teaching ideas and activities for all 45 poems included in the OCR set text poetry anthology *Towards a World Unknown*.

As mentioned before, there's lots of scope to encourage students to read more widely, to enhance their engagement with and enjoyment of the set texts. At the end of this appendix there are some ideas of a wide range of authors to get you started as you encourage students in their own reading.

### **How to effectively prepare students to work with unseen texts**

Again, there are rich crossover opportunities with GCSE (9–1) English Language, given the new English Language end-of-course assessments are based entirely on unseen texts. See earlier *Planning and Teaching and learning* sections. Other practical, simple strategies you might consider:

- OCR resource *Using modern unseen texts* includes a suggested framework for exploring stand-alone unseen extracts and pairing an unseen extract with a studied text, plus new unseen extracts for each of the set texts
- Student sourced extracts around a theme e.g. use *I Wouldn't thank you for a Valentine* by Liz Lochhead as a starting point for ideas around romantic love – see activities in OCR digital poetry anthology at <http://english.ocr.org.uk>
- Embedding unseens/comparison through different mediums e.g. using a picture or visual as a starting point and setting it to music – could be linked to a particular dramatic moment in a text.

## **Assessment**

The focus in preparing learners for the final exams should be on skills-based learning through the study of a range of quality, literary texts. Reading critically and evaluatively, making connections across reading and analysing the impact of language, structure, form and presentation are all essential skills developed through this qualification. Preparing learners to respond to unseen texts and to use them comparatively in the assessment further encourages independent thought and analysis, enabling students of all abilities to build their confidence in responding to texts in a fresh and personal way and make connections, both explicit and implicit.

The reality of end-of-course exams means that you are likely to want to build in assessment opportunities at regular intervals. This could mean end of term or text assessments; many centres are planning for mocks at the end of Year 10 and again around Christmas time in Year 11. In order to support you in measuring progress in this way, as well as the published sample assessment materials, we've produced new practice papers which are securely stored on Interchange, making them ideal for mock exams. You can find these here: [GCSE English Literature practice papers](#)

Regular progress checks provide scope for intervention and support across the ability range, without students being under pressure to 'perform' in high stakes assessments en route.

It's a good idea to encourage and support student understanding of how they will be assessed at the end of the course, and to give them hands-on experience, e.g. by developing student friendly Assessment Objectives, marking and reviewing published candidate exemplars and examiner commentaries, available at [GCSE English Literature subject page](#) (under Teaching and Learning resources under Candidate exemplars). Learners will be keen to use the new style mark schemes themselves, too, and using them to support critiques of their peers' work is an easy way to achieve familiarity for them.

Mocks are a useful tool to mirror the stamina students will require for the final exams, while regular assessments during the course can be motivating for students, as well as highlighting where further work needs to be done or skills consolidated.

## Revision

Revision is not the same as re-visiting or reflecting, it is about ensuring readiness for the final exams at the end of a linear course. OCR has a number of resources available to specifically support effective exam practice for the new GCSE English exams, developed by practising teachers.

There is a dedicated revision section in the <http://english.ocr.org.uk> designed to directly support students with practical activities and strategies to help them prepare for the poetry section of the final exam.

Other practical suggestions from teachers for revision include:

- Groups taking responsibility for summaries of plots/characters/relationships in set texts
- Developing quote banks for characters linked to themes
- Quizzes and competitions e.g. give the answer and work out the question
- Students sourcing extracts around a particular theme
- Active Shakespeare – groups tracking themes/plots and sub-plots, quick-fire key quotes.

Hyperlinks included in this document:

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse-english-literature-j352-from-2015/>

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/164038-journeys-delivery-guide.pdf>

<https://global.oup.com/education/content/secondary/series/ocr-gcse-english/?region=uk>

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/208645-dna-delivery-guide.pdf>

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/208646-never-let-me-go-delivery-guide.pdf>

<http://english.ocr.org.uk>

<https://interchange.ocr.org.uk/Downloads/English-Literature-J352-from-2015-practice-papers-and-mark-schemes.zip>

**Contemporary authors  
 suitable for 14–16 year olds**

*The following list is NOT a list of authors from which unseen material will be drawn but a wide range of high quality authors whose work incorporates the kinds of themes and styles which will support students to extend their critical creative reading skills and develop their creative writing skills. This list could be sent home to help parents to support wider reading.*

- |                  |                    |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Aaronvitch Ben   | Atkinson Kate      |
| Almond David     | Beauman Sally      |
| Banks Iain       | Blackman Malorie   |
| Bates HE         | Brennan Maeve      |
| Boyle John       | Carter Angela      |
| Chatwin Bruce    | Dickens Monica     |
| Conrad Joseph    | Du Maurier Daphne  |
| Dahl Roald       | Dunmore Helen      |
| Durrell Gerald   | Fine Anne          |
| Elton Ben        | Gibbons Stella     |
| Filer Nathan     | Hall Radclyffe     |
| Fleming Ian      | Harris Joanne      |
| Forster EM       | Heller Zoe         |
| Fowles John      | Hill Susan         |
| Golding William  | Jones Sadie        |
| Greene Graham    | Joyce Rachel       |
| Harding John     | Levy Andrea        |
| Hornby Nick      | Lewycka Marina     |
| Horowitz Anthony | Lively Penelope    |
| Huxley Aldous    | Lupton Rosamund    |
| Kelman Stephen   | Manning Olivia     |
| Kipling Rudyard  | Mantel Hilary      |
| Lawrence DH      | O'Farrell Maggie   |
| Lee Laurie       | Rendell Ruth       |
| McEwan Ian       | Rhys Jean          |
| Nicholls David   | Rosoff Meg         |
| Orwell George    | Smith Zadie        |
| Pullman Philip   | Spark Muriel       |
| Rushdie Salman   | Streatfield Noel   |
| Swindells Robert | Tearne Roma        |
| Torday Paul      | Tremain Rose       |
| Waugh Evelyn     | Waters Sarah       |
| Wells HG         | Watson Winifred    |
| Westall Robert   | Winman Sarah       |
| Wyndham John     | Winterson Jeanette |
|                  | Woolf Virginia     |

# THE A LEVEL ENGLISH SPECIFICATIONS

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## *Synopticity*

The linear design of the new AS and A level specifications across the English suite enables a truly synoptic approach to study and assessment. The new English Literature AS and A level structures enables centres to select how they wish to deliver each component and to draw natural contextual, critical, thematic and stylistic links between texts taken from a range of historical periods and a range of literary genres. Because each component assesses against all AOs learners will consistently draw on a rich toolbox of interpretative skills, ensuring that they become increasingly competent in a range of interpretative models including: close-reading, critical reading and context-driven approaches. Similarly, in the new English Language and Literature AS and A level specifications, candidates develop a rich appreciation of how meaning is shaped within a range of fictional and non-fiction texts. The component assessments are designed to enable learners to apply a range of interpretative skills in a precise analysis of texts and to apply their knowledge of how meanings are shaped within in texts through creative writing tasks. Because of the final assessment structure of the specification, centres are able to weave the content and skills from each component into an integrated delivery model in order to support the cross-fertilisation of ideas. The English Language AS and A level specifications also provide excellent scope to move away from potentially limited unitised delivery. Instead an integrated, cross-component approach to studying the key concepts and theories that underpin language study can be adopted. Learners are likely to become more aware of the interconnectedness of language theories in relation to language usage amongst various groups. One could also argue that in seeing the links, learners will also become better equipped at reading the subtleties, developing nuanced insights into why certain groups use language in very different ways, and how much one's language use shapes identity, presentation and reception.



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# GCE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AS (H070) AND A LEVEL (H470)

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*The move from a modular course where UMS marks are accumulated in 2 separate exam series to a linear course where there are only terminal exams does offer teachers more freedom to move away from the demands of constantly having to think of preparing students for exams and instead to think about wider curriculum study and enrichment. In a modular system, at least a term was given up in preparation for and sitting of summer AS exams. Now teachers have that time 'back', which reduces the pressure of covering content in a short amount of time and therefore gives more space to exploring concepts, improving skills and investigating linguistic areas that naturally appeal to students.*

Underlying any course planning is the aim of preparing students to feel confident and prepared for the exams at the end of the two year course and this part of the guide is committed to helping you to suitably prepare your students.

## Planning

You will find on the A level English Language webpage a number of 2 year course planners (<http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/177894-a-guide-to-co-teaching-the-ocr-a-and-as-level-english-language-specifications.pdf>) to help you make decisions about the structuring of your course. However, these are very much assessment preparation driven. They offer routes through for teachers who have been required to offer a co-teachable approach (so some students could do both AS and A level English language). They reflect a traditionally modular approach to teaching, in that the unit titles reflect assessment topics/questions.

The majority of OCR English Language A level centres embarked on this approach in September 2015 because they were in a 'mixed economy' of modular and linear AS/A levels. But as more A levels become linear, and funding pressures increase, many centres are changing their offer and moving to offering linear A level courses separately from any AS provision which might be available. This gives an opportunity to re-visit schemes of work with colleagues in the department and team to re-order the way elements are taught, or to take a far more conceptual and integrated approach to the teaching of the examined topics.

For instance, one way to start could be through the topic of Language Change. This would seem odd in an assessment driven curriculum – it is the last question on the second exam at the end of the two year course, after all. OCR has a Delivery Guide already available for this topic (<http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/261590-language-change-delivery-guide.pdf>) but rather than follow it as a step-by-step guide to teaching the topic, you might dip in and out of it. Start with the students' interest – ask the question 'can teachers/parents use modern slang?!!' You might dip into aspects of Language and Technology as part of this activity, and use the Delivery Guide which can be found at <http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/as-a-level-gce-english-language-h070-h470-from-2015/delivery-guide/delivery-guide-ladg009-language-and-technology/>. You might then explore students' knowledge of basic grammar terms; you could use either the Topic Exploration Guide on approaching texts, or refer to the relevant section of the OUP book for OCR A level English Language. Through this approach, you can make sure the students understand grammar analysis and can identify subjects, objects, verbs, adverbials and complements and can also pick out nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and prepositions with all the various sub-classes. Some of this work will be building on what students will probably have been learning about Grammar since Key Stage Two, some of this work will also be new to them.

Now having established an ability to analyse linguistic texts, student should be able to continue on a 'language change journey'. You could explore older texts, and the Delivery Guide on Language Change (<http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/261590-language-change-delivery-guide.pdf>) has sections to help you – and then use the British Library 'Sounds' section <https://www.bl.uk/subjects/sound> to explore how oral traditions have changed. This could involve looking at regional dialects (there are plenty of examples in the British Library Sounds Familiar part of the website (<https://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/sounds/index.html>)), differences between the spoken and written word (there are lesson ideas for this in the Delivery Guide 'Introduction to Conversation which can be found at <http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/as-a-level-gce-english-language-h070-h470-from-2015/delivery-guide/delivery-guide-ladg004-introduction-to-conversation/> and then explore topics like language and gender (Delivery Guide available at <http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/as-a-level-gce-english-language-h070-h470-from-2015/delivery-guide/delivery-guide-ladg003-language-and-gender/>) which can come alive for students when exploring the spoken word. The students should constantly be considering whether these areas have changed over time.

Then, after having explored how language has developed, you might want to return with your students to the modern world and think about where it might go in the future. Look at how language is used in Media Texts (the Delivery Guide on Multi-modality in linguistic texts gives some ideas about how to approach this <http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/as-a-level-gce-english-language-h070-h470-from-2015/delivery-guide/delivery-guide-ladg008-multimodality/> as does the previously mentioned guide on Language and Technology <http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/as-a-level-gce-english-language-h070-h470-from-2015/delivery-guide/delivery-guide-ladg009-language-and-technology/>). While looking at 'modern texts' you might ask your students to consider issues of who has power in the texts you are looking at and how this power is expressed, and Delivery Guides like <http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/as-a-level-gce-english-language-h070-h470-from-2015/delivery-guide/delivery-guide-ladg002-language-and-power/> can help here.

This will all take (at least) the first year of teaching, but you have now covered all the concepts of the course – bar one, Child Language Acquisition and that could be reserved for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, along with the student's independent Language Investigation and Academic Poster.

Language and Change isn't the only place to start by any means. If you have a female only class, Language and Gender might seem an obvious place to start, tracking how female voices have changed over the years and whether they are different in writing and speaking. You could even end by reading some of Deborah Cameron's work on whether Language and Gender even exists!

Or you could start by looking at speech, and exploring these exploratory questions: What makes it different from the written word? Which mode exerts most power? How has speech evolved? Do men and women speak differently?

There are many different ways to make your way through a two year course, with the benefit of not having to constantly think about exams looming shortly.

## Teaching and learning

For A level English Language, in addition to covering the course requirements, the focus is on building key skills and conceptual understanding to prepare the learner for the end of course exams. The full curriculum can be found at <http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/171195-specification-accredited-a-level-gce-english-language-h470.pdf>. Students need to be prepared to:

- Analyse a text for key features of lexis and grammar
- Respond creatively to a language issue
- Explore differences between linked texts in different modes
- Consider what stage of language development a child might be at
- Analyse a multi-modal media text
- Examine language change

And as part of the non-examined assessment (NEA), complete their own independent investigation into language, on a topic of their own choice.

All the bullet pointed topics are found in the exam and all will include responding to unseen linguistic texts. Even the piece of creative writing (the second bullet point) responds to a previously unseen quote. Therefore, preparing students to study unseen texts is at the core of this qualification.

All the Delivery Guides on our website include 'real' linguistic texts and transcripts – or ideas of where to find them through web links. The more students practice on these texts, the better prepared they will be. This shouldn't mean lots of silent timed writing, however – there are many ways you could explore unseen texts in creative and engaging ways. For example, a different student could be asked to introduce an interesting linguistic text at the start of each lesson; you could put texts onto large pieces of paper for groups to annotate and display on the wall; you could give texts out with missing words and ask students to fill in the gaps (the fascinating bit is the discussion/explanation of their choices, and then exploring what the 'right' answer was, and discussing any differences); the class could jigsaw different texts.

Creative writing is such a good vehicle as well. The excellent Delivery Guide on Topical Issues (<http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/258291-topic-issue-delivery-guide.pdf>) explores different writing styles. Asking students to write in a particular style and then explain their choices is an excellent (and tried and tested) way of exploring lexical and syntactical choices through the use of genre conventions. It makes sense not to teach this skill discretely, but to integrate it with the other topics. For instance, in the course of teaching Language and Gender, ask students to create a style-based response to the utterance 'The English Language is biased against women'.

One of the really interesting aspects of the independent student language investigation is that they have to develop as independent learners. This doesn't happen magically overnight, but needs to be developed alongside the skills required to follow through a topic of interest for the student. The Delivery Guide about starting this work - <http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/as-a-level-gce-english-language-h070-h470-from-2015/delivery-guide/delivery-guide-ladg010a-setting-up-a-language-investigation/> - is full of ideas for developing the necessary skills. OCR also has guides about turning these Language Investigations into Academic Posters.

## Assessment

Both of the exams and the NEA that form the new GCE in English Language are synoptic. Since the focus is on skills-based learning, synoptic assessment is integrated into the specification. Analysing the impact of language, understanding and employing the language levels, making connections across different texts and the impact of language, form and structure on a student's own writing are all essential skills developed in this qualification. The emphasis on responding to unseen linguistic texts means that a student should feel ready to understand the pivotal role language plays in modern society and perhaps more importantly, be aware of how to use this knowledge.

The reality of end-of-course exams means that a teacher would want to build in assessment opportunities at regular intervals. This could mean end of year or end of topic assessments. To help teachers there are the sample exam papers, and OCR have also published practice papers for the A level that are securely stored on Interchange. Additionally, as you approach the end of the first year of the course, there is another end of year (AS) mock you could use in the practice materials for GCE English Language (for instance at <http://www.ocr.org.uk/images/297308-as-component-01-exploring-language-practice-material.pdf>).

It is a good idea to encourage and support student understanding of how they will be assessed at the end of the course throughout the course, and to give them hands-on-experience, e.g. by developing their own student friendly reading of Assessment Objectives, marking and reviewing indicative student work (such as those that can be found at <http://www.ocr.org.uk/images/269682-component-01-h070-indicative-candidate-answers.pdf>) and when available, looking at exemplars and chief examiner's reports which will be found on the A level English language webpage <http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/as-a-level-gce-english-language-h070-h470-from-2015/>. This will enable students to be able to understand how the mark scheme works and what they would need to do to improve their own work.

## Revision

Revision is not the same as re-visiting or reflecting. It is about ensuring readiness for the final exams at the end of a linear course. Obviously using practice papers and past papers when they are ready and looking at student exemplars all help. But as the course is synoptic in approach, continually looking at unseen texts of the standard and type that might come up in exams is always helpful.

Other ideas might include

- Using Quizlet (<https://quizlet.com/>) – students can design their own as well as respond to yours
- Students designing guides to answering different exam questions
- Designing useful phrases for comparison
- Finding interesting texts for analysis, both online and in language course books
- Use online resources like David Crystal's blog (<http://david-crystal.blogspot.co.uk/>) or the UCL Englicious site (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ah/knowledge-transfer-enterprise/initiatives/englicious>)

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# GCE ENGLISH LITERATURE AS (H072) AND A LEVEL (H472)

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## Planning

Teachers who are delivering both the AS and A level specification in tandem may find that their programme of study is more in line with those adopted for the legacy specification. The fact that learners will sit the AS exam half way through their A level journey necessitates that some content is delivered prior to others. Of course, this content will need to be revisited during the second year of study and will be reassessed at the end of the course. However, in many ways the AS course provides a useful structure for planning delivery for the full A level course, and, because the AS structure already focuses on literature from across historical periods and genres and all AOs are utilised within both the pre-1900 and post-1900 components, learners can still benefit from this integrated approach to delivery.

For example, the Shakespeare text can be explored through its historical contexts and critical reception, and this will inform approaches to studying the Post-1900 prose or drama text; the skills therefore transcend individual components. It is highly feasible to study the Shakespeare and the Post-1900 drama text simultaneously (in a split session approach), thereby fostering even deeper awareness of the dramatic characteristics of each play – how Shakespearean drama influences modern/contemporary drama, and how far dramatic traditions or conventions have changed. Concepts of narrative drivers, character types/functions, use of universal themes and dramatic/literary conventions are beautifully illustrated within Shakespeare's plays and this serves as a rich source to explore such aspects in post-1900 drama.

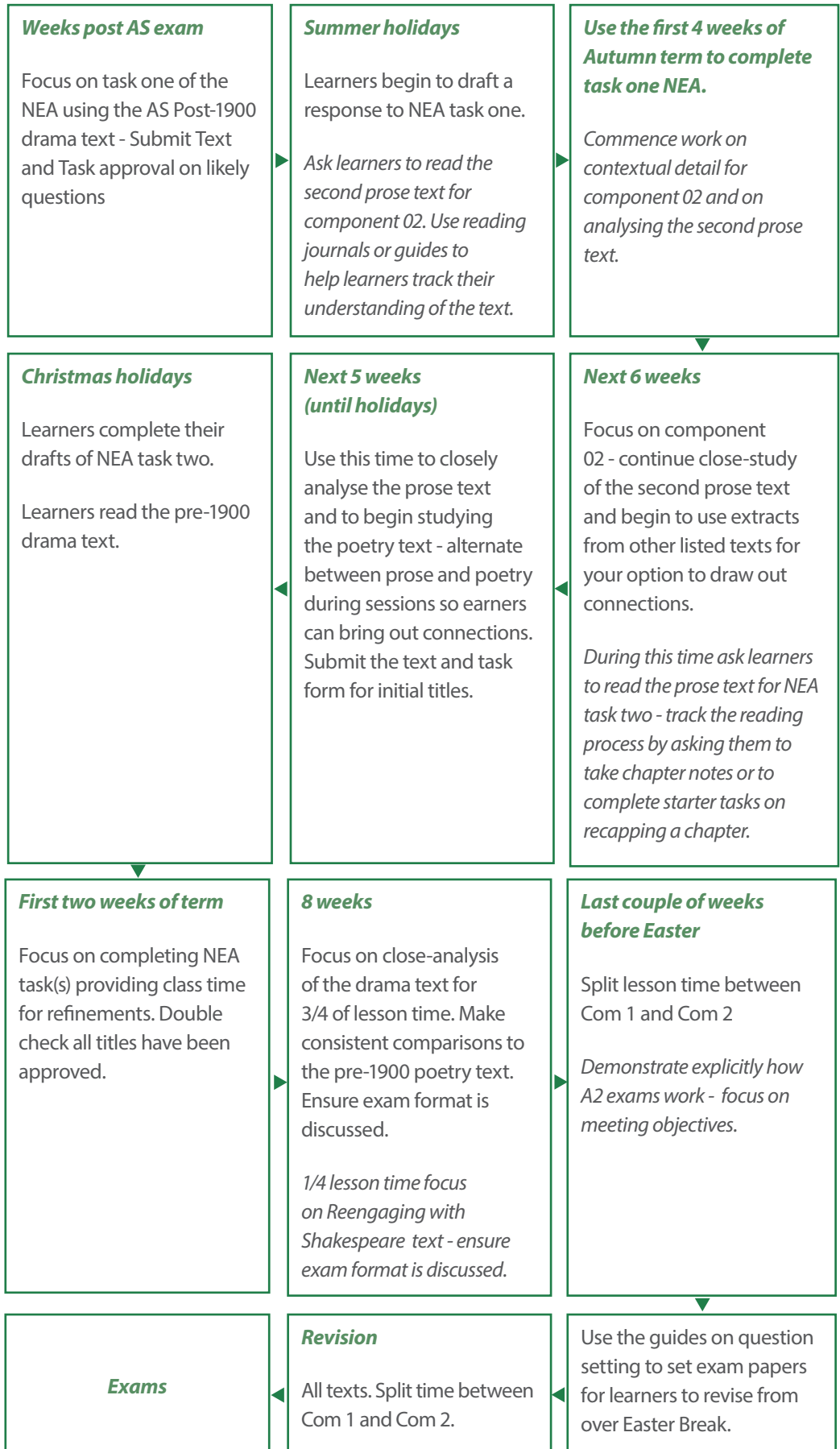
Similarly, the pre-1900 poetry text can be taught simultaneously with the post-1900 prose text, drawing out the historical movement of popular literary genre – from a preference for poetry to the advent of the novel and the elevation of prose. Drawing from the two drama texts already studied, exploring aspects of narrative can be a handy starting point to access the poetry and prose texts, drawing out comparisons between genre conventions and historical literary fashion or trends.

Of course this is only one approach to how you could plan your delivery of texts, so there are many other ways that you can sequence the delivery of texts to stimulate an appreciation of the connections between those texts. Some centres may wish to start with post-1900 texts, knowing their learners will find it more accessible to work with language and context more closely linked to their own. Some centres may wish to take a historical approach to texts – exploring how literary trends have emerged over time. The fact that each of the set texts is assessed separately within the AS exam, means that the order of delivery of the texts does not matter so much as to how skills and approaches to studying literature are developed across the programme of study.

After completion of the AS year, the new texts simply need to be linked to their partner text, so the pre-1900 drama text is explored through its connections to the pre-1900 poetry text and the second prose text is explored via its connections to the post-1900 text of the same topical focus. Furthermore, the texts chosen for the NEA tasks can also be linked to the thematic and socio-cultural contexts of the component 02 prose texts, and linked in terms of genre conventions to all the previous examples.

The two example calendars below may provide some insights into how to pick up the extra A level texts in the year after completing a coteachable model:

**Example calendar – single teacher**





**Example calendar – split teaching**

<p><b>Summer months</b>                  Use this time to focus on task one of NEA. You could use the AS drama text for this.</p> <p>Ask learners to complete a draft / or have investigated and selected which text they wish to use for NEA task one.</p>	<p><b>Autumn term</b>                  Focus on completion of NEA task one within first 4-6 weeks.</p> <p>Next part of term focus on NEA task two.</p>	<p><b>Christmas holidays</b>                  Complete second NEA task.</p> <p>Undertake reading for the second Prose text for Com 2.</p>	<p><b>After Christmas</b>                  Focus on Com 2.</p> <p>Make comparisons between the texts and focus on using extracts from other texts on the option list to practice the unseen aspect of the exam.</p>
<p><b>Summer months</b>                  Focus on introducing pre-1900 drama text. Invest in contexts, drawing out similarities between authors' styles/concerns etc in this and pre-1900 poetry text. Work on opening scenes - then set reading the remainder for summer holidays.</p>	<p><b>Autumn term</b>                  Focus on close-analysis of the pre-1900 drama text. Begin making comparisons to the Pre-1900 poetry text. Focus on exam structure and how to meet AOS.</p>	<p><b>After Christmas</b>                  3/4 of time re-engage with the Shakespeare text. Focus on exam structure and how to meet AOS.</p> <p>Keep the Poetry and Drama in the loop with regular lessons / activities.</p>	<p><b>Easter and after</b>                  Both teachers focus on exam preparation during and after Easter - use question setting guide to set mock papers.</p>

Those teachers who are teaching the A level specification only, perhaps have greater freedom in shaping their programme of study – determining which connections they wish to established between texts. For example, a component driven structure could be applied, where a teacher may choose to work their way through each component either in historical order or another order (for example following a structure that is likely to provide greater accessibility to learners). However, as there is perhaps more space/time for scope of delivery when only delivering the A level specification teachers may employ a cross component approach to delivery. They may adopt a similar approach as that outlined above – seeking links across genres and historical periods. However, it is important that texts that are assessed together are married up – for example the Pre-1900 poetry and drama texts and the component 02 texts.

There are a number of text-specific delivery guides and skills guides available on the English Literature subject page which can be used to help planning learning focuses for specific texts and to aid the development of key skills: <http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/as-a-level-gce-english-literature-h072-h472-from-2015/delivery-guide/>

Teachers can also use our online Scheme of work builder to plan their delivery: <http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/as-a-level-gce-english-literature-h072-h472-from-2015/scheme-of-work/>

### Teaching and learning

Those preparing learners for the AS exams will likely find that this imposes some structure to their delivery. This does not mean, however, that teachers are forced to teach to the exam, but you may find that a tight focus on the set texts is necessary. However, by adopting the cross genre/cross component approach to delivery, you may well find that you are able to establish effective contextual links or indeed critical approaches across the four texts studied for AS examinations, and of course then the extra four texts that are studied for the A level specification. This may ultimately free up more time to invest in exploring a wider range of critical material, exposing learners to wider-reading of relevant literature and exploring more deeply the shaping influences or contexts of the texts.

Those delivering the A level specification only have considerable space to deliver the texts and as such this provides excellent scope for enhancement activity. For example, for component 02 centres may decide to deliver more than the minimum two prose texts, or may encourage learners to read more widely themselves. Some centres may choose to study parts of other Shakespeare texts to draw out connections with their set text. Centres may feel they have more scope to offer more choice to learners within the NEA text selection. Wider-reading and research can also be undertaken into the contexts that surround the text, and more time can be invested in engaging with denser critical essays, more nuanced literary theories, a greater array of performances or historical responses.

Regardless of whether the AS and A level are studied together or not, the focus of the second year of delivery is usefully placed on gaining greater competency in applying the AOs. The **AS to A level Transition guide** provides useful tips as to how to achieve this and can be found at: <https://www.cpdhub.ocr.org.uk/DesktopDefault.aspx?e=eeefkacmhpbIncfpgfbpepiopealdmcpjcegaconikpmnokm>

(See pages 46-50)

## Assessment

It is perhaps the case that many centres who have opted to deliver the AS specification, have done so partly because it provides an authentic exam experience for level three learners prior to sitting the high stakes A level exams. The AS, though in itself a discrete qualification, can function as a mid-point mock exam opportunity enabling learners to gain a formalised understanding of their progress. However, it is important to invest in regular formative assessment tasks to track learners' growing understanding of each text. This can initially be achieved via quizzes and tests, Q/A, discussions, and via traditional essay responses etc. However, it is important to introduce exam approaches early on during the AS year in order to ensure that learners are aware of the question formats in the exam for each of the texts studied and which AOs they should address their responses.

The Sample Assessment Material is available online to demonstrate how the papers and questions are structured:

**Paper One:** <http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/171435-unit-h072-1-shakespeare-and-poetry-pre-1900-h072-01-sample-assessment-materials.pdf>

**Paper Two:** <http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/171434-unit-h072-2-drama-and-prose-post-1900-sample-assessment-materials.pdf>

The **Annotated Sample Assessment Material guides** are also great resources to help learners understand how papers and questions are structured. These can be found in the '**Assessment Materials**' section of the subject page.

Those taking the A level specification only will have adequate time to provide multiple mock question or exam opportunities across the two years of study. This means that learners' progress can be precisely tracked. As a result of providing regular exam practice, class-room based activity, homework tasks, and all forms of formative assessment can be more tightly focused on areas where groups and individual learners require more support. Similarly, it is very important that learners are introduced early to the Sample Assessment Material:

**Paper One:** <http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/171432-unit-h472-1-drama-and-poetry-pre-1900-sample-assessment-materials.pdf>

**Paper Two:** <http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/171433-unit-h472-2-comparative-and-contextual-study-sample-assessment-materials.pdf>

There are a range of exemplar materials available for AS and A level specifications which provide excellent insights into what a response may look like and also to support peer and self-assessment activities. All of these can be found in the '**Candidate Exemplars**' section of the subject page.

## Revision

Because there is scope to explore more material when only working towards the A level qualification, it is important that strategies are put in place to ensure all texts are fresh in learners' minds before the final exams. One way to achieve this is to ensure learners constantly re-visit texts. For example, while delivering the pre-1900 drama text, ensure links are consistently made to the pre-1900 poetry text. Ensure Shakespeare remains fresh in learners' mind by establishing constant links to contextual elements and critical interpretations. Ensure that connections are consistently made between the two prose texts for component two.

Utilise a range of resources to aid revision:

- Create reading books for all texts as you are studying them – summaries of chapters/acts/poems, questions that assess understanding of content and concepts, character development points, narrative arcs and key quotes can be charted through such resources.
- Connections/comparison tables/charts, where linked texts can be compared or all texts can be compared.
- Quotation tables (that also require learners to closely analyse language choices and significance of the reference)
- Create literary and historical context timelines
- Create genre characteristic factsheets
- Create key critical perspective factsheets for each text
- Create literary interpretative schools factsheets (Marxist, feminist, psychoanalytical etc.)
- Use seminars to enable wide-ranging discussion of the texts around a central concern (allow learners to draw out their own links)
- Identify sections of texts as focus points for discussion/close-analysis – cram full of annotations.
- Provide numerous unseen extracts and analyse closely – always use to draw out connections to their studied texts.
- Divide the Shakespeare text into key sections which you closely analyse as a group.

We have produced a guide for both the AS and A level exams which enables centres to see how to create authentic exam-style questions. This helps to ensure that in your own tests, learners are not only assessed on knowledge and skills but on their ability to apply these appropriately within exam contexts.

**AS:** <http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/290116-preparing-for-as-level-mock-exam-teacher-guide.pdf>

**A level:** <http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/290117-preparing-for-a-level-mock-exam-teacher-guide.pdf>

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# GCE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE (EMC) AS (H074) AND A LEVEL (H474)

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The OCR English Language and Literature (EMC) AS and A level courses have been designed to be fully co-teachable, enabling teachers to deliver the AS independently or as the first year of two year A level course.

Both components of the AS course have equivalent elements in the full A Level: the study of poetry and prose fiction is based on the same set texts as for A Level, and the OCR/EMC anthology of non-fiction written and spoken texts is a set text for both groups of students.

More specific guidance on all of the combined elements is available in our [co-teaching guide](#) that also features a sample curriculum plan detailing how the course content can be effectively split over 1 or 2 years.

There is no set way to approach the course, as the approach a centre takes will be largely dependent on whether they are offering an AS level / A level course or the A level in isolation. Offering the AS specification obviously necessitates that certain content is covered prior to others but as demonstrated above, the stipulated content does 'double up' for the A level exams making it co-teachable.

## Teaching and learning

As with other linear courses the focus of the English Language and Literature course is the development of skills of analysis and knowledge and understanding of the studied texts. Central to the English Language and Literature course is the stylistic approach bringing literary and language analysis to texts and using a 'talkative' approach to analysing texts that leads to students deciding for themselves the best approach to the text(s) in question. The course aims to give students different ways of exploring texts, enabling them to make sensitive judgements on the texts whilst applying their knowledge to them.

A good way of introducing the course and marking the transition from KS4 to KS5 analysis is looking at ways of analysing texts drawn from literary and linguistic study. Examples will include:

- Narratology
- Rhetoric
- Dramatic technique / stagecraft
- Conversation analysis
- Stylistics
- Close reading

The obvious starting point for this is the [anthology of texts](#) which provides learners with a broad range of texts to apply their skills of analysis to. There needs to be some differentiation in the practice assessment tasks you might set for AS and A Level students, as AS students do not have to undertake unseen work in their examination. However, AS students could still benefit from the study of unseen texts in lessons to consolidate their skills of linguistic analysis.

Key concepts and ideas that learners can apply to the texts include (but are not limited to):

- Lexis (word class, morphology, phonology, graphology)
- Sentence Types and Functions/Syntax/Grammar
- Semantics and Pragmatics/Denotation and Connotation
- Attitudes and Values
- Literary and Non-Literary Texts
- Discourse/Genre
- Writing for a purpose
- Audiences
- Spoken Language and its differences from the written

The analytical skills learners will focus on during their work on the anthology can act as an effective lead in to the in-depth stylistic study and close analysis required from the study of the poetry, prose and drama (A level only) elements of the English Language and Literature course.

Another key aspect of the English Language and Literature specification is the idea of writing and reading informing each other, and the relationship between the two. As students develop their knowledge and understanding of texts and narrative through their study they should also be able to hone their writing skills, revealing through their own writing their study of narrative. This will prepare them for the creative writing aspects of the assessment as well as giving them further opportunity to consider the texts they have studied. Although this is perhaps more naturally applicable to A level and the 'reading as a writer, writing as a reader' examination, AS students will also benefit from this level of insight when studying the anthology texts in preparation for section B of the 'Non-fiction written and spoken texts' paper.

There are a wide range of support materials available on the OCR English website for the [Language and Literature](#) course including a range of [delivery guides](#) for all set prose, poetry and dram texts on the specification.

## Assessment

Where centres are offering both qualifications, the AS will obviously be used as a measure of interim assessment half way through the two year course. Where centres are offering the A level only, additional practice papers are available securely via the [OCR interchange website](#). This provides the opportunity for learners' progress to be precisely tracked and measured throughout the course.

Synoptic assessment is embedded throughout the English Language and Literature specification as learners apply their knowledge of literary and linguistic concepts and methods (as appropriate) in a range of contexts. The non-examined assessment (NEA) Component 04 gives learners an opportunity to work independently, pursuing a particular interest and developing expertise that builds on study from elsewhere in the course. Both sections of component 04 are designed to be integrated with the examination components. Component 04 allows learners to apply their knowledge and skills synoptically, demonstrating the coherent learning that has taken place across the course as a whole.



## Exam preparation

Preparation for exams is not just a case of revising set texts and reviewing past lesson content; it should be a discreet activity that is planned for the run up to the linear assessment of the course, which should encompass both the knowledge and skills required to approach the exams successfully.

It is important that steps are taken to ensure all exam texts are fresh in learners' minds prior to exams. This can be achieved throughout the course by re-visiting texts and undertaking practice assessments regularly to reinforce what will be expected of learners in the exam.

It is just as important that learners are aware of the skills that are required for each aspect of the examined components and are aware of the AO breakdown for each question / section of the exams. This will be helpful in terms of focus when responding to the questions and is best done when working through practice papers to clearly demonstrate what learners need to do for each question and how they should approach them on the day of the exam.

Other ideas for class revision aids could include:

- Comparison tables/charts where linked texts can be compared and links explored. This is particularly useful for the study of the anthology texts and the poetry collection.
- Regular use of unseen extracts to analyse in class either taken from set texts or for use with the non-fiction anthology (A level only)
- Creation of set texts fact sheets incorporating key quotation and analysis
- Creation of key critical perspective factsheets for each text
- Division of set texts into key sections for group analysis
- Peer teaching of set texts / exam skills and approaches

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