Controlled Assessment guidance

GCSE English
GCSE English Language
GCSE English Literature

Controlled Assessment replaces coursework for GCSE English from September 2010. It provides a greater level of control than current coursework and has been developed to elicit a fresh response from candidates.

At AQA, our aim is to help make the transition run as smoothly as possible. That's why we've created this guide so you know the basics about Controlled Assessment and how it applies to the new GCSE English specifications.

There are three elements to Controlled Assessment:

• **Task setting – who sets the task, eg the awarding body or the teacher, and what students have to do**

• **Task taking – how the students perform the tasks, including stages such as research, analysis and write-up**

• **Task marking – who does the marking, eg the awarding body or the teacher.**

Each stage has a level of control (high, medium or low) to ensure reliability and authenticity and to make assessments more manageable for teachers and students.

AQA's controlled assessment tasks are designed to offer you maximum flexibility allowing you to:

• **choose texts for all reading assessments**

• **contextualise tasks for all units**

• **timetable the assessment to meet your needs (you can complete the tasks at any point in the course)**

• **offer assessment in January and June (you can enter candidates for units when they are ready).**

In many ways, your preparation will be the same as for coursework. Like coursework, Controlled Assessment allows students to produce an extended personal response.

Task setting

Where task setting is set at high control, we will set the tasks. The exception is Speaking and Listening which is set at limited control.

The tasks will, however, be open enough to allow you to contextualise them for your students.

Tasks will be released each April and issued via our secured extranet, e-AQA. Tasks will change each year. There will, however, always be two years worth of tasks available so you can spread the Controlled Assessment over two years if you wish.

You must make sure that candidates do the correct task for the year they will be entered for the Unit. You should retain the finished pieces of work until you are ready to enter the candidates for the whole Unit.

Examples given in the specimen task banks are purely illustrative. Centres may contextualise tasks by selecting texts which meet the needs of their candidates. This means that you can make the tasks more specific, for example by focussing on particular characters or sections of the text in reading tasks and by giving candidates a particular topic or genre in reading tasks.

Planning and preparation

To prepare students for a controlled assessment task you should teach approaches to the assessment, the chosen topic/text and possibly by studying style models which may include exemplar responses by other students.

You should also ensure that candidates are familiar with the controlled assessment criteria and are aware of the weighting given to each assessment objective as this will help them to understand how their work will be marked.

You will then support and guide candidates through their planning, for example in discussing how they will structure a response in the controlled 'write up' stage. You should avoid, however, giving candidates a pre-prepared plan; candidates should be encouraged to produce their own plans for the task.

Teaching time

The time given in the specification for each controlled assessment unit is the time for writing up the final submission. You can allocate as much time as you wish to planning, but we advise that you allocate teaching time in proportion to the percentage of marks (weighting) allocated to a particular unit. For example, if the Controlled Assessment is worth 10% of the overall mark you are advised to spend 10% of the total teaching time available when teaching that unit.

Planning has to take place under limited supervision which means that:

- **some work can be completed without supervision, outside the classroom/centre**

- **students have access to resources**

- **students can work together**

- **students can receive guidance from teachers.**

Approaching planning and research

Having taught approaches to the topics/texts you should give candidates the relevant task(s). You can do this at any point.

During this time candidates should have access to relevant source materials and may make use of any further resources available in the school or college, including the internet, to inform their preparation. Candidates must keep a record of all the primary and secondary sources (including websites) they use.

Candidates may work with others during the planning phase, for example by discussing their ideas in small groups or sharing resources found on the internet. Each candidate must produce an individual response to the task, though.

Feedback

Candidates may be given feedback during the planning phase. You can review student planning and preparation and provide advice at a general level. The advice can be used to evaluate progress to date and propose broad approaches for improvement. Where this goes beyond general advice, this should be recorded on the candidate record form.

You should not, however:

- **provide detailed/specific advice on how to improve drafts**

- **give detailed feedback on errors/omissions**

- **provide model answers or writing frames.**

Using the Anthologies

Our poetry Anthology, *Moon on the Tides*, may be used for the reading task in the following Controlled Assessment units:

- **English: Unit 3: Understanding and producing creative texts**

- **English Language: Unit 3: Understanding spoken and written texts and writing creatively**

- **English Literature: Unit 5: Exploring poetry.**

Our prose Anthology, *Sunlight on the Grass*, may be used for the reading task in the following Controlled Assessment units:

- **English: Unit 3: Understanding and producing creative texts**

- **English Language: Unit 3: Understanding spoken and written texts and writing creatively.**

Task taking

During the formal stage of writing up the task candidates must be under formal supervision. Formal supervision means that:

- **students must be in direct sight of the supervisor at all times**
- **the use of notes is tightly prescribed and monitored by the supervisor**
- **students must complete all work independently**
- **students must not communicate with each other**
- **no assistance can be given to students.**

Sessions can be divided to fit in with your timetabling requirements and the different needs of candidates. Some candidates may benefit from a series of short sessions, whereas others might be helped by having an extended, uninterrupted attempt at the task. Where the total time is divided, the teacher or invigilator must collect all materials in at the end of each session and return them to candidates at the beginning of the next session. Candidates may not bring any new materials into a session once this phase has started.

Throughout the assessment period, all materials, including mark schemes and student work, must be stored securely, usually in a locked cabinet/cupboard. Work produced over several sessions must be collected at the end of each session and stored securely to ensure it can't be amended between sessions. Work stored on memory sticks etc should also be collected in after each session.

At the end of the Controlled Assessment, the teacher or invigilator must collect in all work, including the final piece of work for assessment and any drafts. The work should be stored securely until moderation.

Notes and drafts

Candidates may take brief notes into the formal assessment period. These must be checked to ensure they do not include plagiarised text, detailed planning grids or a pre-prepared draft. We will provide standard cover sheets for each piece of Controlled Assessment. These cover sheets will have a box which must be used for notes and no other notes may be taken into the assessment.

Candidates may **not** take drafts into the assessment but some candidates **may** choose to produce a draft **during** the assessment period. Any preliminary drafts produced by the candidate during the assessment period must be submitted with the final draft for assessment and moderation.

Feedback should **not** be given on drafts prepared once the assessment period has started.

GCSE English, GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature

Texts

Candidates can use clean, un-annotated copies of texts during the assessment period for any of the reading assessments in the following units:

- **English Language Unit 3: Understanding spoken and written texts and writing creatively, Part a: Extended reading**

- **English Literature Unit 3: The significance of Shakespeare and the English Literary Heritage**

- **English Literature Unit 5: Exploring poetry**

- **English Unit 3: Understanding and producing creative texts, Part a: Understanding creative texts.**

Can students take anything else into the assessment?

Candidates may take data into the assessment for the Spoken Language Study. This may take the form of a written transcript or may be an audio file. If students are working from audio, they will need to use headphones so that other students are not disadvantaged. Candidates would usually transcribe audio data into a written transcript during the planning phase.

Use of a dictionary or thesaurus

During the writing up of the Controlled Assessment, candidates are allowed access to a dictionary, a thesaurus and grammar and spell check programmes for the following units:

- **GCSE English Language: Spoken language study**

- **GCSE English Literature Unit 3: The significance of Shakespeare and the English Literary Heritage**

- **GCSE English Literature Unit 5: Exploring poetry.**

During the writing up of the Controlled Assessment, candidates are not allowed access to a dictionary and a thesaurus nor grammar and spell check programmes for the following units:

- **English Language Unit 3: Understanding spoken and written texts and writing creatively, Part a: Extended reading and Part b: Creative writing**

- **English Unit 3: Understanding and producing creative texts.**

Questions

Do students have to perform the Controlled Assessment in an examination hall?

No. Assessments can take place in supervised sessions in the classroom. Teachers can supervise, although this can also be undertaken by an invigilator if you wish.

Do students need to work individually during the assessment?

Yes. While writing up their response, candidates must work independently and complete all work under formal supervision by a teacher or invigilator. You must record any feedback given to candidates during this phase on the Candidate Record Form.

Can students use PCs to write up their Controlled Assessment?

Yes. Controlled Assessment may be either hand written or produced electronically. Candidates using laptops/PCs to write their Controlled Assessment cannot have access to the internet, e-mail, floppy disks or memory sticks as this could breach the controlled conditions. If the assessment period is divided into a number of shorter sessions, centres should ensure that work is saved securely to ensure that candidates cannot amend or add to it between sessions.

Are oral responses to reading allowed?

No. Oral alternatives are not allowed.

Task marking

Controlled Assessment will be marked by teachers and moderated by us, as coursework is now. The assessment criteria are in the relevant specification for each subject. We will provide training and supporting resources, including exemplar tasks demonstrating performance across bands, to make the introduction of Controlled Assessment as straightforward as possible.

Questions

What happens when a student has not completed a part of a unit? For example, if they have only done one writing task for GCSE English or GCSE English Language Unit 3 or only written about one text for GCSE English Unit 3?

The candidate will be awarded a mark of zero for the missing piece or pieces of work. No further mark reduction will be made.

Are there any penalties incurred for work which is too long?

No. The word limits are for guidance only. There is no penalty for exceeding word limits. Candidates should, however, be aware that a concise, focused answer can meet the assessment criteria and will be very appropriate for some tasks, eg some writing tasks for specific audiences and purposes.

Why are there no grades on the Controlled Assessment marking criteria?

Legacy GCSE English specifications have been unusual in having notional grades attached to mark bands. Almost all other subjects have used bands, without grades attached, for a number of years. In the new specifications, teachers will mark work using the descriptors within the bands, making a judgement on a 'best fit' basis. This judgement will be informed by training given during annual standardisation and through the provision of exemplar materials illustrating performance at each band. Therefore, teachers will still be following the same procedure as they are when marking coursework.

In terms of making predictions about candidate performance, centres are expected to judge the quality of the work of their current year's candidates in comparison to previous years' candidates, for whom they know the grades achieved.

Re-sit rules

Because tasks are replaced every year and there is availability in January and June, may a student who re-sits in June make another attempt at the same task which s/he submitted in January?

Yes.

Can a student who feels that s/he has under-performed in their initial attempt make another attempt at the same task (ie before submission to the awarding body)?

A student is not allowed to make another attempt at the same task, although the student may attempt a different task if the centre is willing to supervise it.

Support

You will be allocated a Controlled Assessment Adviser who will be available to give advice on all aspects of the Controlled Assessment including the marking.

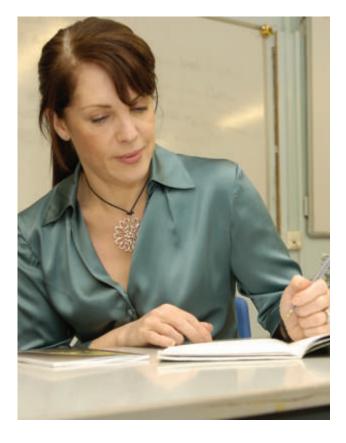### Other issues

How is students' work authenticated?

All students must confirm that the work they submit for assessment is their own by signing the Candidate Record Form (CRF). A completed CRF will be required for each student. Teachers must also confirm by signing the declaration of authenticity that the work is solely that of the student concerned and that it was completed under the required conditions. If a teacher cannot do this, the work should not be accepted for assessment. Centres should record marks of zero if the authenticity of students' work cannot be confirmed. Failure to sign the authentication statement may delay the processing of the students' results.

What happens if students move centres during the course?

It is possible to help candidates who move from one centre to another during the course. Possible solutions depend on the stage at which the move takes place. If the move occurs early in the course, the new centre should take responsibility for Controlled Assessment work. If it occurs late in the course, it may be possible to arrange for the moderator to assess the work through the 'Educated Elsewhere' procedure. Centres should contact us at the earliest possible stage for advice about appropriate arrangements in individual cases.

Will students requiring reasonable adjustments be given the same access arrangements eg extra time as before?

Candidates requiring reasonable adjustments can be assessed. Arrangements must be made before the assessment period. For example, we can produce a Braille Controlled Assessment task bank for a candidate with a visual impairment. Further advice can be obtained from the JCQ booklet 'Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration General and Vocational Qualifications'.

How can excluded pupils and those who cannot attend school for whatever reason do Controlled Assessment?

Candidates who are excluded from mainstream schooling, for whatever reason, can sometimes still do Controlled Assessments, provided suitable arrangements for supervision, authentication, etc can be made. Contact us as soon as possible.

What happens if a student is absent for all or part of their assessment?

Teachers should be able to accommodate the occasional absence by giving students an opportunity to make up the time later. For longer absences, centres should contact us to see whether special consideration can be given. Unless instructed otherwise, teachers must only mark what students produce.

Do the same rules for 'special consideration' apply to Controlled Assessment as to exams?

The rules are not the same in all cases, but broadly candidates who were eligible for special consideration when doing coursework will be eligible when doing Controlled Assessments.

Some centres will have better access to IT, will this affect Controlled Assessments?

Centres have differing resources and this situation is not affected by the introduction of Controlled Assessments.

What happens if a school or student submits the wrong task for the series (ie one which is out of date or applicable to a future series)?

The centre should apply for special consideration to see if the task can be accepted and the marks for the wrong task allowed to stand. We will do all that we can to protect candidates' interests, but in some cases, it might not be possible to accept work based on incorrect tasks. Centres should therefore take very great care to ensure that they give candidates the correct task for the series in which they are going to be entered for awards.

GCSE English

Unit 2: Speaking and Listening

Task setting: limited control (centre sets the task)

Task taking: medium control (formal supervision)

Task marking: medium control (centre marked/ AQA moderated)

	Task setting	Task taking	Task marking
High control			
Medium control		✔	✔
Limited control	✔		

Summary: candidates do three tasks: presenting, discussing and role-playing.

The assessments can take place at any point in the course.

Unit 3: Part a: Understanding creative texts (literary reading)

Task setting: high control (we set the task/centre chooses texts)*

Task taking: medium control (formal supervision)

Task marking: medium control (centre marked/ AQA moderated)

*Tasks are chosen from the bank of tasks and can be contextualised. They will be available in April for the following academic year. You may give the tasks to candidates when you are ready.

	Task setting	Task taking	Task marking
High control	✔		
Medium control		✔	✔
Limited control			

Summary: candidates study three texts: Shakespeare (drama); a text from the English Literary Heritage (prose or poetry); a text from a different culture (poetry or prose).

Candidates will do one task (on all three texts). They do not have to study or write about the texts in the same period of time. This means that they may, for example, write about each of the texts in different months or different terms. There is no need to make comparisons or draw links between the texts.

Teaching time: 20% of the total course (approx 26 hours)**

Assessment time: up to 4 hours***

Word count: up to 1600 words****

Resources allowed: clean texts, brief notes

** for all three texts – this time may be spread throughout the course

*** for writing about all three texts – this time may be spread throughout the course

**** in total across writing about all three texts. The texts should be treated at equal length with 500-600 words per text being a good guide.

Unit 3: Part b: Producing creative texts (creative writing)

Task setting: high control (we set the task/ centre chooses texts)*

Task taking: medium control (formal supervision)

Task marking: medium control (centre marked/AQA moderated)

*Tasks are chosen from the bank of tasks and can be contextualised. They will be available in April for the following academic year. You may give the tasks to candidates when you are ready.

	Task setting	Task taking	Task marking
High control	✔		
Medium control		✔	✔
Limited control			

Summary: candidates do two tasks. They do not have to do both pieces of writing in the same period of time.

Teaching time: 20% of the total course (approx 26 hours)**

Assessment time: 3-4 hours***
Word count: up to 1600 words****

** for both tasks – this time may be spread throughout the course

*** for both tasks – this time may be spread throughout the course

**** in total across both tasks.

GCSE English Language

Unit 2: Speaking and Listening

Task setting: limited control (centre sets the task)

Task taking: medium control (formal supervision)

Task marking: medium control (centre marked/ AQA moderated)

	Task setting	Task taking	Task marking
High control			
Medium control		✔	✔
Limited control	✔		

Summary: candidates do three tasks: presenting, discussing and role-playing.

The assessments can take place at any point in the course.

Unit 3: Part a: Understanding written texts (extended reading)

Task setting: high control (we set the task/centre chooses texts)*

Task taking: medium control (formal supervision)

Task marking: medium control (centre marked/ AQA moderated)

*Tasks are chosen from the bank of tasks and can be contextualised. They will be available in April for the following academic year. You may give the tasks to candidates when you are ready.

	Task setting	Task taking	Task marking
High control	✔		
Medium control		✔	✔
Limited control			

Summary: candidates study one text which may be one of the texts they are studying for GCSE English Literature.

Teaching time: 15% of the total course (approx 20 hours)

Assessment time: up to 4 hours

Word count: up to 1200 words

Resources allowed: clean texts, brief notes

Unit 3: Part b: Producing creative texts (creative writing)

Task setting: high control (we set the task/centre chooses texts)*

Task taking: medium control (formal supervision)

Task marking: medium control (centre marked/AQA moderated)

*Tasks are chosen from the bank of tasks and can be contextualised. They will be available in April for the following academic year. You may give the tasks to candidates when you are ready.

	Task setting	Task taking	Task marking
High control	✔		
Medium control		✔	✔
Limited control			

Summary: candidates do two tasks. They do not have to do both pieces of writing in the same period of time.

Teaching time: 15% of the total course (approx 20 hours)**

Assessment time: up to 4 hours***

Word count: up to 1200 words****

** for both tasks – this time may be spread throughout the course

*** for both tasks – this time may be spread throughout the course

**** in total across both tasks.

Unit 3: Part c: Studying spoken language

Task setting: high control (we set the task/centre chooses texts)*

Task taking: medium control (formal supervision)

Task marking: medium control (centre marked/AQA moderated)

*One task is chosen from the bank of tasks and can be contextualised. Tasks will be available in April for the following academic year. You may give the tasks to candidates when you are ready.

	Task setting	Task taking	Task marking
High control	✔		
Medium control		✔	✔
Limited control			

Summary: candidates submit one spoken language study chosen from the topics in this unit

Teaching time: 10% of the total course (approx 13 hours)

Assessment time: up to 3 hours

Word count: 800-1000 words

GCSE English Literature

Unit 3: The significance of Shakespeare and the English Literary Heritage

Task setting: high control (we set the task/ centre chooses texts)*

Task taking: medium control (formal supervision)

Task marking: medium control (centre marked/ AQA moderated)

*Tasks are chosen from the bank of tasks and can be contextualised. They will be available in April for the following academic year. You may give the tasks to candidates when you are ready.

	Task setting	Task taking	Task marking
High control	✔		
Medium control		✔	✔
Limited control			

Summary: candidates study two texts: Shakespeare and a text from the English Literary Heritage. Both texts will be suitable for the chosen task, making them implicitly linked. Candidates do not have to make comparisons between the texts and the texts can be written about in the same period of time or at different times.

Teaching time: 25% of the total course (approx 32 hours)

Assessment time: up to 4 hours

Word count: up to 2000 words

Resources allowed: clean texts, brief notes, dictionary and thesaurus

OR, Unit 5: Exploring poetry

Task setting: high control (we set the task/centre chooses texts)*

Task taking: medium control (formal supervision)

Task marking: medium control (centre marked/ AQA moderated)

*Tasks are chosen from the bank of tasks and can be contextualised. They will be available in April for the following academic year. You may give the tasks to candidates when you are ready.

	Task setting	Task taking	Task marking
High control	✔		
Medium control		✔	✔
Limited control			

Summary: candidates study two texts (groups of poems) – one group of contemporary poems and one group of poems from the Literary Heritage. Both texts will be suitable for the chosen task, making them implicitly linked. Candidates do have to make comparisons between the texts in this unit.

Teaching time: 25% of the total course (approx 32 hours)

Assessment time: up to 4 hours

Word count: up to 2000 words

Resources allowed: clean texts, brief notes, a dictionary and thesaurus

We can offer you all the support and resources you need to get 2010 ready:

- **English Resource Zone** with all the material you need for planning with our *5 Steps to Success*. See **aqa.org.uk/englishzone** for:
  - specifications, specimen question papers, mark schemes and controlled assessment task banks and guidance
  - guidance to help you plan your course – English Language/Literature long term planning grids, English and media planning grids
  - free resources and schemes of work for new content and texts
  - examples of candidate answers and examiner commentary for written papers and controlled assessment tasks.
- **free Preparing to Teach meetings** giving in-depth advice and support for teaching
- **Events Zone** including presentations and materials from our events for downloading and sharing with colleagues. See **2010ready.aqa.org.uk/eventszone**
- **Local Support Networks** with your personal contacts offering support and advice through the changes to ensure you are 2010 ready. See **2010ready.aqa.org.uk/englishnetwork**

We are here to help you

For further information or advice please contact the AQA GCSE English department at:

Tel: **0161 953 7504**

e-mail: **english-gcse@aqa.org.uk**

aqa.org.uk/englishzone

This document is available online at **aqa.org.uk/english zone**

All you need when teaching

- Free **Anthology** in print and Digital version with interactive resources that you can amend, annotate and save. See **anthology.aqa.org.uk**
- Free **Enhanced Results Analysis** tool to give you access to question papers, mark schemes and examiner reports on results day and save you time when analysing your students' results. See **aqa.org.uk/era**
- **Resources from Nelson Thornes and other publishers** to support the specification
- **Ongoing support and advice** from the English subject team
- **Controlled Assessment Advisers** to answer your queries relating to task setting and marking
- **Meetings to support you with Controlled Assessment** and written papers
- **Continuing Professional Development courses** focusing on particular areas of the curriculum.

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