**Qualifications and Curriculum Authority**

# GCSEs in English

## New opportunities

From September 2010, there will be a new range of GCSE qualifications in English available for first certification in 2012. These are:

- English

- English language

- English literature.

Functional English, which assesses skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening, will be available from 2010.

These qualifications have been developed to complement and support each other. The GCSEs are based on the requirements of the new key stage 4 programmes of study and the key concepts of competence, creativity, cultural understanding and critical understanding.
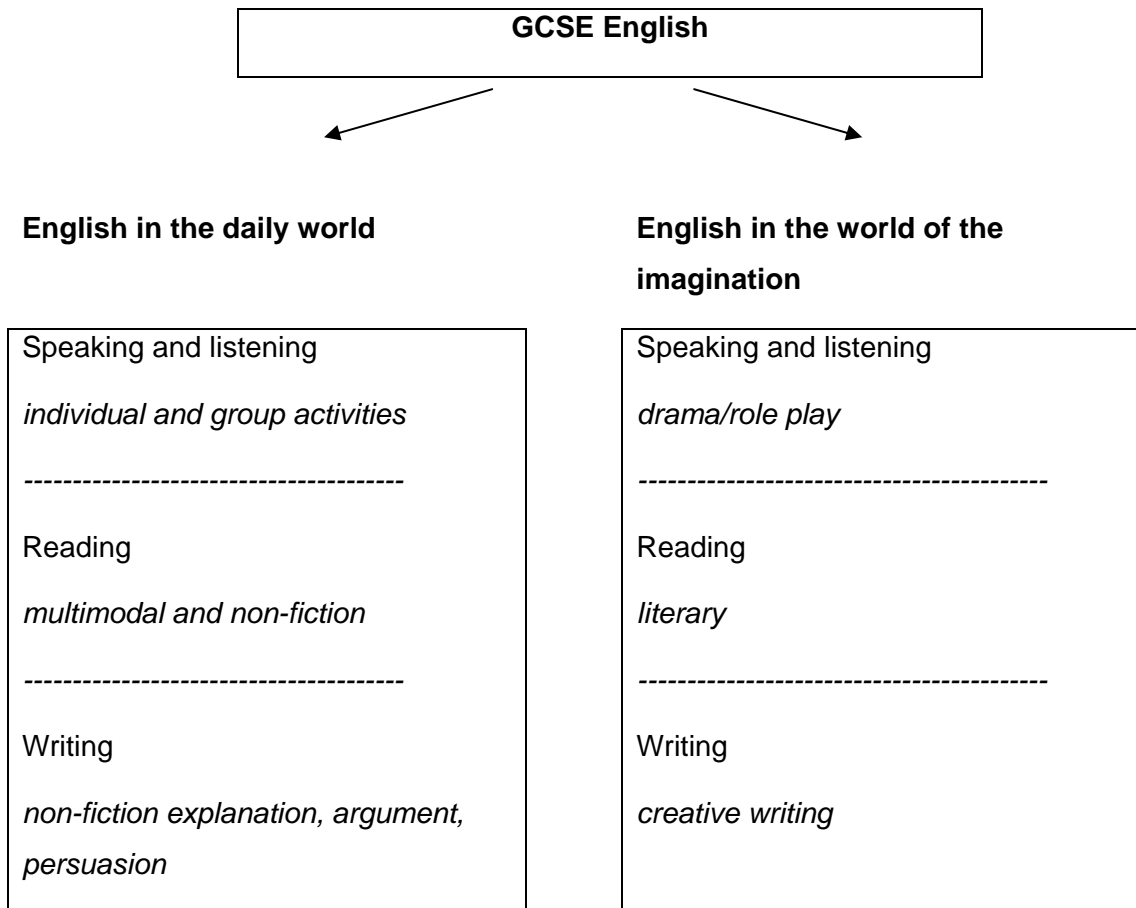
The addition of the new English language GCSE means that the three GCSEs provide clear progression routes to A levels in English language and literature, English language and English literature as well as to other higher level qualifications.
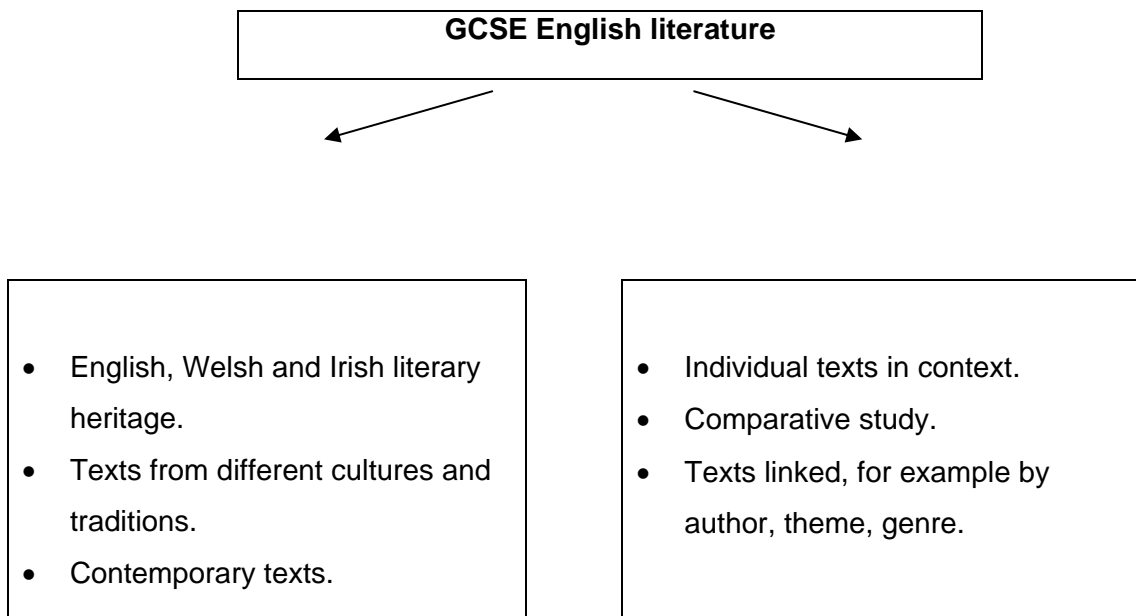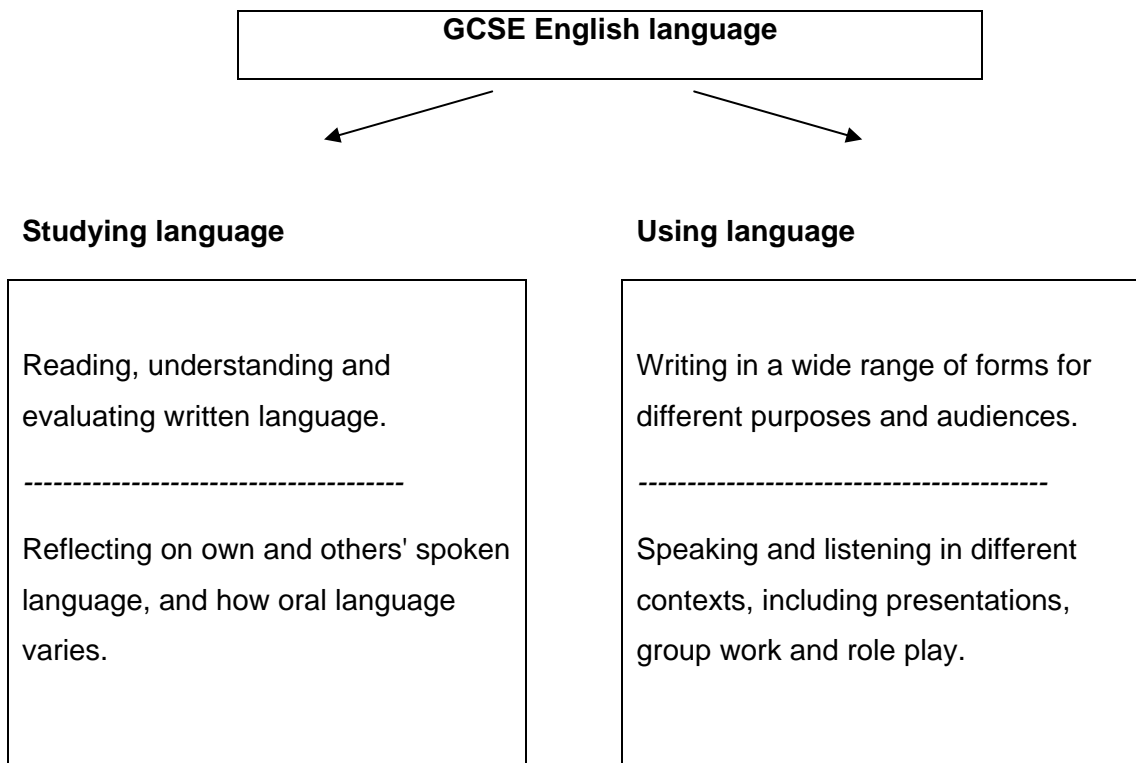
Through the common components and areas of linkage, it will be possible to develop coherent courses of study and to be flexible about which qualifications are taken and

when. Students will be able to develop from the English course to the wider requirements of the English language and English literature GCSEs.

The functional skills requirements are embedded in the programmes of study and are integral to both English and English language, but will be separately assessed and certificated. Integrated courses will enhance both the functional skills and the GCSEs. The emphasis is on students using their skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing for real-life purposes in a wide range of contexts. This will develop and enhance students' skills and confidence and so encourage success in the qualifications.

# The structure of the qualifications

| **GCSE English** |
| :---: |

**English in the daily world**

| Speaking and listening |
| --- |
| *individual and group activities* |
| -------------------------------------- |
| Reading |
| *multimodal and non-fiction* |
| -------------------------------------- |
| Writing |
| *non-fiction explanation, argument, persuasion* |

**English in the world of the imagination**

| Speaking and listening |
| --- |
| *drama/role play* |
| ------------------------------------------ |
| Reading |
| *literary* |
| ------------------------------------------ |
| Writing |
| *creative writing* |

| GCSE English language |
|:---:|

**Studying language**

Reading, understanding and evaluating written language.

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Reflecting on own and others' spoken language, and how oral language varies.

**Using language**

Writing in a wide range of forms for different purposes and audiences.

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Speaking and listening in different contexts, including presentations, group work and role play.

| GCSE English literature |
|:---:|

- English, Welsh and Irish literary heritage.
- Texts from different cultures and traditions.
- Contemporary texts.

- Individual texts in context.
- Comparative study.
- Texts linked, for example by author, theme, genre.

# Breadth of study

Students aged 14–16 are entitled to the breadth of the key stage 4 programmes of study for English. This means that they must study for either English or combined English language and English literature. At the end of key stage 4, students may not be entered

for GCSE English with either English language or English literature. The 'nesting' of the English requirements within those for English language and English literature potentially enables teachers to make late decisions about entries.

| Table showing the relationship of components in the three GCSEs | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **English** | **English language** | **English literature** |
| Speaking and listening | x | x | |
| Non-fiction reading | x | x | |
| Non-fiction writing | x | x | |
| Creative writing | x | x | |
| Sustained reading/set texts/literary study (overlap of texts possible, but not of tasks) | x | x | x |

For the purposes of performance tables that record the achievement of five or more GCSEs at grade C or above, including English and mathematics, students need to achieve level 2 in functional skills before a grade C or above in English or English language may be included. English language will only be included in this provision if students are also entered for English literature.

# The GCSEs explained

## English

The GCSE English course provides coverage of the key stage 4 programmes of study and functional skills requirements in one examination course. It is a practical alternative to taking two GCSEs in English language and English literature for students who wish to release time for other subjects, and for those who might not wish to tackle the reading in GCSE English literature. The breadth of the current GCSE English has therefore been retained in these proposals, with overall weightings of 20% for speaking and listening, 40% for reading and 40% for writing.

However, the revised GCSE English criteria encourage awarding bodies to develop fresh approaches in examination specifications. New programmes of study promote real-life contexts for skills learnt in the classroom and suggest a greater emphasis on creative approaches in students' work. This is why the course is in two parts: *English in the daily world* (55%) and *English in the world of the imagination* (45%).

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The first part includes functional skills requirements and is concerned essentially with responding to, and creating, non-fiction texts. The second part includes coverage of literary reading and the production of students' own creative texts. Speaking and listening activities feature in both parts of the course; assessment requirements are broadly equivalent to those in the current GCSE English.

Three units of work, assessed internally under controlled conditions, are each weighted at 20%.

- Students will be expected to show, in speaking and listening, their awareness and understanding of variety and adaptation in their own and others' spoken language, and that they are able to make appropriate choices in real-life situations. They will be assessed in a range of contexts that include the creative use of language in drama, role play or storytelling as well as pragmatic uses of language in giving information, explanations or directions.

- The literary study presents an opportunity for students to explore the impact and influence of a sample of the literary texts they have read. The texts will be drawn from different eras and cultures and will include prose, poetry and drama. There is the opportunity to set tasks that give shape and coherence to students' reading and that enable individual texts to illuminate others.

- Writing tasks will ask students to show adaptability in producing texts that show their ability to respond to the varying demands of context, purpose and audience.

The assessment of non-fiction reading will have an emphasis on evaluating writers' linguistic choices and the effects achieved in texts by different presentational devices. Subtleties of impact on the reader/viewer brought about by using digital or multimodal forms are a significant aspect of this component.

Common components shared between this course and the new GCSE English language provide teachers with considerable flexibility in decision making about individual students' examination entries. In addition, texts used for the literary study in GCSE English may be chosen from – or used in part as – those studied for GCSE English literature, again keeping options open for students' final entry decisions.

## English language

The two parts of the GCSE English language course, *Studying language* (45%) and *Using language* (55%), encourage students to study how language works and to show understanding through creating and adapting their own talk and writing.

*Speaking and listening* has an enhanced weighting; in addition to requirements equivalent to those in the current GCSE English, students undertake a study of spoken language, offering the chance to engage with real-life talk and explore their own and others' uses of language in contexts beyond the classroom. Students might, for example, consider levels of formality and informality, appropriate uses of standard and non-standard English, or evaluate how borrowings from other languages or dialects have brought about recent changes in oral communication.

The assessment of reading is approached as the study of written language, emphasising evaluation of writers' linguistic choices and the effects achieved in literary and non-literary texts by different structural and presentational devices. Subtleties of impact on the reader/viewer brought about by using digital or multimodal forms are a significant aspect of this component. In studying how an extended literary text conveys and sustains meaning for its readers, students may opt to read a non-fiction work, for example travel literature or (auto)biography, if they find that more stimulating than fiction, although a novel or a play may equally well be chosen.

Two units of work are internally assessed under controlled conditions: *Speaking and listening*, and one that includes both a response to an extended literary text and pieces of the student's own creative writing. Texts used for this assessment may be chosen from those studied for GCSE English literature, although the same task cannot be submitted for both courses. In setting out the requirements for these assessments, awarding bodies will propose tasks and texts that support coherent and interesting courses of study.

The aim is to develop students' understanding of language use in the real world through engaging with and evaluating material that is relevant to their own development as speakers, listeners, readers and writers. Writing tasks, for example, in both external and controlled assessments, will ask students to show adaptability in producing a number of texts – not necessarily long or complete texts – that show their ability to respond to the varying demands of context, purpose and audience. In speaking and listening activities, students will be expected to participate in drama or role play, or tell stories, to show how they can interpret and use the spoken word creatively as well as for conveying straightforward information, explanations or arguments.

GCSE English language may be an attractive stand-alone course for post-16 and English as an additional language (EAL)] students, ie those needing a language qualification at this level but who are not required to fulfil the range of reading stipulated in the key stage 4 programmes of study. For such students, this course offers the benefit of being grounded firmly in how language is used, how it works and how it varies in the real world. In addition, it provides an opportunity for students to extend their own skills as producers

of spoken and written language in contexts that are both practical and challenging. In combination with GCSE English literature, it supports a broader study of language than in GCSE English, and as such, provides for students who might wish to progress to higher level language studies.

## English literature

The GCSE English literature course provides opportunities for students to show their enjoyment and understanding of a range of texts. At least six texts must cover the literary heritage, other cultures and traditions, and contemporary writing as well as prose, poetry and drama. Within the course, students are encouraged to pursue broad personal interests and enthusiasms as well as demonstrate skills in detailed textual criticism.

Understanding the social, cultural and historical contexts in which texts were produced, and of the effect this has on their meaning and their impact on contemporary readers, is a significant element. Similarly, demonstrating an awareness of how writers draw on literary traditions to affect the reader's expectations and response will be encouraged where appropriate. These aspects, together with the detailed analysis of individual texts, underpin the part of the course identified as *Individual texts in context*, which contributes half of the total assessment.

To provide a coherent and interesting course of study, emphasis is placed on comparing or linking some of the texts.

- *Comparative study*, one of the externally examined components, will allow students to analyse connections that illuminate themes, characters and settings, or style and choice of language in texts, through similarities, differences or both.

- The controlled internal assessment allows students to develop a personal study of linked texts, which may include literary non-fiction. Linkage here might be through theme (for example the role of women in science fiction), author (for example the poetry and/or prose by an author) or genre (for example the development of the detective story in the 19th and 20th centuries). This component encourages students to relate texts to their own lives and to pursue individual interests in wider reading through centres' choice within guidelines set by awarding bodies.

Combined with GCSE English language, this course provides full coverage of the key stage 4 programmes of study in English and supports a broader exploration of literary reading than in GCSE English, As such, it provides for students who enjoy literature and for those who might wish to progress to higher level literary studies.

# External and controlled assessments

Regulations now specify the proportions of credit available for GCSE external and controlled assessments. These are:

|  | External assessment weighting | Controlled assessment weighting |
|---|---|---|
| English | 40% | 60% |
| English language | 40% | 60% |
| English literature | 75% | 25% |

The subject criteria for English, English language and English literature indicate which parts of the assessment are controlled, ie undertaken during the course with a range of controls related to task setting, task taking and task marking. These are being finalised.

# Functional skills

Functional skills requirements are integral to GCSE English and English Language. The tables below show how the functional skills are included in the GCSEs.

## Speaking and listening level 1

| Functional Skills | | Links to English/English Language GCSE | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Skill standard** | **Coverage and range** | **Assessment Objective** | **Content** | **Grade Description** |
| Take full part in formal and informal discussions / exchanges | <ul><li>make relevant contributions to discussions, responding appropriately to others</li><li>prepare for and contribute to formal discussion of ideas and opinions</li><li>be flexible in discussion, making different kinds of contributions</li><li>present information/points of view clearly and in appropriate language in formal and informal exchanges and</li></ul> | i communicate clearly and purposefully; structure and sustain talk, adapting it to different situations and audiences; use standard English and a variety of techniques as appropriate <br><br> ii listen and respond to speakers' ideas, perspectives and how they construct and express their meanings <br><br> iii interact with others, shaping meanings through suggestions, comments and questions and drawing ideas together | <ul><li>present and listen to information and ideas</li><li>respond to the questions and views of others, adapting talk appropriately to context and audience</li><li>make a range of effective contributions, using creative approaches to exploring questions, solving problems and developing ideas</li><li>reflect and comment critically on their own and others'</li></ul> | **F** <br> Candidates talk confidently in familiar situations, showing some awareness of purpose and of listeners' needs. They convey information, develop ideas and describe feelings clearly, using the main features of standard English as appropriate. They listen with concentration and make relevant responses to others' ideas and opinions. In formal and creative activities, they attempt to meet the demands of different roles. <br><br> **C** <br> Candidates adapt their talk to the demands of different situations and contexts. They recognise when standard English is required and use it confidently. They use different sentence structures |

| Functional Skills | | Links to English/English Language GCSE | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Skill standard** | **Coverage and range** | **Assessment Objective** | **Content** | **Grade Description** |
| | discussions | iv create and sustain different roles | uses of language<br>• participate in a range of contexts, including real life uses of talk and audiences beyond the classroom | and select vocabulary so that information, ideas and feelings are communicated clearly and the listener's interest is engaged. Through careful listening and by developing their own and others' ideas, they make significant contributions to discussion and participate effectively in creative activities. |

## Speaking and listening level 2

| Functional Skills | | Links to English/English Language GCSE | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Skill standard** | **Coverage and range** | **Assessment Objective** | **Content** | **Grade Description** |
| Make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts | • listen to complex information and give a relevant, cogent response in appropriate language<br>• present information and ideas clearly and persuasively to others<br>• adapt contributions | i communicate clearly and purposefully; structure and sustain talk, adapting it to different situations and audiences; use standard English and a variety of techniques as appropriate<br>ii listen and respond to speakers' ideas, | • present and listen to information and ideas<br>• respond to the questions and views of others, adapting talk appropriately to context and audience<br>• make a range of effective contributions, using creative approaches | **F**<br>Candidates talk confidently in familiar situations, showing some awareness of purpose and of listeners' needs. They convey information, develop ideas and describe feelings clearly, using the main features of standard English as appropriate. They listen with concentration and make relevant responses to others' ideas and opinions. In formal and creative activities, they |

| Functional Skills | | Links to English/English Language GCSE | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Skill standard | Coverage and range | Assessment Objective | Content | Grade Description |
| | in discussions to suit audience, purpose and situation<br><br>• make significant contributions to discussions, taking a range of roles and helping to move discussion forward to reach decisions<br><br>in a wide range of contexts, including those that involve others who are unfamiliar | perspectives and how they construct and express their meanings<br>iii interact with others, shaping meanings through suggestions, comments and questions and drawing ideas together<br>iv create and sustain different roles | to exploring questions, solving problems and developing ideas<br>• reflect and comment critically on their own and others' uses of language<br>• participate in a range of contexts, including real life uses of talk and audiences beyond the classroom | attempt to meet the demands of different roles.<br><br>**C**<br>Candidates adapt their talk to the demands of different situations and contexts. They recognise when standard English is required and use it confidently. They use different sentence structures and select vocabulary so that information, ideas and feelings are communicated clearly and the listener's interest is engaged. Through careful listening and by developing their own and others' ideas, they make significant contributions to discussion and participate effectively in creative activities. |

## Reading (Written Language) Level 1

| Functional Skills | | Links to English/English Language GCSE | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Skill standard | Coverage and range | Assessment Objective | Content | Grade Description |
| Read and understand a range of texts | • identify the main points and ideas and how they are | i read and understand, selecting material appropriate to purpose, | • understand how meaning is constructed through | **F**<br>Candidates describe the main ideas, themes or argument in a range of texts, |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| presented in different texts<br>• understand texts in detail<br>• read and understand texts and take appropriate action<br>in a range of texts including reports, instructional, explanatory and persuasive texts, on paper and on screen | collating from different sources and making comparisons and cross-references as appropriate<br>ii develop and sustain interpretations of writers' ideas and perspectives, referring closely to the development of narrative, argument, explanation or analysis<br>iii explain and evaluate how writers use linguistic, grammatical, structural and presentational features to achieve effects and engage and influence the reader, supporting their comments with detailed textual references | words, sentences and whole texts, recognising and responding to the effects of language variation<br>• evaluate the ways in which texts may be interpreted differently according to the perspective of the reader | and refer to specific aspects or details when justifying their views. They make simple comparisons and cross-references that show some awareness of how texts achieve their effects through writers' use of linguistic, grammatical, structural and presentational devices.<br><br>**C**<br>Candidates understand and demonstrate how meaning and information are conveyed in a range of texts. They make personal and critical responses, referring to specific aspects of language, grammar, structure and presentational devices to justify their views. They successfully compare and cross-reference aspects of texts and explain convincingly how they may vary in purpose and how they achieve different effects. |

## Reading (Written Language) Level 2

| Functional Skills | | Links to English/English Language GCSE | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Skill standard** | **Coverage and range** | **Assessment Objective** | **Content** | **Grade Description** |
| Compare, select, read and | • select and use different types of | i read and understand, selecting material | • understand how meaning is | **F**<br>Candidates describe the main ideas, |

| Functional Skills | | Links to English/English Language GCSE | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Skill standard** | **Coverage and range** | **Assessment Objective** | **Content** | **Grade Description** |
| understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions | texts to obtain relevant information read and summarise succinctly information/ideas from different sources<br>• identify the purposes of texts and comment on how effectively meaning is conveyed<br>• detect point of view, implicit meaning and/or bias<br>• read and actively respond to different texts (for example, reply to each point in a letter of complaint)<br>in a wide range of texts for different purposes, on paper and on screen | appropriate to purpose, collating from different sources and making comparisons and cross-references as appropriate<br>ii develop and sustain interpretations of writers' ideas and perspectives, referring closely to the development of narrative, argument, explanation or analysis<br>iii explain and evaluate how writers use linguistic, grammatical, structural and presentational features to achieve effects and engage and influence the reader, supporting their comments with detailed textual references | constructed through words, sentences and whole texts, recognising and responding to the effects of language variation<br>• evaluate the ways in which texts may be interpreted differently according to the perspective of the reader | themes or argument in a range of texts, and refer to specific aspects or details when justifying their views. They make simple comparisons and cross-references that show some awareness of how texts achieve their effects through writers' use of linguistic, grammatical, structural and presentational devices.<br><br>**C**<br>Candidates understand and demonstrate how meaning and information are conveyed in a range of texts. They make personal and critical responses, referring to specific aspects of language, grammar, structure and presentational devices to justify their views. They successfully compare and cross-reference aspects of texts and explain convincingly how they may vary in purpose and how they achieve different effects. |

# Writing Level 1

| Functional Skills | | Links to English/English Language GCSE | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Skill standard** | **Coverage and range** | **Assessment Objective** | **Content** | **Grade Description** |
| Write documents to communicate information, ideas and opinions using formats and styles suitable for their purpose and audience | <ul><li>write clearly and coherently including an appropriate level of detail</li><li>present information in a logical sequence</li><li>use language, format and structure suitable for purpose and audience</li><li>use correct grammar including subject/verb agreement and correct and consistent use of tense</li><li>ensure written work includes accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling and that meaning is clear</li></ul> in a range of documents on paper and on screen. | i  communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, using and adapting forms and selecting vocabulary appropriate to task and purpose in ways which engage the reader<br><br>ii  organise information and ideas into well structured and sequenced sentences, paragraphs and whole texts, using a variety of linguistic and structural features to support cohesion and overall coherence<br><br>iii  use a range of sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate punctuation and spelling | <ul><li>write accurately and fluently, choosing content and adapting style and language to a wide range of forms, media, contexts, audiences and purposes</li></ul> | **F**<br>Candidates' writing shows some adaptation of form and style for different tasks and purposes. It communicates simply and clearly with the reader. Sentences sequence events or ideas logically; vocabulary is sometimes chosen for variety and interest. Paragraphing is straightforward but effective; the structure of sentences, including some that are complex, is usually correct. Spelling and basic punctuation are mostly accurate.<br><br>**C**<br>Candidates' writing shows successful adaptation of form and style to different tasks and for various purposes. They use a range of sentence structures and varied vocabulary to create different effects and engage the reader's interest. Paragraphing is used effectively to make the sequence of events or development of ideas coherent and clear to the reader. Sentence structures are varied; punctuation and spelling are accurate and sometimes bold. |

# Writing Level 2

| Functional Skills | | Links to English/English Language GCSE | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Skill standard** | **Coverage and range** | **Assessment Objective** | **Content** | **Grade Description** |
| Write documents to communicate information, ideas and opinions using formats and styles suitable for their purpose and audience | • write clearly and coherently including an appropriate level of detail<br>• present information in a logical sequence<br>• use language, format and structure suitable for purpose and audience<br>• use correct grammar including subject/verb agreement and correct and consistent use of tense<br>• ensure written work includes accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling and that meaning is clear<br>in a range of documents on paper and on screen. | i  communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, using and adapting forms and selecting vocabulary appropriate to task and purpose in ways which engage the reader<br>ii  organise information and ideas into well structured and sequenced sentences, paragraphs and whole texts, using a variety of linguistic and structural features to support cohesion and overall coherence<br>iii  use a range of sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate punctuation and spelling | • write accurately and fluently, choosing content and adapting style and language to a wide range of forms, media, contexts, audiences and purposes | **F**<br>Candidates' writing shows some adaptation of form and style for different tasks and purposes. It communicates simply and clearly with the reader. Sentences sequence events or ideas logically; vocabulary is sometimes chosen for variety and interest. Paragraphing is straightforward but effective; the structure of sentences, including some that are complex, is usually correct. Spelling and basic punctuation are mostly accurate.<br><br>**C**<br>Candidates' writing shows successful adaptation of form and style to different tasks and for various purposes. They use a range of sentence structures and varied vocabulary to create different effects and engage the reader's interest. Paragraphing is used effectively to make the sequence of events or development of ideas coherent and clear to the reader. Sentence structures are varied; punctuation and spelling are accurate and sometimes bold. |