



**GCSE ENGLISH / ENGLISH LANGUAGE / ENGLISH LITERATURE
SPECIFICATIONS – FOR TEACHING FROM SEPTEMBER 2010
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

How many times may candidates re-take a unit?

Each unit may be re-taken once prior to subject award (with the higher result taken). However, if the unit makes up part of the 40% terminal requirement (see below), the result for that unit will stand even if it is lower than an earlier result for that unit. Candidates may take the qualification more than once, using specific unit results as required. Please see <http://www.wjec.co.uk/uploads/publications/10240.pdf> for more detailed advice.

What is the shelf life of units?

The shelf life of units is limited only by the shelf life of the specification.

How much of the assessment must be taken at the end of the course?

40% of the assessment must be taken at the end of the course. Please see <http://www.wjec.co.uk/uploads/publications/10240.pdf> for more detailed advice.

Why is GCSE English not available for centres in Wales?

This was a regulatory decision made by DCELLS.

How do I decide between entering a candidate for GCSE English or for GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature? (NB: *Not applicable to centres in Wales*)

This is for centres to decide based on a consideration of what is appropriate for each candidate.

Will the examinations for Units 1 & 2 (GCSE English / GCSE English Language) take place in the same session?

Yes. The examination for each unit lasts one hour. They will be timetabled in the same session. Centres may choose to enter candidates for one or both as they deem appropriate.

If candidates sit units 1 and 2 for GCSE English Language in Year 10, can they later decide to switch to GCSE English (and vice-versa) and use the marks obtained?

Yes.

For the GCSE English Literature written papers, are candidates allowed to take copies of their chosen texts into the examination?

No, candidates are **not** allowed to take texts into the exam with them.

For GCSE English Unit 3, what can I choose as my Different Cultures prose text?

Texts must be chosen from the set text list for GCSE English Literature.

For GCSE English Language Unit 3, what can I choose as my extended literary text?

Selections should be made from the set text list for GCSE English Literature or any Shakespeare play.

How much poetry must be studied for the controlled assessments in English and English Literature?

Controlled assessment assignments must draw upon the reading of a range of poetry specified by WJEC.

Do candidates need to study the whole of the WJEC poetry collection?

Candidates will need to study a specified range of poetry on a particular theme.

When will details of the range of poetry to be studied for an exam series be issued?

This will be made available via the WJEC secure website (www.wjecservices.co.uk) in the April of the year prior to the year of entry. However, to allow teachers flexibility when planning courses, the range of poetry for 2012 will be announced in April 2010, although work will not be submitted for moderation until spring 2012.

Can candidates write poetry for their creative writing assignments?

This is not usually suitable as it can be difficult to assess and can cause problems of comparability. It should only be considered in exceptional cases where the candidate has a particular aptitude for poetry. A commentary might prove useful.

How is the study of spoken language assessed?

It is assessed internally. Centres will be allocated a Language Study moderator to whom a sample of the work will be sent for moderation.

How much time can centres have for preparation of controlled assessment tasks?

For every 20% of the course devoted to controlled assessment 17 hours of preparation time is allowed according to QCDA regulations.

When will details of the controlled assessment tasks be issued to centres?

Generic tasks and examples of specific tasks will be made available via the WJEC secure website (www.wjecservices.co.uk) in the April of the year prior to the year of entry. However, to allow teachers flexibility when planning courses, tasks for 2012 will be published in April 2010, although work will not be submitted for moderation until spring 2012.

Why are conditions for controlled assessment tasks precisely specified?

They have to meet QCDA / DCELLS controlled assessment regulations.

How long will the controlled assessment sessions last?

Details of the maximum time for each task are listed in the specification.

How many words are required in each controlled assessment piece?

Generally around 1000 but "linked task" in Literature and English around 1500, and language study (English Language) between 800 and 1000. Length will depend on the ability of the students; very short pieces may be self-penalising but some times being concise is the mark of an able candidate.

Must the controlled assessment sessions take place in the exam hall?

No. Assessment may take place in classroom as long as regulations for controlled assessment are followed.

Are controlled assessments completed under exam conditions?

In effect yes.

Does the entire controlled assessment task need to be completed in one session?

No, the time may be spread over a number of sessions but work must be collected in at the end of each session and stored by the teacher until the next session.

Are there restrictions on when in the school year centres can complete the controlled assessment?

Centres are free to decide when they conduct the controlled assessment but must ensure that sufficient time is allowed for the work to be marked and submitted to the assigned moderator by WJEC moderation deadlines.

What happens if a candidate misses all or part of a controlled assessment session?

The centre should make arrangements for the candidate to take the assessment at another time, ensuring that it takes place under the appropriate controlled conditions.

May copies of the texts be taken into the controlled assessment sessions?

Clean copies of texts may be taken into the sessions if teachers wish. Moderators must be informed whether or not texts were available to candidates.

What can candidates take in to their controlled assessment session?

Clean copies of literary texts and, for the language study and reading assessment, notes. Notes may not contain plans or drafts and for reading must be limited to one A4 sheet. For the creative writing tasks (English/English Language Unit 3) candidates are not allowed to take in notes.

May controlled assessment responses be word-processed?

Yes, but spelling and grammar checks must not be used. Students must be prevented from having access to their work at home via the school network.

Can controlled assessments be repeated?

If student/teacher is not happy with first try, it can be repeated but the student must complete a totally different task.

What are the access arrangements for controlled assessment?

These are similar to existing examination arrangements and applicable to all awarding bodies.

Will online analysis of results be available?

Yes, via the WJEC secure website (www.wjecservices.co.uk).