OCR
Oxford Cambridge and RSA

GCSE

Moderators' report

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

J351

For first teaching in 2015

J351/03/04 Summer 2024 series

Contents

Introduction

Our moderators' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

Online courses

We have created online courses to build your confidence in delivering, marking and administering internal assessment for our qualifications. Courses are available for Cambridge Nationals, GCSE, A Level and Cambridge Technicals (2016).

Cambridge Nationals

All teachers delivering our redeveloped Cambridge Nationals suite from September 2022 are asked to complete the Essentials for the NEA course, which describes how to guide and support your students. You'll receive a certificate which you should retain.

Following this you can also complete a subject-specific Focus on Internal Assessment course for your individual Cambridge Nationals qualification, covering marking and delivery.

GCSE, A Level and Cambridge Technicals (2016)

We recommend all teachers complete the introductory module Building your Confidence in Internal Assessment, which covers key internal assessment and standardisation principles.

Following this you will find a subject-specific course for your individual qualification, covering marking criteria with examples and commentary, along with interactive marking practice.

Accessing our online courses

You can access all our online courses from our teacher support website [Teach Cambridge](#).

You will find links relevant to your subject under Assessment, NEA/Coursework and then Online Courses from the left hand menu on your Subject page.

If you have any queries, please contact our Customer Support Centre on 01223 553998 or email support@ocr.org.uk.

Would you prefer a Word version?

Did you know that you can save this PDF as a Word file using Acrobat Professional?

Simply click on **File > Export to** and select **Microsoft Word**

(If you have opened this PDF in your browser you will need to save it first. Simply right click anywhere on the page and select **Save as . . .** to save the PDF. Then open the PDF in Acrobat Professional.)

If you do not have access to Acrobat Professional there are a number of **free** applications available that will also convert PDF to Word (search for PDF to Word converter).

General overview

The spoken language endorsement is a compulsory component of GCSE English Language. The endorsement is be reported as a separate grade (Pass, Merit, Distinction or Not Classified) and does not contribute to the result of the overall GCSE English Language qualification.

Candidates must undertake a prepared spoken presentation on a specific topic following which they must listen to and respond appropriately to questions and feedback. Presentations must be formal but may take a wide variety of forms.

The spoken language endorsement is assessed holistically as a grade, using competency-based marking criteria. Competency means that a student must meet all the criteria in a grade to achieve it. If they only meet some of the criteria, they cannot be awarded that grade.

Centres are responsible for internal standardisation of assessments across all teaching groups. Standardisation materials are available on Teach Cambridge and should be used to train all teaching staff involved in the assessments.

In this session the vast majority of centres satisfied the requirements of the monitoring process, submitting the recorded samples and documentation by the deadline. Monitors reported seeing some excellent work in centres of all sizes, with the full range of ability able to access and pass the assessment. The topics chosen were mostly appropriate and engaged candidates fully, and the questioning was generally supportive in helping candidates to achieve their potential.

Administration

Centres were required to submit recorded evidence of the assessments, sending up to 30 recordings to the monitor to allow the centre's grading to be monitored. Up to 10 recordings of assessments on all three grades, distinction, merit and pass, were required where appropriate. Some centres chose to upload their recordings onto the OCR repository, others sent their recordings to the monitor on USB sticks. A few used DVDs which caused some issues as many monitors no longer have DVD drives. The majority of centres sent the correct number of recordings on each grade; however, a small number of centres did not send 30 recordings where they had fewer than 10 candidates on a particular grade. Centres are reminded that where this occurs, they should make the total number of recordings in the sample up to 30 by sending more recordings on the grades that they do have available.

Centres are also required to send the monitor a copy of the centre mark sheet detailing the grades of all candidates, not just those in the sample, but the majority of centres did not fulfil this requirement and had to be contacted by the monitor. This session there was also a requirement for centres to send details of the teaching sets. A large number of centres did not include the appropriate forms and had to be contacted by the monitor. The confusion about what centres are required to send to the monitor or upload to the repository caused delays for monitors.

> **Misconception**
>
> **?** Centres are required to send details of the teaching sets to enable monitors to sample candidates across teaching groups. Some centres had only recorded one teaching set which meant this requirement had not been met.
>
> Centres are reminded that their recorded sample of 30 should be drawn from different teaching sets so monitors can check that internal moderation is being carried out to ensure consistency of grading across different teaching sets.

Monitors reported that the vast majority of centres submitted their recordings by the deadline and the USB sticks were clearly and helpfully labelled with candidate numbers, names and the grade awarded. A small number of centres did not label them fully and had to be contacted to provide more details, usually the grade awarded to individual candidates in the sample. At times monitors reported USBs having passwords which required them to contact the centre. Please avoid this in future submissions.

Centres should ensure that they have sent all necessary documentation to the monitor:

- video recordings of 10 candidates on each grade (drawn from different teaching groups), clearly labelled with candidate name, number and grade awarded
- a copy of the centre grade sheet submitted to OCR for the whole cohort
- teaching set details on the appropriate form.

> **Centres using the OCR Repository**
>
> Centres should ensure that they have uploaded all necessary recordings and documentation:
>
> - video recordings of 10 candidates on each grade, clearly labelled with candidate name, number and grade awarded.
>
> And using the Administration Tab:
>
> - a copy of the centre grade sheet submitted to OCR
> - teaching set details on the appropriate form.
>
> Monitors reported that the majority of centres using the repository to submit their samples did not use the Administration Tab and therefore had to be contacted directly.
>
> Monitors also reported that many of the uploaded files took a long time to download. It is the centre's responsibility to ensure that all recordings are compressed and can be accessed easily.

Assessment preparation and procedures in centres

Centres are required to agree a topic with the candidates and offer them sufficient preparation and guidance for the assessment. The filmed assessments should take place in a suitable setting, which can be during a lesson. The camera should remain focused on the candidate, offering a clear view, and the sound quality should ensure that every word can be heard clearly, including the questions. Questions can come from other candidates or the teacher, but it is the teacher's responsibility to ensure that all questions are appropriate and helpful in terms of inviting the candidate to extend their talk rather than repeat material.

This session the topics chosen varied widely and it was clear in the majority of centres that students had made choices which were judiciously guided by the teacher allowing for personal engagement with the subject-matter as well as an appropriate level of complexity for the grade awarded. This session monitors saw very few centres where talks were based on literature texts, or other syllabus-related topics where candidates had clearly not had much choice in their subject-matter. As a result there was a pleasingly high level of candidate engagement in the assessments. Centres are reminded that for any candidates awarded merit or distinction grades, the topics need to have a level of complexity and interpretation. Less complex topics, such as work-experience, or my favourite football club, should be reserved for candidates aiming for a pass grade.

Monitors reported that the filming of the assessments was mostly very helpful and with appropriate levels of visual and sound quality. However, a small number of centres did not provide a recording of the whole assessment, including the questions. Centres are reminded that the whole assessment must be filmed with the candidate clearly in view. There is no need to film the person asking the questions or to scan the

audience. Occasionally the sound quality on the recording was poor, sometimes due to extraneous noise in the background and sometimes due to the camera being positioned too far from the candidate where projection was poor and could not be picked up fully by the camera's microphone. It is crucial that monitors can hear every word of the presentation and the questions for effective monitoring to take place. It is also fairer to candidates if background noise and disturbances are kept to a minimum during these assessments. A few centres only sent audio recordings which were not sufficient for full monitoring to take place.

Monitors reported that some films were difficult to access where they were too large for monitors to upload or saved in an unusual format, although there was improvement in this area this year. Centres should check their submissions carefully to ensure that they can be accessed easily.

Monitors reported seeing a great deal of good practice, where candidates had planned their presentation carefully and used a wide variety of presentational skills and rhetorical devices to engage their audience, judiciously using a PowerPoint or short notes to assist them.

Unfortunately, there was still too much reliance on whole scripts in many centres where candidates were simply reading a pre-prepared script, sometimes with very little emphasis and often far too quickly. This led to ineffective talks with no communication established between the presenter and the audience. The presence of the script hindered rather than assisted the candidates and limited their scope to demonstrate good presentational skills and awareness of audience needs. Often these candidates had been given higher grades that seemed to be based on the content of the script rather than considering how effectively the content was delivered. These higher grades could not be justified, as the requirement to engage the audience had not been met. Other candidates used PowerPoint slides which contained far too much information and were read aloud by the candidate.

The presentations and questions should last approximately 8 – 10 minutes. Monitors reported seeing a number of presentations that were too short – between 1 and 2 minutes at times. Some of these presentations had been awarded distinctions and merits. Although at times the questions allowed candidates to expand their talk through extended answers enabling a higher grade, this was not always the case. Centres are reminded that candidates aiming for higher grades should present an extended talk on their topic, allowing them to fulfil all the criteria for these grades. Conversely, a few presentations were far too long, and some monitors reported seeing individual presentations and questions lasting up to 25 minutes. This is not helpful for either the candidate or the monitoring process and centres are reminded that 10 minutes is the maximum time recommended. Teachers should work closely with candidates to ensure that their presentations are an appropriate length.

The questions asked should enable candidates to extend their talk rather than repeat information. Monitors reported seeing some excellent examples of pertinent questions which enabled candidates to achieve a higher grade in many cases; these questions tended to probe and challenge using precise language. Other questions were less helpful and sometimes too detailed, leaving the candidates with little to add, or they were asked closed questions which invited very perfunctory responses. Occasionally candidates were asked very challenging questions which they were unable to answer. It is essential that the questions are teacher-led rather than allowing other students to freely ask questions, as often student-led questions were far less helpful to the candidates. Candidates should not be told the questions in advance: monitors reported a few instances of candidates reading out answers to pre-prepared questions – this is clearly not in the spirit of the assessment and did not enable those candidates to demonstrate further skills.

Some centres adopted a format where the teacher used questions to structure the candidate's talk for them. This is a supportive format, but it is one that should be reserved for candidates aiming to achieve a pass grade. Candidates awarded a merit or distinguish must show evidence of the ability to structure their talk effectively to meet the needs of the audience independently.

The vast majority of centres used the competency-based mark scheme accurately and put candidates in the correct grade band. As the marking criteria for the Spoken Language component is competency-based, candidates must fulfil all the criteria in the appropriate grade descriptor to achieve that grade. There was some evidence in a few centres that a 'best-fit' approach was being taken and candidates were awarded a higher grade based on fulfilling one of the descriptors in the grade above. Centres are reminded that internal moderation must take place to ensure that the mark scheme has been applied fairly and consistently across all teaching sets.

Assessment for learning
Where candidates had been over-marked, it was usually for one of the following reasons: • the presentation was too short and undeveloped • the candidate read aloud a pre-prepared essay with no attempt to engage the audience or meet the needs of the audience • the candidate did not use the range of strategies required for a distinction grade. Centres are advised to prepare candidates carefully for the assessment, teaching them to plan and structure their talks effectively. Candidates should be offered opportunities to practise their talks to reduce reliance on their notes and develop their confidence. Candidates should be supported with bullet-point notes, or a PowerPoint rather than a script. This will support them without tempting them to read aloud.

Where centres had enthusiastically embraced the demands and challenges of the Spoken Language component, candidates had produced some outstanding work. Monitors reported seeing a great deal of excellent presentations where the candidates were enthusiastic about their subject and fully engaged the audience. OCR recommends that all candidates are given opportunities across the GCSE English Language course to develop a range of oracy skills in preparation for this final assessment.

Candidates who did well generally:	Candidates who did less well generally:
• prepared their talk carefully, structuring it effectively to engage the audience • chose a suitable topic in which they had genuine interest • used a range of rhetorical devices to arouse the interest of the audience • used their notes or a PowerPoint effectively without being reliant on reading aloud • answered questions confidently using the opportunities offered by them to broaden their ideas.	• chose a topic in which they did not seem to have much interest • gave a brief outline of the topic without developing their talk fully through using examples • did not acknowledge the audience • read a prepared speech rather than delivering a talk • spoke too quickly without considering the audience • answered questions very briefly or repeated the content of their talk.

Avoiding potential malpractice

Centres should follow the guidance and instructions for monitoring procedures carefully. Monitors cited the following reasons for referring centres for potential malpractice:

- not sending a full range of filmed samples
- not covering a range of teaching groups in the filmed sample
- recordings missing sound or video
- no questions asked or scripted responses to questions
- a speech that is clearly plagiarised from another source.

Helpful resources

OCR has published a guide for preparing candidates for the spoken language assessment and a guide for providing recorded evidence for the monitoring of the spoken language assessment.

Additional comments

Working on the skills required for the Spoken Language component is essential throughout the course, to enable candidates to develop effective strategies for this final assessment. It was clear that many candidates were not aware of the need to engage with their audience using gesture, eye-contact and body language to make their presentations effective. Spoken language skills can be developed through group and paired presentations when studying literature texts or developing ideas for non-fictional writing tasks. They could be built into the GCSE Language and Literature schemes of work to develop the candidates' skills and confidence gradually.

Supporting you

Teach Cambridge

Make sure you visit our secure website **Teach Cambridge** to find the full range of resources and support for the subjects you teach. This includes secure materials such as set assignments and exemplars, online and on-demand training.

Don't have access? If your school or college teaches any OCR qualifications, please contact your exams officer. You can forward them this link to help get you started.

Reviews of marking

If any of your students' results are not as expected, you may wish to consider one of our post-results services. For full information about the options available visit the OCR website.

Access to Scripts

We've made it easier for Exams Officers to download copies of your candidates' completed papers or 'scripts'. Your centre can use these scripts to decide whether to request a review of marking and to support teaching and learning.

Our free, on-demand service, Access to Scripts is available via our single sign-on service, My Cambridge. Step-by-step instructions are on our website.

Keep up-to-date

We send a monthly bulletin to tell you about important updates. You can also sign up for your subject specific updates. If you haven't already, sign up here.

OCR Professional Development

Attend one of our popular professional development courses to hear directly from a senior assessor or drop in to a Q&A session. Most of our courses are delivered live via an online platform, so you can attend from any location.

Please find details for all our courses for your subject on **Teach Cambridge**. You'll also find links to our online courses on NEA marking and support.

Signed up for ExamBuilder?

ExamBuilder is a free test-building platform, providing unlimited users exclusively for staff at OCR centres with an Interchange account.

Choose from a large bank of questions to build personalised tests and custom mark schemes, with the option to add custom cover pages to simulate real examinations. You can also edit and download complete past papers.

Find out more.

Active Results

Review students' exam performance with our free online results analysis tool. It is available for all GCSEs, AS and A Levels and Cambridge Nationals (examined units only).

Find out more.

You will need an Interchange account to access our digital products. If you do not have an Interchange account please contact your centre administrator (usually the Exams Officer) to request a username, or nominate an existing Interchange user in your department.

Online courses

Enhance your skills and confidence in internal assessment

What are our online courses?

Our online courses are self-paced eLearning courses designed to help you deliver, mark and administer internal assessment for our qualifications. They are suitable for both new and experienced teachers who want to refresh their knowledge and practice.

Why should you use our online courses?

With these online courses you will:

- learn about the key principles and processes of internal assessment and standardisation

- gain a deeper understanding of the marking criteria and how to apply them consistently and accurately

- see examples of student work with commentary and feedback from OCR moderators

- have the opportunity to practise marking and compare your judgements with those of OCR moderators

- receive instant feedback and guidance on your marking and standardisation skills

- be able to track your progress and achievements through the courses.

How can you access our online courses?

Access courses from Teach Cambridge. Teach Cambridge is our secure teacher website, where you'll find all teacher support for your subject.

If you already have a Teach Cambridge account, you'll find available courses for your subject under Assessment - NEA/Coursework - Online courses. Click on the blue arrow to start the course.

If you don't have a Teach Cambridge account yet, ask your exams officer to set you up – just send them this link and ask them to add you as a Teacher.

Access the courses **anytime, anywhere and at your own pace**. You can also revisit the courses as many times as you need.

Which courses are available?

There are **two types** of online course: an **introductory module** and **subject-specific** courses.

The introductory module, Building your Confidence in Internal Assessment, is designed for all teachers who are involved in internal assessment for our qualifications. It covers the following topics:

- the purpose and benefits of internal assessment

- the roles and responsibilities of teachers, assessors, internal verifiers and moderators

- the principles and methods of standardisation

- the best practices for collecting, storing and submitting evidence

- the common issues and challenges in internal assessment and how to avoid them.

The subject-specific courses are tailored for each qualification that has non-exam assessment (NEA) units, except for AS Level and Entry Level. They cover the following topics:

- the structure and content of the NEA units

- the assessment objectives and marking criteria for the NEA units

- examples of student work with commentary and feedback for the NEA units

- interactive marking practice and feedback for the NEA units.

We are also developing courses for some of the examined units, which will be available soon.

How can you get support and feedback?

If you have any queries, please contact our Customer Support Centre on 01223 553998 or email support@ocr.org.uk.

We welcome your feedback and suggestions on how to improve the online courses and make them more useful and relevant for you. You can share your views by completing the evaluation form at the end of each course.

Need to get in touch?

If you ever have any questions about OCR qualifications or services (including administration, logistics and teaching) please feel free to get in touch with our customer support centre.

Call us on
01223 553998

Alternatively, you can email us on
support@ocr.org.uk

For more information visit
- **ocr.org.uk/qualifications/resource-finder**
- **ocr.org.uk**
- **facebook.com/ocrexams**
- **twitter.com/ocrexams**
- **instagram.com/ocrexaminations**
- **linkedin.com/company/ocr**
- **youtube.com/ocrexams**

We really value your feedback

Click to send us an autogenerated email about this resource. Add comments if you want to. Let us know how we can improve this resource or what else you need. Your email address will not be used or shared for any marketing purposes.

👍 **I like this**   👎 **I dislike this**

Please note – web links are correct at date of publication but other websites may change over time. If you have any problems with a link you may want to navigate to that organisation's website for a direct search.