

GCSE CRITERIA FOR ENGLISH LITERATURE

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 These criteria define the subject-specific essentials for GCSE in English Literature. The criteria present requirements distinct from and complementary to those in the criteria for English. Specifications must also meet the regulatory authorities' general requirements, including the Common and GCSE Criteria.
- 1.2 Any specification that contains significant elements of the subject English Literature must be consistent with the relevant parts of these criteria.

2. AIMS

- 2.1 A specification must give students opportunities to explore their literary interests and encourage them to:
 - i develop the ability to read, understand and respond to a wide range of literary texts, appreciate the ways in which authors achieve their effects and develop the skills necessary for literary study;
 - ii develop awareness of social, historical and cultural contexts and influences in the study of literature;
 - iii develop the ability to construct and convey meaning in speech and writing, matching style to audience and purpose.

3. SPECIFICATION CONTENT

- 3.1 A specification entitled English Literature must specify the content on which assessment will be based, consistent with the requirements of the national curriculum orders for English for England, and/or Wales, and/or Northern Ireland.
- 3.2 A specification must offer opportunities for study in depth of substantial texts. The majority of the works studied must be literary texts originally written in English, but works in translation may also be included. The works studied must be of sufficient substance and quality to merit serious consideration.
- 3.3 A specification must ensure that each candidate is assessed on a substantial and diverse range of texts, which includes poetry, prose and drama published before and after 1914. One work may be literary non-fiction provided that the balance of pre- and post-1914 is maintained.
- 3.4 A specification must require considered responses to literature, including connections and comparison between texts. It must also require assessment of candidates' understanding of literary tradition, and appreciation of social and historical influences and cultural contexts.

4. KEY SKILLS

4.1 GCSE specifications in English Literature should provide opportunities for developing and generating evidence for assessing the key skills listed below. Where appropriate, these opportunities should be directly cross-referenced at specified level(s), to the criteria listed in part B of the Key Skills specifications.

- application of number
- communication
- information technology
- improving own learning and performance
- problem solving
- working with others.

5. ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

5.1 A specification must require candidates to demonstrate their ability to:

AO1 respond to texts critically, sensitively and in detail, selecting appropriate ways to convey their response, using textual evidence as appropriate;

AO2 explore how language, structure and forms contribute to the meanings of texts, considering different approaches to texts and alternative interpretations;

AO3 explore relationships and comparisons between texts, selecting and evaluating relevant material.

AO4 relate texts to their social, cultural and historical contexts and literary traditions.

6. SCHEMES OF ASSESSMENT AND ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES

6.1 Each scheme of assessment must include a terminal examination with a minimum weighting of 70% in non-modular schemes and 50% in modular schemes. The terminal examination may include some questions on texts which are not specified in the specification. A maximum weighting of 20% can be allocated to questions of this type. Generic questions must not be used in external assessments.

6.2 Question papers must be targeted at two tiers of grades: A*-D¹ and C-G.

6.3 The weighting allocated to internal assessment must not exceed 30% in any scheme of assessment.

¹ A safety net for candidates entered for the higher tier in these specifications is provided. In these specifications, an allowed Grade E is awarded on the higher tier. Candidates failing to achieve Grade E are reported as Unclassified.

- 6.4 Internal assessment submitted for assessment must mostly be in writing. Where oral responses - for example, performance - are assessed, some accompanying written evidence must be made available for moderation.
- 6.5 Where texts are taken into examinations they should not contain handwritten annotations, or marking. Editions which may be taken into examinations should be specified. This is effective from examinations in 2005.

7. GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

- 7.1 Grade descriptions are provided to give a general indication of the standards of achievement likely to have been shown by candidates awarded particular grades. The descriptions must be interpreted in relation to the content specified by the specification; they are not designed to define that content. The grade awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of the assessment may be balanced by better performances in others.

7.2 Grade F

In giving personal responses to texts, candidates show understanding of key features, including themes, characters and language. They make straightforward connections between texts, and show some understanding of influences on texts and readers. They refer to aspects of texts when explaining their views. They convey their responses in appropriate ways.

7.3 Grade C

In responding to a range of texts, candidates show understanding of how meanings and ideas are conveyed through language, structure and form. They explore connections and comparisons between texts, referring to details to support their views. They show awareness of some of the cultural and social contexts of texts. They convey their ideas appropriately in a range of forms.

7.4 Grade A

Candidates respond critically and sensitively to a range of texts, taking into account alternative approaches and interpretations. They explore and evaluate the ways meaning, ideas and feelings are conveyed through language, structure and form, making connections and comparisons between texts. They identify and comment on social, historical and cultural contexts of texts, and show awareness of literary tradition. They select forms appropriately and convey their ideas coherently.