

Frequently Asked Questions

Level 2 Award

OCR Level 2 Award in Thinking and Reasoning Skills J930

Last updated: 19/05/11

Is this still a pilot qualification?

No. From **January 2011** Level 2 Thinking and Reasoning Skills is now accredited as a full general qualification and is no longer a pilot. This means that centres are not required to be registered as pilot centres to deliver this qualification.

Does this just develop and assess critical thinking skills?

No. There are 10 Skills assessed, including the wider skills of conceptual thinking, information processing and problem solving, and creative thinking.

Who is this qualification aimed at?

It is a Level 2 qualification (the same level as GCSE) and therefore suitable for a broad range of learners. It can be used with:

- gifted and talented students, in Year 9 or even in Years 7 and 8
- KS4 students to support learning across the curriculum and hone thinking skills
- post-16 students alongside either Level 3 or Level 2 courses
- adult learners

What does the qualification do for students?

The course:

- develops 10 skills of thinking and reasoning
- develops both traditional critical thinking skills and wider problem solving skills
- allows different kinds of learner to achieve success
- develops skills which can be transferred to other subjects

Why do people like this qualification?

It is a unique, flexible, standalone qualification which supports learning in other areas and allows students to access the whole curriculum by developing fundamental learning skills. It is suitable to be taken as Additional Specialist Learning within Diplomas and is fully mapped to personal learning and thinking skills (PLTS).

What subjects or qualifications does this go well with?

It is designed to complement any course of study at Level 2 or 3, including GCSEs, Diplomas, and A levels. It should be of benefit to students studying any combination of academic and/or vocational courses.

It supports learning in the EBacc subjects.

How was this qualification developed?

Some materials were originally developed in a sixth form college, targeting C/D borderline students in partner schools. This meant many aspects of the material had been trialled in the classroom prior to development through OCR.

Customer research with Aim Higher and a group of Nottingham schools also informed the development.

Why isn't this a GCSE?

This was a QCDA requirement, and had the effect of giving freedom to the development, allowing us to include wider skills, not just traditional critical thinking skills.

What is the potential for progression from this Level 2 course to a Level 3 course?

It provides a good basis for progression specifically to Critical Thinking AS/A level. The Level 2 Award in Thinking and Reasoning skills will also aid progression to a wide variety of Level 3 courses which require reasoning skills implicitly.

What is its relationship to the PLTS framework?

This qualification meets the requirements set out by the PLTS framework and PLTS are fully mapped in the specification.

How much teaching time does this qualification require?

As a Level 2 award, it is equivalent to a GCSE short course and therefore it is expected that centres can deliver it in approximately 60 guided learning hours.

What is the best model of delivering the qualification?

The qualification can be delivered in a variety of ways. Suggestions include:

- as a separate programme of study delivered 1.5 hours per week throughout one academic year.
- as a combined programme of study with an another short course e.g. citizenship or religious studies
- as a programme embedded into other subjects (e.g. history, geography, science)
- as an enrichment course for post-16 students
- as a twilight course
- with selected groups of students
- with whole cohorts

What resources are there?

Resources for Skills 1-10 and the Scheme of Work and sample lesson plans are on the OCR public website. You do not need to go onto the e-community or Interchange to find them. The scheme of work and linked resources are suggested ways of teaching the skills. You can of course alter these to suit your own requirements.

You can reach them like this:

On the OCR website,

- go to the A-Z of qualifications (quick link right hand side of home page)
- then the T page,
- then the Thinking and Reasoning Skills page.
- then "View all key documents" and the resources for the 10 skills and scheme of work are down the bottom of the page

How do I join the e-community?

The e-community is for teachers to contribute and share ideas, discuss issues and share resources to supplement those produced by OCR which appear on the OCR website. Please do use it to have conversations and share ideas.

You can join the e-community by following these instructions:

Go to <http://community.ocr.org.uk/>

Click on the link at the bottom to get the list of e-communities

Click on the link called Thinking Reasoning Skills

Click on the link to subscribe

What INSET is there?

INSET is listed on the subject page on the OCR website at the bottom of the page. There will be INSET on 1st November 2011 in London, and there may be another event before that if there is sufficient interest. Please look at the subject page for details and how to book.

What documents are available on the OCR website ?

On the Thinking and Reasoning Skills page (go there through the A-Z of subjects) you will find:

- the specification describing all 10 skills and suggesting teaching activities
- INSET examples for teaching Skill 9
- pre-release material for June 2010 onwards
- Principal Examiners' reports for June 2010 onwards
- specimen question papers and markschemes

Where can I find past question papers and markschemes from live examination series?

These are available via Interchange. Your exams officer will have access.

Is there a textbook?

Not at present, but full teaching resources are available on the OCR website at the Thinking and Reasoning skills subject page. For the traditional Critical Thinking skills a good AS textbook would be suitable. The language of examples would need to be simplified but the principles, e.g. what constitutes an argument, would be the same.

How is the qualification assessed?

There are two written papers, one with pre-release material. Each paper is one hour long and carries 60 marks.

There is a mixture of short and longer answer questions. On each unit candidates are asked to develop and present their own arguments as well as answering shorter problem-solving type questions.

The qualification is graded distinction/merit/pass.

Frequently Asked Questions

Does this qualification have funding?

The qualification carries Section 96 funding

Does this qualification carry points?

The course is 60 glh. Points are roughly equivalent to GCSE short course. They are as follows.

Distinction 27.50

Merit 24.50

Pass 20.00

How do I make entries?

Entries should be made as for other examinations using the Unit codes B901 and B902 and J930 for aggregation. If your Examinations Officer has any queries please ask them to contact the Customer Contact Centre on 01223 553998.

Please note entries cannot be made via Interchange until January 2012. Exams Officers will need to use EDI until then.

Entry fees are the same as for a short course GCSE in Humanities subjects.

When are the examinations?

There are two sessions a year in January and June for both units.

For June 2011 and Jan 2012 dates do not appear on the public timetable.

June 2011 B901 Thurs 16 June Afternoon
 B902 Tuesday 21 June Afternoon

Jan 2012 B901 Wed 11 June Afternoon
 B902 Thurs 19 June Afternoon

Dates for June 2012 onwards will be on the public timetable.

Do students have to take the examinations both at the same time?

No, they can take units over several sessions

Can my students re-sit?

Yes. Candidates can re-sit each unit once before entering for certification for a Level 2 Award (specification section 5.2). The best result will count for each unit.

Do my students get a certificate?

Yes, they will get a level 2 Award certificate. This is broadly equivalent to a GCSE short course

When is the pre-release material issued?

This is dispatched in late September for the January paper and early February for the June paper. The material will be dispatched to your centre hard copy if you have made provisional entries, otherwise it will be available on the website. If you want to receive hard copy on the pre-

Frequently Asked Questions

release date (1 copy per student entered) please make sure provisional entries are made in good time.

What is the lifetime of pre-release material?

Each B902 paper will have its own pre-release material.

Where do I find examination statistics for June 2010?

These are not on the main OCR website document. The statistics for June 2010 were:

B901 1009 entries

	Distinction	Merit	Pass	U
Raw marks (not UMS)	47	35	23	
Cumulative percentage	13.7	66.2	92.9	100

B902 1000 entries

	Distinction	Merit	Pass	U
Raw marks (not UMS)	45	33	21	
Cumulative percentage	15.4	49.7	80.3	100

J930 729 entries for certification

	Distinction	Merit	Pass	U
UMS marks	96	72	48	
Cumulative percentage	14.5	51.4	75.4	100

This clearly shows the disparity in performance between the two papers. This is discussed in the principal examiner's reports and in the chief examiner's report, all available on the OCR website.

Statistics for January 2011 onwards are published on the OCR website.

How do I become an examiner?

In the expectation that entries will grow further we are building the lists of examiners. If you are interested in being on the list please make an application via the Assessors section of the OCR website.