

August 2017

Dear Head of Centre/Head of English

OCR GCSE English Literature (J352/02) error – an update for results day

We hope your students did well and got the results they deserved for their performance in OCR's new GCSE English Literature exams this summer.

There was an unacceptable error on a *Romeo and Juliet* question on the J352/02 GCSE English Literature exam paper this year. As one of the schools studying alternative Shakespeare plays (*Macbeth*, *The Merchant of Venice* or *Much Ado About Nothing*) for the new GCSE, we know your students were not affected on the day. However, we want to reassure your teachers and students that the approach OCR took to minimise the impact of the error was designed to ensure fair results for all our GCSE English Literature students.

To understand the overall impact of the error, we compared students' marks for the *Romeo and Juliet* questions (questions 4 and 5) with those achieved by your students who answered questions on the other Shakespeare plays in section B of the paper. On average, students who answered questions on the other plays did better by 1 or 2 marks.

We therefore decided to adjust the marking of students who had answered *Romeo and Juliet* questions in one of two ways:

- By giving those students a statistically calculated mark for their answer based on students' performance on Paper 1 (J352/01) and on the first half (the Poetry section) of J352/02. This is a tried and tested exam board solution if a student is not able to take a paper, in the case of illness, for example.
- By giving students the mark given by the examiner for their answer to a *Romeo and Juliet* question.

We applied whichever option gave students a higher mark for their answer.

When we set the grade boundaries for GCSE English Literature, the boundaries were the same for all students, regardless of the question they answered. Adjusting the marking via the options above was the fairest way of compensating for the error without disadvantaging any other students.

We hope that this summary of the approach we have taken is useful. To help you and your students to better understand the results they have received, downloadable copies of the marked GCSE English Literature exam papers (J352/01 and J352/02) are available free of charge to your students via OCR's secure website, Interchange.

If you have any further questions about your GCSE English Literature results, please call us on 01223 553998 or email general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk.

Yours faithfully



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