GCSE Examiners' Report

Digital Technology

GCSE

Summer 2025

Introduction

Our Principal examiners' report provides valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. It has been written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and details how candidates have performed in each unit.

This report opens with a summary of candidates' performance, including the assessment objectives/skills/topics/themes being tested, and highlights the characteristics of successful performance and where performance could be improved. It then looks in detail at each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.[1]

The information found in this report provides valuable insight for practitioners to support their teaching and learning activity. We would also encourage practitioners to share this document – in its entirety or in part – with their learners to help with exam preparation, to understand how to avoid pitfalls and to add to their revision toolbox.

Further support

Document	Description	Link
Professional Learning / CPD	WJEC offers an extensive programme of online and face-to-face Professional Learning events. Access interactive feedback, review example candidate responses, gain practical ideas for the classroom and put questions to our dedicated team by registering for one of our events here.	https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/professional-learning/
Past papers	Access the bank of past papers for this qualification, including the most recent assessments. Please note that we do not make past papers available on the public website until 12 months after the examination.	Portal by WJEC or on the WJEC subject page
Grade boundary information	Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade. For unitised specifications grade boundaries are expressed on a Uniform Mark Scale (UMS). UMS grade boundaries remain the same every year as the range of UMS mark percentages allocated to a particular grade does not change. UMS grade boundaries are published at overall subject and unit level. For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the subject, rather than for each unit that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.	For unitised specifications click here: Results, Grade Boundaries and PRS (wjec.co.uk)

[1] ***Please note that 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.***

Exam Results Analysis	WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC Portal. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	Portal by WJEC
Classroom Resources	Access our extensive range of FREE classroom resources, including blended learning materials, exam walk-throughs and knowledge organisers to support teaching and learning.	https://resources.wjec.co.uk/
Bank of Professional Learning materials	Access our bank of Professional Learning materials from previous events from our secure website and additional pre-recorded materials available in the public domain.	Portal by WJEC or on the WJEC subject page.
Become an examiner with WJEC.	We are always looking to recruit new examiners or moderators. These opportunities can provide you with valuable insight into the assessment process, enhance your skill set, increase your understanding of your subject and inform your teaching.	Become an Examiner | WJEC

Contents **Page**

Executive Summary

The Summer 2025 series saw a drop in entries – down from over 5,200 candidates in 2024 to just 3,824 in 2025, a decrease of more than 27%. Unit 1 saw a significant rise in marks, indicating stronger outcomes from candidates. Both the NEA tasks, Units 2 & 3, also showed upward trends in scores and a higher proportion of candidates achieving top-end marks. The series demonstrated a broad range of candidate performance across all three units, with notable strengths and areas requiring improvement. Overall, the assessments were accessible and well-structured, allowing candidates to engage with realistic digital contexts. Centres are to be commended for their preparation, particularly in Unit 1, where most candidates attempted the full paper and showed secure understanding in areas such as data representation and image types. However, extended writing questions remained a key differentiator, with many candidates struggling to structure responses and apply subject-specific terminology effectively.

In Unit 1, while basic concepts such as byte units and bitmap/vector images were well understood, more technical topics like image compression, broadband technologies, and cyber resilience were poorly answered. Candidates often lacked depth in their explanations and confused key terms. The extended writing question on AI in restaurants was widely attempted, with stronger responses demonstrating clear understanding of intelligent automation, though many candidates conflated general ICT systems with AI-specific applications.

Unit 2 revealed mixed outcomes. Most candidates were able to cleanse and analyse spreadsheet data using appropriate techniques, and many produced suitable visual representations. However, the asset log was frequently incomplete, with limited commentary on copyright implications and tools used. Website and animation/game development showed improvement, yet few candidates responded to feedback effectively or documented their development process in sufficient detail. Evaluations were often descriptive rather than analytical, and many failed to discuss future improvements or link outcomes to project objectives.

Unit 3 showed generally strong performance in planning and evaluating digital assets. Candidates demonstrated good understanding of audience demographics and house style, though marketing campaigns were often weak or missing. The creation of digital assets varied significantly, with many candidates achieving satisfactory outcomes but lacking higher-level skills such as keyframes, masking, and speed adjustments. Centres using Adobe Premiere Rush should note its limitations in the ability to achieve top mark bands. Evaluations were mostly well written but could benefit from more descriptive language and clearer referencing of refinement logs.

Across all units, common themes included inconsistent use of technical terminology, limited depth in extended responses, and administrative issues such as incorrect file formats and incomplete documentation. To support future performance, candidates should be encouraged to revise the full specification, engage with feedback throughout the development process, and use appropriate software tools that allow for advanced functionality. Resources such as blended learning materials, exam walk-throughs, and CPD events are available via the WJEC website to aid preparation and teaching.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

GCSE

Summer 2025

UNIT 1: THE DIGITAL WORLD

Overview of the Unit

This component was completed onscreen within an allocated time of 1 hour 30 minutes and is a compulsory unit, contributing 40% of the overall qualification. The paper assessed a range of digital topics including data representation, communications, cybersecurity, legislation, and practical uses of emerging technologies.

The paper was accessible to all candidates and offered good opportunities for candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. As in previous series, the mix of short answer and extended response questions provided differentiation across the ability range. Questions were mapped against the appropriate assessment objectives (AO1 and AO2) and designed to encourage application of knowledge in realistic contexts.

Most candidates attempted the full paper, and centres are to be commended for their preparation. Extended writing questions continued to be the main differentiator, with centres encouraged to help candidates build confidence in structuring longer answers and using subject specific language effectively.

All areas of the specification were covered with the 2025 paper.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Q.1 **(a)** This part was very well answered, with most candidates correctly identifying byte related units. There was secure understanding of fundamental data quantities. Accessible to all candidates due to the tick box format and attempted by all candidates.

(b) **(i)** This question was also well answered, with candidates confidently matching descriptions to bitmap and vector image types. Accessible to all candidates due to the tick box format and attempted by all candidates.

(ii) This question was well answered by most candidates.

(c) **(i)** Candidate understanding of image compression was limited. While most recognised it involved reducing file size, responses were often brief and lacked the technical detail expected at this level.

(ii) This question was poorly answered by many candidates. Although most recognised the terms *lossy* and *lossless*, few explained the difference clearly. Many confused how each one affects image quality.

Q.2 **(a)** This part was fairly well answered, with most candidates correctly identifying interaction methods such as touch, voice, or facial recognition.

(b) **(i)** Understanding of location technologies was generally secure. The majority referred to GPS or Wi-Fi based positioning, with some mentioning mobile signal triangulation. A few candidates confused general connectivity with actual location tracking apps such as *Find My*, mistaking these for the technology itself, but most responses showed awareness of the concept.

(ii) This question was very well attempted, with many candidates clearly explaining advantages and disadvantages of sharing location, such as privacy issues, battery drain and targeted ads. Many popular responses included features like finding lost devices or concerns about stalkers.

Q.3 **(a)** This question was poorly answered by the majority of candidates. Many incorrect answers were discussing Wi-Fi rather than broadband connectivity

(b) This question was extremely poorly answered. Few candidates showed a clear understanding of ADSL or SDSL, and even fewer could explain the difference between them. Responses often lacked technical detail or confused the two entirely.

(c) This question was very poorly answered. Few candidates clearly understood the difference between FTTC, where fibre reaches the street cabinet and uses copper to the home, and FTTP, which uses fibre all the way to the premises for faster and more reliable speeds.

Q.4 **(a)** This question was poorly answered by most candidates. Some candidates listed changeover methods correctly, such as pilot or parallel, but did not explain how these would apply to the biometric registration system. A few candidates read the question incorrectly and responded with answers relating to biometric registration systems.

(b) This question was poorly answered. Few candidates gave clear descriptions of user guides or technical manuals, and many responses confused maintenance support with general training materials.

Q.5 **(a)** **(i)** This question was reasonably well attempted. Most candidates could define deliberate damage and gave appropriate examples, such as deletion of files or the introduction of malware. A few responses confused deliberate actions with accidental damage.

(ii) This question was well answered by the majority of candidates. Most correctly named security measures such as encryption or firewalls and provided a basic explanation.

(b) This question was poorly answered. Very few candidates demonstrated accurate understanding of the term *cyber resilience*. Most responses offered vague ideas around backups or system recovery without explaining how an organisation prepares for and recovers from attacks.

Q.6 This question was reasonably well attempted. Many candidates demonstrated awareness of popular C2C marketplaces such as eBay or Vinted and gave valid advantages and disadvantages. Stronger answers discussed issues like seller reviews, listing fees, or security concerns, while weaker responses gave generic statements with little reference to how the platforms operate. A popular incorrect answer focused on advantages and disadvantages to the customer, rather than to Katie as the seller, which did not meet the requirements of the question.

Q.7 **(a)** This question was answered fairly well. Most candidates recognised that not all online information is reliable, with stronger responses mentioning bias, outdated content, or user edited sources like Wikipedia. Weaker answers lacked specific examples or explanation.

(b) Most candidates gave basic answers like checking other websites or looking at the date of the information, but only a few explained how this helps. Stronger responses mentioned trusted sources like the BBC, which helped show a clearer understanding of how to verify information online.

Q.8 This question was the best answered extended writing question on the paper. As it represents a small part of Unit 3, candidates were well prepared and showed confident knowledge. Most gave detailed descriptions of two social media platforms, clearly explaining their features, benefits, and drawbacks. Instagram and TikTok were the most common choices. Some of the stronger answers discussed how social media influencers could help Molly promote clothing brands, attract followers, and receive free items through partnership opportunities. Most candidates were able to outline relevant benefits and drawbacks, though weaker responses sometimes repeated similar points or lacked platform specific detail.

Q.9 This question was answered fairly well. Most candidates knew that digital technology has changed how people work, but only a few explained the effects in detail. Better answers talked about new jobs, working from home, and using tools like video calls to collaborate. Many responses were vague, with phrases like “people work online” or “use Zoom,” but didn’t explain what that means for workers. Very few mentioned things like learning new skills, flexible hours, or working from different places.

Q.10 The quality of written communication was assessed in Question 10. Overall, responses were generally well written, with few spelling and grammar errors. Stronger candidates used appropriate technical terminology and gave structured answers that addressed uses of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and both benefits and drawbacks.

This was an extended writing question asking candidates to explain the uses of AI in restaurants and the potential impact on both customers and the restaurant. The question was attempted by 95.3% of candidates, with a mean score of 4.4 out of 11.

Many candidates demonstrated confident understanding of basic uses, including menu optimisation, automated ordering, rota creation, and customer service chatbots. A large number of candidates also referred to AI servers, describing robots being used for food delivery to tables. Stronger responses evaluated benefits and drawbacks clearly and gave examples.

However, many weaker responses focused on general IT systems rather than AI-specific features. Popular but incorrect answers included references to databases storing bookings or generic touchscreen systems. These responses did not demonstrate an understanding of intelligent automation. Some answers were limited in scope and relied on vague statements such as “AI helps with ordering.”

Summary of Key Points

Many centres showed strong preparation, and some candidates gave excellent answers. However, some responses suggested that the full specification hadn’t been revised. Broadband connection methods, image compression and changes in working practices were poorly answered. Candidates should make sure they cover all topic areas and understand exactly what each question is asking.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

GCSE

Summer 2025

UNIT 2: DIGITAL PRACTICES

Overview of the Unit

Examples of good work were seen at moderation this summer with most centres providing work in the correct format and following provided naming conventions.

When completing the evidence logs, candidates should save their work in PDF format. A growing number of candidates work was submitted as either Word or PowerPoint file types.

When completing the asset log, it is crucial to discuss copyright impact upon assets and comment on how this would impact the project. This element was overlooked by many centres.

Centres should also be aware of the controlled conditions of this unit. Candidates are not to receive templates or store work online or outside their secure accounts.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A: Interrogating Spreadsheet Data

Candidates should provide evidence of Section A in the *Analysis Log* and a *Completed Survey Spreadsheet*.

- Using a range of techniques and functions candidates were required to organise and cleanse given data. The cleansed data allowed the candidate to identify target audience, trends and needs.
- This scenario required candidates to remove duplicate, unnecessary spaces, identify blank cells, round up and convert text to upper case.
- The data analytics required candidates to copy cleansed data to a new worksheet, sort data by age, use a range of functions (5) to analyse the data to identify a target audience.
- Candidates were required to provide a visual representation and produce two suitable charts from their analysis justifying their choices.
- Candidates are required to carry out two further relevant investigations using the advanced techniques of what-if analysis and pivot tables.
- Most candidates were able to process data using some cleansing and sorting techniques. Calculate most outcomes accurately. Illustrate some data trends using appropriate charts.
- Many candidates were able to use mostly relevant cleaning and sorting techniques to thoroughly cleanse data. Accurately calculate outcomes and use **different** functions. They evidenced data trends using appropriate charts. Many candidates were also able to carry out further investigations using advanced techniques.
- Most candidates evidenced their work correctly, few failed to include the spreadsheet and the *Analysis Log*.

Section B: Data-informed digital products

Candidates are required to evidence the planning, developing, testing and evaluating process in **one** PDF file named *Development Log*. Any images that are included **must** be documented in the *Assets Log* not just images used in the final digital products.

Website requirements

Candidates are required to design a website of at least three pages with a hierarchy (not all pages are accessible from every page) – one page must contain either the game or the animation. Another page must contain links to evidence. Candidates should include accessibility features and the website should contain no horizontal scrolling.

Animation requirements

The animation should be between 20 and 30 seconds long and include an original cartoon character. Sound (at least one must be original) should be included - music, voiceover, incidental noise or any combination of these. The animation must include different scenes that are navigable e.g. pause, forward, replay.

Game requirements

The game should be set in a maze that has different playable layers (levels) with objectives and a scoring system. The game must include an original character and include appropriate sound effects.

Planning digital products

Website

Since the first year through many schools have taken feedback onboard regarding the planning stage and this has improved, generally this was done well with many candidates meeting the requirements of the scenario, few candidates still lacked details in:

- design content for the webpages, this should be detailed enough that a competent third party could complete the project from the designs.
- organise their workspace with folders, files and documents. Many failed to use the correct file type (.pdf)
- provide evidence, in the *Development* Log, of obtaining and responding to feedback.

Animation and Game

This was generally well executed with most candidates provided designs that a competent third party would be able to meet some of the requirements of the scenario. However, many candidates failed to obtain and respond to feedback from test users. Candidates can only be awarded the higher mark band where they have responded to feedback to further develop their work showing a clear progression from original design to post feedback design.

Developing digital products

Assets

This was generally poorly undertaken although most candidates used the *Assets Log* to evidence the gathering of some assets. Many failed to evidence **all** assets and the tools used to prepare the content.

Most candidates only partly completed the asset log misunderstanding its importance:

- Candidates failed to comment on copyright requirements beyond the fact the images were not primary images.
- Candidates gave little to no commentary on tools used when creating their assets or any difficulties they faced.

Website

Most candidates were able to use the software to produce a website that met the scenario requirement. Many showed some of the development process with an increased number obtaining feedback. This is an area where many centres failed to appreciate that top mark band required candidates to use the software to produce a professional website that met all the requirements of the scenario, detailed and clear development logs are maintained.

Candidates must undertake feedback sessions throughout the development process to establish the view and feelings of the target audience and make changes where appropriate.

Animation and Game

Many candidates were able to use the software to produce the animation/game that met some of the scenario requirements. Many showed the development process and obtained feedback. Fewer made changes based on the feedback. Again, candidates must be able to critically evaluate feedback throughout the development process to establish the view and feelings of the target audience and make changes where appropriate to achieve the top mark band. Many candidates provided the source files.

Testing complete products

Testing of the games/animations were usually of a good standard however many website links failed to open the correct page or document. Many documents were not of the correct file type (.pdf).

Candidates cannot be awarded the top mark band where errors and bugs are still present in the products.

Evaluating completed products

This was generally poorly answered many evaluations were descriptive and failed to consider the extent to which the final digital products meet the scenarios aims and objective and the target audience. Higher band marks require future developments and improvements to be discussed. Few candidates offered valid and detailed suggestions for future improvements. Few candidates used a different document to evidence this work.

Summary of key points

- The development log is the vehicle for evidencing the planning, development, testing and evaluation.
- Including titles in the development log to indicate changes between design and development would aid moderation.
- When completing the asset log candidates need to detail copyright issues if any are present and how this would impact the project.
- Candidates are awarded marks for the correct naming and organisation of files; this isn't an exercise use to make the moderation process easier.
- Obtaining and responding to feedback are key elements to the design and development of the digital products.
- Candidates would benefit from setting project objectives prior to the design stage, this will keep them on track during the project and help improve responses in the evaluation.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

GCSE

Summer 2025

UNIT 3: COMMUNICATING IN THE DIGITAL WORLD

Overview of the Unit

Centres that choose to use Adobe Premiere Rush and not Premiere Pro should be advised that the work will **not** make the highest mark band. Although Premiere Rush might be easier to use, it doesn't allow candidates to use higher-level skills (keyframes) to get to the highest mark band.

Centres should also be aware of the controlled conditions of this unit. Candidates are not to receive templates or store work outside their secure accounts. Candidates should not receive copy of the Specimen Assessment Materials (SAMs) from the secure website. Centres should ensure all work is submitted in the correct format and in the correct folders.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Forms of online marketing communication

This area was generally done well. For candidates to be in the top mark band, they must discuss 4 social media platforms. They should cover in detail how the demographics differ for each of the 4 platforms, and they should discuss the characteristics of the 4 platforms.

Impact of online marketing communications

In this area, the benefits were well documented, but the risks were not. With a minority of candidates, the risks were not appropriate. Candidates need to give valid risks and link these to the given brief.

Analysis of audience needs

This area was generally done well. Most candidates were able to give an objective analysis of the given scenario, identifying opportunities and objectives. The objectives were generally a strength for most candidates. Candidates did struggle more with the digital marketing communications strategy. This is where we would expect the candidate to discuss how they would like their digital asset to appear on social media.

Plan digital asset

This area was generally done well. Most candidates were able to discuss the purpose, target audience/demographic to a good standard. House Style was generally good. Candidates discussed the main colours that they were going to use and the style of font that they'd use for titles and for normal text. The marketing campaign tended to be missing with a lot of candidates and weak with most candidates who did include it.

Creating digital assets

This area was a mixed. Some centres noted on their submissions the technical difficulties they experienced. This was also the main area where centres tended to be generous with their assessment. If a candidate has created a digital asset, where they have added images, text, transitions and audio in a basic but satisfactory way, that is suitable for the target audience and suitable for the brief, this should be considered satisfactory and be put in mark band 3. To be considered for mark band 4 or 5, the candidate should also show higher level skills. These could include zoom effects, changing speed, changing the colour of the images using keyframes, adding appropriate original images, masking and more.

Evaluating digital assets
This area was generally done well. Where centres could improve would be further use of adjectives in the evaluation and more detail in the Refinement Log. Candidates could also reference the refinement log when they cover the success criteria. E.g. this can be seen in session 10 of the refinement log.

Summary of key points
Forms of online marketing communication
- To reach the top mark band, candidates must analyse four different social media platforms in depth.
- Ensure to compare the demographics and key characteristics of each platform.

Impact of online marketing communications
- Be sure to include valid risks as well as benefits, contextualised within the scenario.

Analysis of audience needs
- Consider expanding on the digital marketing communications strategy, particularly how and when the assets will appear on social media.

Plan digital asset
- Discuss the marketing campaign in terms of key messages.

Creating digital assets

- To move into mark bands 4 or 5, use higher-level skills such as keyframes, zoom effects, speed adjustments, and original content
- Centres should use software that allows for their digital asset to be opened in Adobe software for the purpose of moderation.
- If a candidate has created a digital asset, where they have added images, text, transitions and audio in a basic but satisfactory way, that is suitable for the target audience and suitable for the brief, this should be considered satisfactory and be put in mark band 3.
- Candidates cannot be in the top mark band for Creating digital assets without higher level skills such as the use of key frames.

Evaluating digital assets

- Add more descriptive language (use adjectives) and reference specific sessions in the refinement log, e.g., 'as seen in Session 6...'.

Administrative

Candidates are not to receive templates or store work outside their secure accounts. All work must be supervised, and the teacher must be able to sign to say it’s the candidates work.

Supporting you

Useful contacts and links

Our friendly subject team is on hand to support you between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.
Tel: 029 2026 5355
Email: digitech@wjec.co.uk
Qualification webpage: GCSE Digital Technology

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