

Switching to OCR from AQA

Introduction

We've developed a specification designed to motivate and enthuse learners at GCSE level, giving them opportunities to develop key English skills through their exploration of and engagement with a range of literature, from Shakespeare through to the 21st century. So why choose OCR's English Literature?

- Our GCSE (9-1) English Literature specification is designed to encourage learners to engage critically with and explore a variety of texts across the major genres. The emphasis is on building learners' confidence in developing and articulating a fresh, individual response to texts that is supported and justified.
- Unique to OCR, a fresh and innovative approach to comparing texts in the linear exams (a requirement for all GCSE (9-1) English Literature courses: in Paper 1 candidates compare an extract from their *studied* text (modern prose or drama) with an *unseen* extract linked by theme and genre; in Paper 2 candidates compare a *studied* and an *unseen* poem on the same theme, meaning candidates are never asked to respond to an unseen text without a studied text for support.
- Clear, well balanced exam papers that mirror each other in terms of format and weighting, with modern and literary heritage texts assessed in each paper.
- Fresh new set text choices recommended by teachers alongside more familiar texts drawn from our literary and cultural heritage.
- You can register for free for OCR's digital poetry anthology, packed with practical activities and ideas to support your teaching of all of the poems in OCR's set poetry anthology *Towards a World Unknown*, regardless of which themed cluster you choose.
- We provide a range of creative, well researched resources to cover every aspect of the course, from candidate exemplars to specific skills development to handy revision and reference guides.

How do I find out more?

- Visit our [GCSE English Literature subject webpage](#) to access the specification, specimen assessment materials and a wide range of free support materials, from



scheme of work planners to skills-based teacher guides, candidate exemplars and more.

- Join our conversation on the [OCR Community](#) and [@ocr_english](#) to exchange ideas and information and share good practice.

Key differences

OCR English Literature	AQA English Literature
Balanced, straightforward assessment with two exam papers equally weighted at 50%, both 2 hours.	One exam paper worth 40% , 1 hour 45 minutes; one exam paper worth 60% , 2 hours 15 minutes.
The structure of the exams is very similar in both papers . Both exam papers are the same length, format and weighting. This means you can focus on teaching your learners about the texts, without spending time teaching them to navigate complex assessments.	The structure of the exams differs across Paper 1 and Paper 2. Paper 2 is a longer exam, and in this exam, candidates answer a question on their modern text as well as a comparison question on the AQA poetry anthology plus two questions on unseen poetry, one of which is a comparison question.
19 th century novel: A choice of two questions , one extract based and one a discursive essay.	19 th century novel: One essay question with two parts , one focussing on a printed extract and the other part on the whole text.
For Shakespeare: A choice of two questions , one extract based and one a discursive essay.	For Shakespeare: One essay question with two parts , one focussing on a printed extract and the other part on the whole text.
Learners answer on a modern and a literary heritage text in both exam papers .	One exam focuses on literary heritage texts (Shakespeare and 19 th century novel) and the other focuses on a modern text and poetry across time.
Unique to OCR, a fresh and personal approach to comparing texts – comparison of a set text extract with a same genre, thematically linked unseen extract in both papers (Paper 1 – modern text; Paper	Two comparison questions in Paper 2 both focusing on poetry . One based on the AQA anthology (one poem printed in the exam for comparison with another one from memory) and the other focussing on



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2 – poetry). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The studied text provides a springboard for learners to make connections and comparisons with the unseen text. Learners have reported that they feel 'more confident' about tackling an unseen text when they can link it to a familiar taught text. 	two unseen poems.
The comparison question in each exam paper is always based on texts printed in the paper (Paper 1 - modern text; Paper 2 – poetry).	Paper 2 comparison question on the AQA anthology poems requires learners to compare a printed poem with another one from memory.
Choice of three themed poetry clusters in the OCR poetry anthology – extra option of <i>Youth and Age</i> cluster provides more choice so you can choose poems which will best inspire and enthuse your learners.	Choice of two themed poetry clusters in the AQA poetry anthology.



Content

The key content and skills to be covered by all new GCSE (9-1) English Literature specifications mean it's simple and straightforward to move to a different exam board, even if you're halfway through a course. There is crossover of many of the set text choices between exam boards, another key factor in considering a potential move.

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Set Texts Modern prose or drama: <i>Anita and Me</i> – Meera Syal <i>Never Let Me Go</i> – Kazuo Ishiguro <i>Animal Farm</i> – George Orwell <i>An Inspector Calls</i> – J. B. Priestley <i>DNA</i> – Dennis Kelly <i>My Mother Said I Never Should</i> – Charlotte Keatley 19th century prose: <i>Great Expectations</i> – Charles Dickens <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> – Jane Austen <i>The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde</i> – Robert Louis Stevenson <i>Jane Eyre</i> – Charlotte Brontë <i>The War of the Worlds</i> – H G Wells	Set Texts Modern prose or drama: <i>Anita and Me</i> - Meera Syal <i>Never Let Me Go</i> - Kazuo Ishiguro <i>Animal Farm</i> - George Orwell <i>Pigeon English</i> – Stephen Kelman <i>Lord of the Flies</i> - William Golding <i>AQA Anthology - Telling Tales</i> <i>An Inspector Calls</i> – J. B. Priestley <i>DNA</i> - Dennis Kelly <i>Blood Brothers</i> - Willy Russell <i>The History Boys</i> - Alan Bennett <i>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time</i> (play script) - Simon Stephens <i>A Taste of Honey</i> - Shelagh Delaney 19 th century prose: <i>Great Expectations</i> – Charles Dickens <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> - Jane Austen <i>The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde</i> - Robert Louis Stevenson <i>Jane Eyre</i> - Charlotte Brontë <i>A Christmas Carol</i> - Charles Dickens <i>Frankenstein</i> - Mary Shelley



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<p>Poetry across time:</p> <p>OCR Poetry Anthology:</p> <p><i>Love and Relationships / Conflict / Youth and Age</i></p> <p>Shakespeare:</p> <p><i>Romeo and Juliet</i></p> <p><i>The Merchant of Venice</i></p> <p><i>Macbeth</i></p> <p><i>Much Ado About Nothing</i></p>	<p><i>The Sign of Four</i> - Sir Arthur Conan Doyle</p> <p>Poetry across time:</p> <p>AQA Poetry Anthology:</p> <p><i>Love and Relationships / Power and Conflict</i></p> <p>Shakespeare:</p> <p><i>Romeo and Juliet</i></p> <p><i>The Merchant of Venice</i></p> <p><i>Macbeth</i></p> <p><i>Much Ado About Nothing</i></p> <p><i>The Tempest</i></p> <p><i>Julius Caesar</i></p>



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<p>Unseen texts</p> <p>Paper 1</p> <p>One question comparing an extract from a studied modern prose or drama text with a linked unseen extract (same genre).</p> <p>Paper 2</p> <p>One question comparing a studied poem with a linked unseen poem.</p> <p><i>In both papers, an unseen text is always linked to a familiar taught text, with all relevant texts printed in the exam paper.</i></p>	<p>Unseen texts</p> <p>Paper 2</p> <p>Two questions: one question on an unseen poem and one question comparing two unseen poems.</p>

Assessment

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<p>Paper 1: Modern text and 19th century novel</p> <p>50% of GCSE</p> <p>Written paper 2 hours</p> <p>80 marks</p> <p>Modern text: one question with two parts, one comparing a printed extract from the set text with an unseen, same genre extract linked by theme, and the other part focussing just on the set text.</p> <p>19th century novel: one question from a choice of two, both focussing on the whole novel – one extract based, one essay style.</p>	<p>Paper 1: Shakespeare and 19th century novel</p> <p>40% of GCSE</p> <p>Written paper 1 hour 45 minutes</p> <p>64 marks</p> <p>Shakespeare: one question with two parts, one focussing on a printed extract from the play and the other part on the whole play.</p> <p>19th century novel: one question with two parts, one focussing on a printed extract from the novel and the other part on the whole novel.</p>
<p>Paper 2: Poetry and Shakespeare</p> <p>50% of GCSE</p> <p>Written paper 2 hours</p> <p>80 marks</p>	<p>Paper 2: Modern text and Poetry</p> <p>60% of GCSE</p> <p>Written paper 2 hours 15 minutes</p> <p>96 marks</p>



OCR English Literature	AQA English Literature
<p>Poetry: one question with two parts, one comparing a printed poem from the OCR anthology with an unseen poem, and the other part based on a poem of the candidate's choice from the OCR anthology.</p> <p>Shakespeare: one question from a choice of two, both focussing on the whole play – one extract based, one essay style.</p>	<p>Modern text: one question from a choice of two, both focussing on the text as a whole.</p> <p>Studied poetry: one question comparing two poems from the AQA anthology (one poem only printed in the exam paper).</p> <p>Unseen poetry: two questions, one on an unseen poem and one on the same unseen poem comparing it with another unseen poem.</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. When you're ready to enter your students, you just need to speak to your exams officer to make estimated entries then confirmed 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 [GCSE English Literature](#) 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 or telephone 01223 553 998.
4. Get a login for our secure site, Interchange – 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](#).

