

GCE Subject Level Guidance for English Literature

May 2014

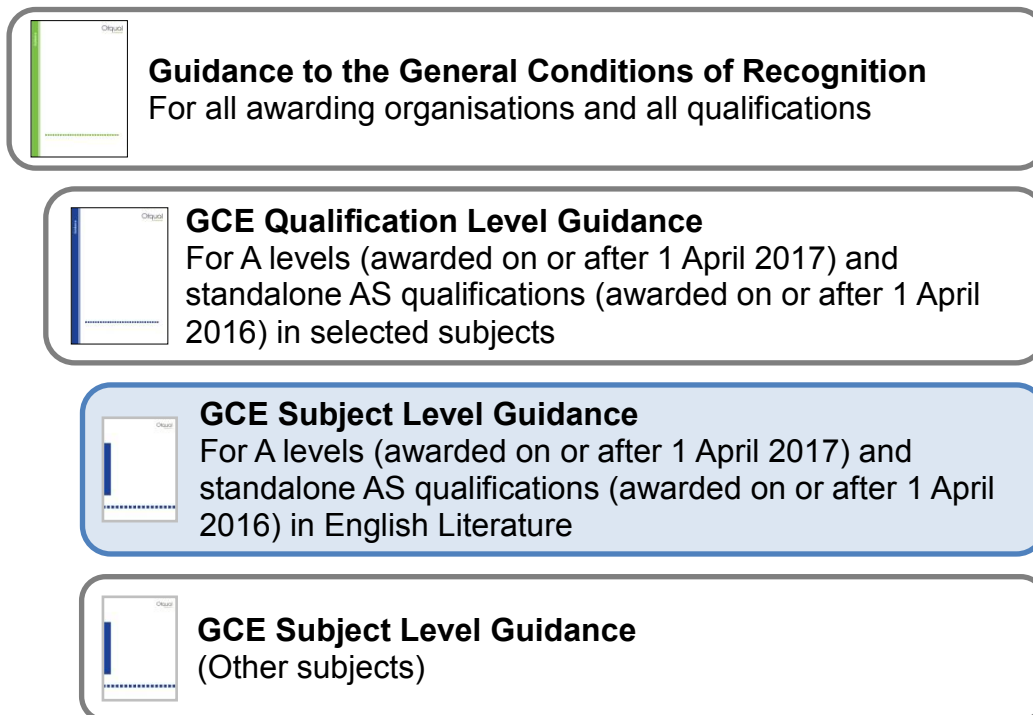
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Introduction

About this document

This document (highlighted in the figure below) is part of a suite of documents which outlines our guidance for awarding organisations offering GCE Qualifications.



This document sets out guidance which applies to the following qualifications:

- all GCE A levels in English Literature awarded on or after 1 April 2017; and
- all standalone GCE AS qualifications in English Literature awarded on or after 1 April 2016.

This guidance supports the GCE Subject Level Conditions and associated requirements for English Literature.¹

This document constitutes guidance for the purposes of section 153 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (the '2009 Act' and Conditions GCE(English Literature)1.2 and GCE(English Literature)2.3.

An awarding organisation has a legal obligation under the 2009 Act to have regard to this guidance in relation to each GCE Qualification in English Literature that it makes available or proposes to make available. Conditions GCE(English Literature)1.2 and

¹ www.ofqual.gov.uk/documents/gce-subject-level-conditions-english-literature/

GCE(English Literature)2.3 impose the same obligation in respect of the guidance below which is issued under those Conditions.

An awarding organisation should use the guidance to help it understand how to comply with the GCE Subject Level Conditions and associated requirements for English Literature.

Guidance set out in this document

This document provides guidance in relation to non-examination assessment for GCE A level qualifications in English Literature, and on assessment objectives for GCE Qualifications in English Literature

Guidance in relation to non-examination assessment for GCE A levels in English Literature

Under Condition GCE(English Literature)2.2(b) an awarding organisation must ensure that 20% of the total marks available for a GCE A level in English Literature are made available through non-examination assessments.

In order to promote consistency and comparability between such non-examination assessments, as designed and set by different awarding organisations, we suggest that these assessments should take the form of one or more extended responses, within the meaning of Condition GCE5.4, independently produced by a Learner. We would expect the total length of such an extended response, or extended responses, to be between 2,500 and 3,500 words.

Although we will expect an awarding organisation to set an indicative word limit within these parameters, we would not expect a Learner to be specifically penalised on the basis that the length of his or her extended response(s) differed from that indicative word limit.

Guidance on assessment objectives for GCE Qualifications in English Literature

Condition GCE(English Literature)1.2 allows us to specify requirements and guidance relating to assessment objectives for GCE Qualifications in English Literature.

We published our requirements in relation to assessment objectives in *GCE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for English Literature*, and reproduce them in the table below.

		<i>A level</i>	<i>AS</i>
AO1	Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression	<i>Each of AO1, AO2 and AO3 can be targeted in the range 20-30%</i>	<i>Each of AO1, AO2 and AO3 can be targeted in the range 20-30%</i>
AO2	Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts		
AO3	Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received		
AO4	Explore connections across literary texts	<i>Each of AO4 and AO5 can be targeted in the range 10-15%</i>	<i>Each of AO4 and AO5 can be targeted in the range 10-15%</i>
AO5	Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations		

We set out below our guidance for the purposes of Condition GCE(English Literature)1.2. This guidance explains how we expect awarding organisations to interpret these assessment objectives in terms of:

- the discrete ‘elements’ within each assessment objective which questions and tasks could target and/or seek to credit – our expectation is that each and every question/task should target or seek to credit at least one of these elements, and may target or seek to credit multiple elements across one or more assessment objectives;

- the coverage expectations, such as in relation to the different elements within each assessment objective and how those elements should be sampled over time; and
- the key areas of emphasis in each assessment objective and the particular meaning for the subject of any key terms and phrases used; defined terms are shown in bold text, followed by their definitions.

In line with the obligations set out in Condition GCE(English Literature)1.2, we expect awarding organisations to be able to demonstrate how they have had regard to this guidance. For example, an awarding organisation could map how it has regard to the guidance as it:

- develops its sample assessment materials;
- delivers the qualification;
- develops and applies its approach to sampling the elements into which the assessment objectives are divided; and
- monitors the qualification to make sure it addresses all elements appropriately.

AO1: Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression		20-30% (A level) 20-30% (AS)	
Strands	Elements	Coverage	Agreements and definitions
n/a	<p>1a – Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts</p> <p>1b – Use associated concepts and terminology</p> <p>1c – Use coherent, accurate written expression</p>	Reasonable coverage of each element in each set of assessments (but not every assessment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Informed means the learners' own knowledge of the texts. ■ Personal relates to their level of engagement with the texts. ■ Creative includes how engaging and well-structured a Learner's response is. ■ Terminology here is concerned with the use of correct/suitable words, while concepts reflects an overarching awareness of the framework of the subject. The main requirement for both of these is that they are relevant to the approach adopted in the response. ■ Coherent means the ability to engage in clear and effective academic discourse, which is well organised and adopts an academic style and register. ■ Re-creative tasks are permitted but not required.

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts			20-30% (A level) 20-30% (AS)
Strands	Elements	Coverage	Agreements and definitions
n/a	<i>The AO is a single element</i>	Full coverage in each set of assessments (but not every assessment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The emphasis here should be on the ability to analyse. ■ The ways here are multifarious: they cover an extremely broad range of areas – all of those that affect how writing ‘works’; there is not an accepted set of them – they are manifested differently for poetry, prose and drama, as well as being heavily dependent on each individual text; different responses, even to the same text, may focus on them to differing degrees as this will depend on the approach that is adopted. ■ The phrase meanings are shaped acknowledges that authorial intentions in this regard can never be definitively known. ■ Each awarding organisation should take particular care to explain its approach to this assessment objective in its assessment strategy for this subject.

AO3: Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received		20-30% (A level) 20-30% (AS)	
Strands	Elements	Coverage	Agreements and definitions
n/a	1a – Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reasonable coverage of each element in each set of assessments (but not every assessment) ■ The degree to which each element is covered overall will depend on the approach to the subject taken in the specification, as well as the nature of the specific tasks and texts/topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The question of context is a fundamental concern both for this individual subject and for the suite of English subjects as a whole. ■ There are a vast number of legitimate ways of addressing context in relation to literary study. It is very difficult to specify them and as such any attempt to do so would be likely to be inaccurate. ■ Significance has a dual meaning here: it is a synonym for ‘importance’ in general use; it also alludes to ‘signification’ – the making of signs – in relation to literary study more specifically. And, it is inter-connected with influence, so these facets of literary study should not be targeted and credited separately. ■ Each awarding organisation should take particular care to explain its approach to context in its assessment strategy for this subject.
	1b – Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are received		

AO4: Explore connections across literary texts			10-15% (A level) 10-15% (AS)
Strands	Elements	Coverage	Agreements and definitions
n/a	<i>The AO is a single element</i>	Full coverage in each set of assessments (but not every assessment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The connections here would usually be between one text and one or more others. ■ However, connections might also be within a single published text if this comprises multiple discrete, standalone parts – this is particularly likely to be the case for collections of poetry and short stories. ■ Equally, connections might be addressed through consideration of a given literary genre – discussion of any tendencies in this regard would necessitate awareness of a relevant range of texts. ■ The requirements here could be addressed through a task involving analysis of a previously unseen text, provided that this was contextualised.

AO5: Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations			10-15% (A level) 10-15% (AS)
Strands	Elements	Coverage	Agreements and Definitions
n/a	<i>The AO is a single element</i>	Full coverage in each set of assessments (but not every assessment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Exploration here could involve engagement with critical material. Equally, it might involve responding to specific critical quotations, such as those that may be used as question focuses. (It may be legitimate to paraphrase these quotations rather than using them in their original form.) This exploration might also involve debating alternative ideas about texts and multiple readings of them, including those of the Learner. ■ The subject content specifies consideration of different interpretations across time, which would suggest engaging with a critical tradition.

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