AQA

ENTRY LEVEL CERTIFICATE
STEP UP TO ENGLISH

(5970)

Specification
For teaching from September 2015 onwards
For exams in June 2016 onwards

Version 1.2 10 September 2019

Contents

Are you using the latest version of this specification?

- You will always find the most up-to-date version of this specification on our website at aqa.org.uk/5970
- We will write to you if there are significant changes to the specification.

1 Introduction

1.1 Why choose AQA for Entry Level Certificate Step Up to English

You can find out about all our Step Up to English qualifications at aqa.org.uk/english

A specification designed for you and your students

Entry Level Certificates are nationally recognised qualifications that give students the opportunity to achieve a certified award. Our assessments are designed to inspire and motivate your students, providing appropriate stretch and challenge whilst ensuring that the assessment and texts are accessible to Entry Level students.

The specification will encourage Entry Level students to develop the skills they need to read and understand a range of texts as well as to write clearly, coherently and accurately using a range of vocabulary and sentence structures.

The qualification can be tailored to students' needs through either Silver Step or Gold Step. Silver Step is aimed at Entry 1 and Entry 2 students and Gold Step is for Entry 3 students looking to progress to GCSE. We have provided clear progression and GCSE-ready level descriptors.

Dynamic and engaging content

The qualification offers non-exam assessment (NEA) which supports an engaging and supportive learning and assessment experience for Entry Level students. The specification offers two components in both steps, which each assess reading and writing. Spoken language is included in Component 1 and contributes to the overall mark.

Each component thematically links reading and writing and supports high-quality provision and engaging teaching and learning.

- Component 1, Literacy Topics, is transactional in nature and will ask students to complete a number of tasks based around a theme.
- Component 2, Creative Reading and Writing, is literary in nature and students will be asked to respond to excerpts from literary and literary non-fiction texts and write creatively.

Skills-based approach

The specification offers a skills-based approach to the study of English and literacy. Assessment is on-demand as tasks are available throughout the academic year on the secure area of our website. You can download them whenever you think a student has acquired the skills needed. However, students will still need to be entered and certificated in a particular series.

Teach Step Up to English and GCSE together

The specification is fully co-teachable with GCSE English Language. Entry Level students who choose to study both will benefit from the transferable skills developed across the two specifications. The assessment objectives (AOs) are based on the GCSE English Language objectives; Entry Level descriptors of achievement have been matched to these, giving threads of

learning running right through Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3 to GCSE. This allows you to focus your teaching on the same AOs with both Entry Level and GCSE students.

We're behind you every step of the way

We have consulted teachers and subject experts to ensure the specification meets the needs of you and your students.

The GCSE-ready descriptors offer excellent preparation for GCSE English Language by allowing teachers to easily identify when a student has developed the skills they need to progress to the GCSE. It will also equip your students with essential life-skills and a progression route for future employment.

The assessment method will provide a straightforward but flexible approach which fosters high-quality teaching and learning and will aim for clarity so that you can focus on your students rather than administration.

With Step Up to English your students will receive the award that fairly represents their attainment and reflects the skills that they have demonstrated.

You can find out about all our English qualifications at aqa.org.uk/english

1.2 Support and resources to help you teach

We've worked with experienced teachers to provide you with a range of resources that will help you confidently plan, teach and prepare for exams.

Teaching resources

Visit aqa.org.uk/5970 to see all our teaching resources. They include:

- exemplar plans to show co-teachability resources
- suggested activities for lessons
- standardising materials
- training courses to help you deliver AQA Step Up to English qualifications
- subject expertise courses for all teachers, from newly-qualified teachers who are just getting started to experienced teachers looking for fresh inspiration.

Analyse your students' results with Enhanced Results Analysis (ERA)

Find out which questions were the most challenging, how the results compare to previous years and where your students need to improve. ERA, our free online results analysis tool, will help you see where to focus your teaching. Register at aqa.org.uk/era

For information about results, including maintaining standards over time, grade boundaries and our post-results services, visit aqa.org.uk/results

Keep your skills up-to-date with professional development

Wherever you are in your career, there's always something new to learn. As well as subject-specific training, we offer a range of courses to help boost your skills.

- Improve your teaching skills in areas including differentiation, teaching literacy and meeting Ofsted requirements.
- Prepare for a new role with our leadership and management courses.

You can attend a course at venues around the country, in your school or online – whatever suits your needs and availability. Find out more at coursesandevents.aqa.org.uk

Get help and support

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at aqa.org.uk/5970

You can talk directly to the Step Up to English subject team:

E: english-gcse@aqa.org.uk

T: 0161 9537504

2 Specification at a glance

This qualification is linear. Linear means that all assessments are submitted at the end of the course.

2.1 Subject content

1 Reading and comprehension

2 Writing

3 Spoken Language

2.2 Assessments

2.2.1 Silver Step

Component 1: Literacy topics
What's assessed: **Spoken language task**   • Presenting   • Responding to questions and feedback   **Reading tasks**   Three transactional texts   **Writing task**   Transactional writing
How it's assessed   • Students should complete and submit **two** topics   • Externally-set non-exam assessment: up to 1 hour and 30 minutes   • 60 marks per topic, 120 marks per component   • 50% of Step Up to English

Component 1: Literacy topics

Tasks

Spoken language (12 marks)

One task

Reading (24 marks)

- three linked reading tasks
- short form questions

Writing (24 marks)

One longer form writing task

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Component 2: Creative reading and writing

What's assessed:

Section A Reading

Two literary texts

Section B Writing

Creative writing

How it's assessed

- Students should complete **one** paper
- Externally-set non-exam assessment: up to 1 hour and 30 minutes
- 60 marks
- 50% of Step Up to English

Tasks

Reading (30 marks)

- two linked texts
- short form questions

Writing (30 marks)

One longer form writing task

2.2.2 Gold Step

Component 1: Literacy topics

What's assessed:

Spoken language task

- presenting
- responding to questions and feedback

Reading tasks

Three transactional texts

Writing task

Transactional writing

How it's assessed

- Students should complete and submit **two** topics
- Externally-set non-exam assessment: up to 1 hour 30 minutes
- 60 marks per topic, 120 marks per component
- 50% of Step Up to English

Tasks

Spoken language (12 marks)

One task

Reading (24 marks)

- three linked reading tasks
- short form questions

Writing (24 marks)

One extended writing task

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Component 2: Creative reading and writing

What's assessed:

Section A Reading

Two literary texts (from 19th, 20th, 21st century)

Section B Writing

Creative writing

Component 2: Creative reading and writing
How it's assessed • Students should complete **one** paper • Externally-set non-exam assessment: up to 1 hour 30 minutes • 60 marks • 50% of Step Up to English
Tasks **Reading (30 marks)** • two linked texts • short form questions **Writing (30 marks)** One extended writing task

3 Subject content

Students will draw upon a range of texts as reading stimuli and engage with creative as well as real and relevant contexts. Students will have opportunities to develop reading and critical thinking skills that encourage enquiry into different topics and themes.

For Step Up to English students should:

- read, with some understanding, a range of texts, including literature and literary non-fiction as well as other writing such as letters and leaflets
- read and make comparisons between texts, explaining personal preferences where relevant
- locate and explain information or ideas from texts
- write effectively and coherently using English appropriately
- use grammar correctly and punctuate and spell accurately
- acquire and develop an appropriate vocabulary in writing and spoken language
- listen to and understand spoken language and use spoken English effectively.

This specification will encourage students to read fluently and write effectively. Students will be able to demonstrate a confident control of spoken English and write grammatically correct sentences.

3.1 Scope of study

Based on the criteria for GCSE English Language, Step Up to English will require students to study the following content:

3.1.1 Reading and comprehension

- Reading and comprehension: identifying and interpreting themes, ideas and information in literature and other writing; reading in different ways for different purposes and comparing and evaluating content for these purposes; drawing inferences; expressing a point of view sometimes supported by evidence.
- Commenting on writer's choice of vocabulary, form, grammatical and structural features.
- Comparing texts: identifying similarities and differences between two texts.

3.1.2 Writing

- Producing clear and coherent text: writing for different purposes and audiences; to describe, narrate, explain, instruct, give and respond to information, and argue; selecting vocabulary, grammar, form and structural and organisational features to reflect audience, purpose and context; using language imaginatively and creatively; using information provided by others to write in different forms; maintaining a consistent point of view; maintaining coherence and consistency across a text.
- Writing for impact: selecting, organising and emphasising facts, ideas and key points; creating emotional impact; using language creatively, imaginatively and persuasively.

3.1.3 Spoken language

- Presenting information and ideas: selecting and organising information and ideas effectively and persuasively for prepared spoken presentations; planning effectively for different purposes and audiences; making presentations and speeches.
- Responding to spoken language: listening to and responding appropriately to any questions and feedback.
- Spoken English: expressing ideas using Standard English whenever and wherever appropriate.

4 Scheme of assessment

Find mark schemes and specimen tasks for new courses at aqa.org.uk/english. Assessments for this specification are available on-demand on the secure area of the website e-AQA. Certification for this specification is available for the first time in June 2016 and then every January and June for the lifetime of the specification.

All materials are available in English only.

4.1 Aims and learning outcomes

Courses based on this specification should encourage students to:

- read, with some understanding, a range of texts, including literature and literary non-fiction as well as other writing such as letters and leaflets
- read and make comparisons between texts, explaining personal preferences where relevant
- locate and explain information or ideas from texts
- write effectively and coherently using Standard English appropriately
- use grammar correctly and punctuate and spell accurately
- acquire and develop an appropriate vocabulary in writing and spoken language
- listen to and understand spoken language and use spoken Standard English whenever and wherever appropriate.

4.2 Assessment objectives

The assessment objectives for this specification are set by AQA and based on those for GCSE English Language. This is so that the specification mirrors what students need at GCSE and enables progression and co-teachability.

AO1: Read and understand a range of texts:

- Identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas.

AO2: Explain and comment on how writers use language and structure to achieve effects and influence readers, using relevant subject terminology to support views.

AO3: Compare writers' ideas and perspectives.

AO4: Evaluate texts and support this with appropriate textual references.

AO5:

- Communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style and register for different forms, purposes and audiences.
- Organise information and ideas, using structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion of texts.

AO6: Use vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.

AO7: Demonstrate presentation skills.

AO8: Listen and respond appropriately to spoken language, including to questions and feedback on presentations.

AO9: Use spoken English effectively in speeches and presentations.

4.2.1 Assessment objective weightings for GCSE Step Up to English

4.2.1.1 Silver Step

Assessment Objectives (AOs)	Component weightings		Overall weighting (approx. %)
	Component 1	Component 2	
AO1	13	15	28
AO2	3	5	8
AO3	N/A	5	5
AO4	4	N/A	4
AO5	13	15	28
AO6	7	10	17
AO7/8/9	10	N/A	10
Overall weighting of components	50	50	100

4.2.1.2 Gold Step

Assessment Objectives (AOs)	Component weightings (approx %)		Overall weighting (approx. %)
	Component 1	Component 2	
AO1	12	10	22
AO2	2	8	10
AO3	N/A	7	7
AO4	6	N/A	6
AO5	13	15	28
AO6	7	10	17
AO7/8/9	10	N/A	10
Overall weighting of components	50	50	100

4.3 Assessment weightings

The marks awarded on the papers will be scaled to meet the weighting of the components. Students' final marks will be calculated by adding together the scaled marks for each component. Grade boundaries will be set using this total scaled mark. The scaling and total scaled marks are shown in the table below.

Component	Maximum raw mark	Scaling factor	Maximum scaled mark
Component 1: Literacy Topics	120	x1	120
Component 2: Creative Reading and Writing	60	x2	120
Total scaled mark			240

4.4 Requirements

The scheme of assessment allows attainment to be recognised at Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3.

All components are made up of externally-set tasks. The Silver Step components cover Entry 1 and Entry 2 and the Gold Step components cover Entry 3.

The two components within each step are compulsory and all assessment must be completed in order to be eligible for an award.

The components must be taken under controlled conditions, directly supervised by the teacher.

The components may be taken in any order and at any time throughout the course. It is not a requirement that all students within a centre do a task at the same time; this is at the discretion of the centre.

Students may be given one page at a time and complete the task at different sittings should they wish.

Students may not make more than one attempt at the same externally-set task for a component, although they may attempt a different task if they fail to complete the first task.

Students cannot mix Silver Step and Gold Step components.

Once a student has completed an externally-set task, it must be kept securely until required for moderation.

4.4.1 Component 1: Literacy topics

The aim of this component is to introduce students to literacy skills by:

- offering familiar and engaging transactional topics based in the real world
- structuring the topics so that they can be built up as a module of work over a number of sessions
- giving students at this level a route into study through the accessible nature of spoken language.

The topics will assess AO1, AO2 and AO4 for Reading, AO5 and AO6 for Writing and AO7, AO8 and AO9 for Spoken language. Within each topic, Reading and Writing are equally weighted with 24 marks available for each and 12 marks are allocated to Spoken language.

Each topic is based around a theme. Spoken language tasks are offered at the beginning of the topics where students develop the skills they need to tackle the rest of the component through the preparation and delivery of a presentation. Students will read three real-life texts such as adverts, leaflets and webpages and then respond to questions based on these. They will complete one transactional writing task such as writing an email or letter.

Students will attempt two of the literacy topics provided by AQA. Each task has a maximum mark of 60. Both topics should be submitted to the moderator.

4.4.2 Component 2: Creative reading and writing

The aim of this component is to engage students in creative texts and inspire them to write creatively themselves by:

- reading two texts which could be fiction or literary non-fiction
- writing their own creative text, inspired by the topic they have responded to in reading.

This component will assess AO1, AO2 and AO3 for Reading and AO5 and AO6 for Writing. Reading and Writing are equally weighted with 30 marks available for each.

The Reading texts will be literature, literary or literary non-fiction. At Gold Step these texts will be from the 19th, 20th or 21st centuries in order to prepare students for the challenges of GCSE. For Writing, students have a choice of two tasks, which will include a visual prompt and will be related to the topic of the reading texts.

Students will attempt one of the tasks provided by AQA. Each task has a maximum mark of 60.

5 Assessment administration

All assessment for this qualification is non-exam assessment (NEA). You can find information about all aspects of NEA, as well as all the forms you need, at aqa.org.uk/examsadmin

The head of the school or college is responsible for making sure that NEA is conducted in line with our instructions and Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) instructions.

5.1 Supervising and authenticating

To meet Ofqual's qualification and subject criteria:

- students must sign the front of the assessment booklets for each component and confirm that the work submitted is their own
- all teachers who have marked a student's work must sign the declaration of authentication on the front of the assessment booklets for each component. This is to confirm that the work is solely that of the student concerned and was conducted under the conditions laid down by this specification
- teachers must ensure that the booklets for each component are submitted to the moderator.

Students must have some direct supervision to ensure that the work submitted can be confidently authenticated as their own. If a student receives additional assistance and this is acceptable within the guidelines for this specification, you should award a mark that represents the student's unaided achievement. Please make a note of the support the student received on the front of the assessment booklet and sign the authentication statement. If the statement is not signed, we cannot accept the student's work for assessment.

5.2 Avoiding malpractice

Please inform your students of the AQA regulations concerning malpractice. They must not:

- submit work that is not their own
- lend work to other students
- allow other students access to, or use of, their own independently-sourced source material
- include work copied directly from books, the internet or other sources without acknowledgement
- submit work that is word-processed by a third person without acknowledgement
- include inappropriate, offensive or obscene material.

These actions constitute malpractice and a penalty will be given (for example, disqualification).

If you identify malpractice **before** the student signs the declaration of authentication, you don't need to report it to us. Please deal with it in accordance with your school or college's internal procedures. We expect schools and colleges to treat such cases very seriously.

If you identify malpractice **after** the student has signed the declaration of authentication, the head of your school or college must submit full details of the case to us at the earliest opportunity. Please complete the form *JCQ/M1*, available from the JCQ website at jcq.org.uk

You must record details of any work which is not the student's own on the front of the assessment booklet or other appropriate place.

You should consult your exams officer about these procedures.

5.3 Teacher standardisation

We will provide support for using the marking criteria and developing appropriate tasks through teacher standardisation.

For further information about teacher standardisation visit our website at aqa.org.uk/5970

In the following situations teacher standardisation is essential. We will send you an invitation to complete teacher standardisation if:

- moderation from the previous year indicates a serious misinterpretation of the requirements
- a significant adjustment was made to the marks in the previous year
- your school or college is new to this specification.

For further support and advice please speak to your adviser. Email your subject team at english-gcse@aqa.org.uk for details of your adviser.

5.4 Task setting, task taking and task marking

5.4.1 Task setting

Each year AQA will provide a choice of five tasks for each component for Silver Step and Gold Step. One of these tasks will be replaced annually. Schools and colleges are required to submit two tasks for Component 1 and one task for Component 2. Schools and colleges are able to contextualise by choosing which of the tasks are most suited to their students.

Assessment can take place at any point during the course of study. Students can be assessed on a given task only once. Students should not be permitted access to the tasks until the final assessment.

5.4.2 Task taking

Tasks should take place under controlled conditions and formal supervision. Students must produce work within the time stated in the assessment booklet.

For the Spoken language element of Component 1, students must be assessed by a teacher either directly at the time of the response or by viewing an electronic visual recording of a student's response. Prompts or visual slides may be used in addition to any resources you provide.

5.4.3 Task marking

You must mark the assessment tasks using the mark schemes provided by AQA. After the first awards meeting, schools and colleges will be informed of the existing level boundaries although these boundaries will be subject to the agreement of AQA's Award of Grades committee and may consequently change. Schools and colleges should therefore mark only against the criteria.

You should use your judgement to select and apply the criteria appropriately and fairly to the work of the students. NEA will be moderated by AQA according to the procedures outlined in Section 5.9

To meet Ofqual's qualification and subject criteria, you must show clearly how marks were awarded against the assessment criteria in this specification.

Your comments should be recorded in the assessment booklet and they will help the moderator see where you think the students have met the assessment criteria.

5.5 Internal standardisation

You must ensure that you have consistent marking standards for all students. One person must manage this process and they must sign the *Centre declaration sheet* to confirm that internal standardisation has taken place.

Internal standardisation may involve:

- all teachers marking some sample pieces of work to identify differences in marking standards
- discussing any differences in marking at a training meeting for all teachers involved
- referring to reference and archive material, such as previous work or examples from our teacher standardisation.

5.6 Submitting marks

You must check that the correct marks are written on the front cover of the NEA task booklet. The Candidate record form (CRF) is incorporated into the task booklet, which is held on e-AQA in Secure Key Materials (SKM) and isn't available as a separate document. When submitting marks you should submit the individual marks for each NEA task and not the cumulative mark.

The deadline for submitting the total mark for each student is given at aqa.org.uk/keydates

Copies of all forms and details of submission can be found at aqa.org.uk/coursework

5.7 Factors affecting individual students

For advice and guidance about arrangements for any of your students, please email us as early as possible at eos@aqa.org.uk

Occasional absence: you should be able to accept the occasional absence of students by making sure they have the chance to make up what they have missed. You may organise an alternative supervised session for students who were absent at the time you originally arranged.

Lost work: if work is lost you must tell us how and when it was lost and who was responsible, using our special consideration online service at aqa.org.uk/eaqa

Special help: where students need special help which goes beyond normal learning support, please use the front of the assessment booklet to tell us so that this help can be taken into account during moderation.

Students who move schools: students who move from one school or college to another during the course sometimes need additional help to meet the requirements. How you deal with this depends on when the move takes place. If it happens early in the course, the new school or college should be responsible for the work. If it happens late in the course, it may be possible to arrange for the moderator to assess the work as a student who was 'Educated Elsewhere'.

5.8 Keeping students' work

Students' work must be kept under secure conditions from the time that it is marked. After the moderation period and the deadline for Enquiries about Results (or once any enquiry is resolved) you may return the work to students.

5.9 Moderation

You must send all your students' marks to us by the date given at aqa.org.uk/deadlines. You will be asked to send a sample of your students' NEA evidence to your moderator.

You must show clearly how marks have been awarded against the assessment criteria in this specification. Your comments must help the moderator see, as precisely as possible, where you think the students have met the assessment criteria. You must:

- record the appropriate details where required in each task booklet
- check that the correct marks are written on the Candidate Record Form (CRF) and that the total is correct.

The moderator re-marks a sample of the evidence and compares this with the marks you have provided to check whether any changes are needed to bring the marking in line with our agreed standards. Any changes to marks will normally keep your rank order but, where major inconsistencies are found, we reserve the right to change the rank order.

5.9.1 School and college consortia

If you are in a consortium of schools or colleges with joint teaching arrangements (where students from different schools and colleges have been taught together but entered through the school or college at which they are on roll), you must let us know by:

- filling in the *Application for Centre Consortium Arrangements for centre-assessed work*, which is available from the JCQ website.
- appointing a consortium co-ordinator who can speak to us on behalf of all schools and colleges in the consortium. If there are different co-ordinators for different specifications, a copy of the form must be sent in for each specification.

We will allocate the same moderator to all schools and colleges in the consortium and treat the students as a single group for moderation.

All the work must be available at the lead school or college.

5.10 After moderation

We will return your students' work to you after the exams. You will also receive a report when the results are issued, which will give feedback on the appropriateness of the tasks set, interpretation of the marking criteria and how students performed in general.

We will give you the final marks when the results are issued.

To meet Ofqual requirements, as well as for awarding, archiving or standardisation purposes, we may need to keep some of your students' work. We will let you know if we need to do this.

6 General administration

You can find information about all aspects of administration, as well as all the forms you need, at aqa.org.uk/examsadmin

6.1 Entries and codes

You only need to make one entry for the qualification for whichever step you choose – this will cover all the non-exam assessment and certification.

Every specification is given a national discount (classification) code by the Department for Education (DfE), which indicates its subject area.

Entry title	AQA entry code
ELC Step Up to English Silver Step	5972
ELC Step Up to English Gold Step	5973

Both of these entry options will lead to the same qualification. The title of the qualification is AQA ELC Step Up to English.

This specification complies with Ofqual's:

- *Criteria for Entry Level qualifications*
- *General conditions of recognition* that apply to all regulated qualifications
- all other relevant regulatory documents.

6.1.1 Availability of tasks and certification

For security purposes, externally-set tasks will be available on e-AQA. The tasks are not timetabled, but are done at a time chosen to suit the school or college. The tasks should be kept under secure conditions when not in use.

Certification for this specification is available for the first time in June 2016 and then January and June for the lifetime of the specification.

6.2 Overlaps with other qualifications

There is some overlap with AQA's ELC Adult Literacy (until June 2016) and AQA's Functional Skills English at Entry 1/2/3 (until June 2017) qualifications.

6.3 Awarding grades and reporting results

The qualification will be graded and awarded at Entry 1 or Entry 2 for students entered for Silver Step and at Entry 3 for students entered for Gold Step.

Students who fail to reach the minimum standard for the step at which they are entered will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate.

GCSE-ready descriptors are included in this specification. The qualification cannot be awarded at this level but the descriptors can be used by teachers as a diagnostic tool to identify when a student may be ready to move on to GCSE.

6.4 Resits and shelf life

Students can resit the qualification as many times as they wish, within the shelf life of the qualification.

6.5 Previous learning and prerequisites

There are no previous learning requirements. Any requirements for entry to a course based on this specification are at the discretion of schools and colleges.

6.6 Access to assessment: diversity and inclusion

General qualifications are designed to prepare students for a wide range of occupations and further study. Therefore our qualifications must assess a wide range of competences.

The subject criteria have been assessed to see if any of the skills or knowledge required present any possible difficulty to any students, whatever their ethnic background, religion, sex, age, disability or sexuality. If any difficulties were encountered, the criteria were reviewed again to make sure that tests of specific competences were only included if they were important to the subject.

As members of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) we participate in the production of the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments: General and Vocational qualifications*. We follow these guidelines when assessing the needs of individual students who may require an access arrangement or reasonable adjustment. This document is published on the JCQ website at jcq.org.uk

6.6.1 Students with disabilities and special needs

We can make arrangements for disabled students and students with special needs to help them access the assessments, as long as the competences being tested are not changed. Access arrangements must be agreed **before** the assessment. For example, a Braille paper would be a reasonable adjustment for a Braille reader but not for a student who does not read Braille.

We are required by the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to remove or lessen any disadvantage that affects a disabled student.

If you have students who need access arrangements or reasonable adjustments, you can apply using the Access arrangements online service at aqa.org.uk/eaqa

6.6.2 Special consideration

We can give special consideration to students who have been disadvantaged at the time of the assessment through no fault of their own – for example a temporary illness, injury or serious problem such as the death of a relative. We can only do this **after** the assessment.

Your exams officer should apply online for special consideration at aqa.org.uk/eaqa

For more information and advice about access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration please see aqa.org.uk/access or email accessarrangementsqueries@aqa.org.uk

6.7 Working with AQA for the first time

If your school or college has not previously offered any AQA specification, you need to register as an AQA centre to offer our specifications to your students. Find out how at aqa.org.uk/becomeacentre

6.8 Private candidates

A private candidate is someone who enters for exams through an AQA-approved school or college but is not enrolled as a student there.

This specification is **not** available to private candidates.

7 Level descriptions

These descriptions give a general indication of the standards of achievement at each level. They should be interpreted in relation to the content outlined in the subject content section of this specification.

The grade awarded will depend on how well the student has met the assessment objectives and these descriptors. If a student has performed less well in some areas, this may be balanced by better performance in others.

GCSE-ready descriptors have been added to this specification. The qualification cannot be awarded at this level but the descriptors can be used by teachers as a diagnostic tool to identify when a student may be ready to move on to GCSE.

7.1 GCSE-ready

AO1

- Read and understand a range of texts showing consideration to an audience.
- Use a wide range of strategies to tackle more difficult words in a variety of texts eg knowledge of suffixes and prefixes, grammatical knowledge, inference from words within the sentence.
- Demonstrate a firm understanding of significant points in a wide variety of texts eg ideas, themes, events, settings and character with detailed explanation.
- Locate and use ideas and information eg refer to the text to support their views.
- Be able to make inferences and deductions based on significant ideas, themes, events, and characters.
- Refer to the text when explaining or summarising to support their views.

AO2

- Begin to show awareness of the writer's craft eg identify words or phrases that create atmosphere or build character, identify alliteration, simple similes and simple colloquialisms.
- Begin to show awareness of structure.

AO3

- Identify similarities and differences between significant ideas, themes, events and characters in two texts and make reference to the text to support their views eg 'we know the character was … because…. This is the same in… because…'

AO4

- Express personal opinions and ideas showing awareness of the writers' viewpoint eg 'I liked it when…I think the writer did this because…'

AO5

- Demonstrate a handwriting style which is fluent and legible eg writes at speed using own handwriting style which is usually joined.
- Organise writing appropriately for the purpose of the reader eg develops different writing genres (narrative, scripts, poem, email etc.) and shows awareness in style of different audiences (formal, informal).
- Sequence ideas often in a sustained, developed and interesting way eg grammatically complex and compound sentences to extend meaning, connectives to link ideas and paragraphs, evidence of a plan.

AO6

- Spell words generally accurately, including polysyllabic words that conform to regular patterns eg common prefixes 'un', 'anti' and suffixes 'able', 'ed', 'less', consonant doubling, high and some medium frequency words etc.
- Use full stops, capital letters, commas, speech marks and question marks accurately. Punctuation within sentences is beginning to develop eg apostrophes or brackets may be used but not always accurately.
- Make adventurous and effective choice of vocabulary eg to indicate a change of pace and tone 'suddenly', string of adjectives 'dark, grimy room'.

AO7

- Talk with confidence in a presentation eg in an formal context about personal experiences or a hobby.
- Adapt talk to purpose: developing ideas thoughtfully, describing events and conveying opinions clearly eg adapt complexity of their language depending on who they are speaking to.
- Use exaggeration, intonation, humour, pace and appropriate body language when presenting.

AO8

- Listen carefully in a range of different contexts eg in familiar and unfamiliar settings, in a range of group sizes and to a range of familiar and unfamiliar speakers.
- Make contributions and ask questions that are responsive to others' views and ideas eg ask questions about peoples' views and give reasons for their own viewpoint.
- Show respect for other peoples' views eg by acknowledging that although someone may have a different opinion or idea it is still valid.

AO9

- Use appropriately some of the features of Standard English vocabulary and grammar eg passive structures and embedded clauses.

7.2 Entry 3

AO1

- Read fluently, accurately and with expression.
- Use a range of strategies to tackle words in a variety of texts eg phonetic structure, initial and final clusters, long vowel sounds, prefixes and suffixes.

- Demonstrate an understanding of the main points in a variety of texts eg characters, setting, theme with some explanation.
- Locate key points in texts eg note some differences between two newspaper reports on the same story.
- Make inferences based on a single piece of textual detail eg in a longer text answer questions about character's actions or make predictions about feelings.
- Interpret at a literal level.

AO2

- Identify some features of the language used by the writer, often without comment eg identify adjectives, verbs and dialogue.

AO3

- Identify similarities and differences between character, an event, theme or presentation in two texts eg 'in both texts the girls are happy. xxx is always laughing and xxx smiles a lot'.

AO4

- Express personal preferences with a limited awareness of the writer's viewpoint or impact eg 'I didn't like it when … because I felt scared. I do not like horror'.

AO5

- Write legibly eg may choose to join letters, beginning to develop own handwriting style.
- Sometimes adapt writing style to match purpose and audience eg with prompts can choose style for a familiar writing purpose (letter, email, newspaper) and begins to use formal/ informal language, but not consistently.
- Sequence ideas logically eg sentences are usually grammatically correct, writing has clear beginning, middle and end.

AO6

- Spell most words including common polysyllabic words accurately eg polysyllabic words or common diagraphs 'wh', 'qu', 'sh', some high frequency words that do not conform to spelling patterns.
- Use capital letters, full stops and question marks usually accurately.
- Choose words for variety and interest eg adjectives, adverbs, powerful verbs.

AO7

- Talk with confidence in different contexts eg school based only.
- Make sustained contributions, developing ideas and feelings eg converse on a wider range of subjects, thinking about use of adjectives and questions to maintain interest.
- Match language and non-verbal features to purpose and audience eg by adjusting tone, pace, volume and intonation.

AO8

- Listen carefully in different group situations eg familiar settings with familiar adults and peers.
- Respond to others, developing ideas and making helpful comments and suggestions eg make an appropriate comment about what they have heard.
- Take on different roles/responsibilities in working with others.

AO9

- Begin to show an awareness of Standard English eg use of pronouns to indicate someone or something that has already been mentioned and conjunctions to link words to the rest of the sentence.

7.3 Entry 2

AO1

- Read with some fluency and accuracy, reading most words on sight eg up to 200 words including high frequency, some medium frequency and CVCC, CCVC words.
- Use appropriate strategies to decode unfamiliar words eg blending 'ch', 'sh','th',some long vowel sounds, simple prefixes and suffixes, common endings such as 'ing', 'ed', 'er', contextual clues.
- Recall some specific and straightforward information from texts eg describe a character, action or event with general accuracy.
- Locate main points and information in texts eg use a contents page, find and note an important sentence.
- Make simple inferences and deductions sometimes supported by textual detail eg make a prediction about characters' feelings based on an event.

AO2

- Use contextual clues to help understand the meaning of simple words/language choices eg 'it can zip' next to a picture of a sports car. The student can express that zip refers to speed.

AO3

- From two simple texts identify a similarity or difference between character, events or presentation eg when given an event from one text, say if it is the same or different in another text and say why.

AO4

- Make simple comments/observations about personal preferences sometimes supported with reasons eg 'I liked it when…'

AO5

- Form letters accurately and consistently eg ascenders and descenders are clear and consistent.
- Show some awareness of narrative, non-narrative form and audience eg within a structure can follow a writing form such as a newspaper article, email or story and try to structure it clearly for the reader.
- Write mainly in simple sequenced sentences eg will make links between ideas or events.

AO6

- Spell phonetically plausible and most high frequency words with growing accuracy eg simple CVCC words or CCVC monosyllabic words and high frequency words. Inaccuracies are phonetically plausible.
- Demarcate most sentences with full stops and capital letters.
- Use appropriate words to create interest eg use adjectives to give more detail.

AO7

- Talk to familiar and sometimes unfamiliar people, especially on topics of personal interest.
- Communicate experiences, thoughts and feelings, linking ideas eg can communicate outside of their own immediate interests.
- Use simple devices such as variations in tone, pace, expression, vocabulary to hold the attention of the listener.

AO8

- Listen carefully in group settings to familiar and sometimes unfamiliar people, especially on topics of personal interest.
- Engage with others, making simple comments and suggestions eg agree or disagree with an idea and sometimes suggest an alternative.
- Take turns, making helpful, more extended contributions.

AO9

- Choose appropriate vocabulary including adjectives and adverbs according to audience and purpose eg speak to an unfamiliar adult differently than to a friend.

7.4 Entry 1

AO1

- Read some high frequency and familiar words in simple texts eg up to 45 high frequency words, phonetic CVC words.
- Use blending to decode some familiar and unfamiliar words eg use letter names and sounds to decode a CVC word.
- Recall main points from simple texts eg put a simple story in sequence.
- Locate some points and information in simple texts eg find the name of a shop on a business card.
- Make simple inferences and deductions eg make a simple prediction to a question in a picture story.

AO2

- Establish the meaning of a simple word in a wider context eg in a picture story understand that the phrase 'sob sob' next to a picture of a girl crying, refers to her being upset or sad.

AO3

- From two simple texts identify a similarity or difference between an event eg in response to adult questioning recall 'the boys are sad'.

AO4

- Make simple comments/observations about personal preferences eg 'I liked the book it was funny'.

AO5

- Form most letters correctly with possible confusion over upper and lower case eg all letters upper and lower case are correctly oriented.
- Inconsistently match writing to structure and understand that words have permanence eg work must be scaffolded within a writing frame and heavily modelled.
- Sometimes arrange ideas in appropriate order eg sequence three related events in a picture based text.

AO6

- Spell simple phonetically plausible and many high frequency words accurately eg monosyllabic words ('it', 'on', 'up'), CVC words ('cat', 'mum') and high frequency words ('the', 'I', 'in') are usually correct or phonetically plausible.
- Show some awareness of full stops and capital letters.
- Use some simple descriptive language eg to indicate colour, size, emotion.

AO7

- Talk to familiar peers and adults in supported groups or 1:1, especially on matters of personal interest.
- Communicate feelings and ideas eg 'I feel sad when…because…'
- When speaking to familiar peers and adults add some detail to sustain interest.

AO8

- Listen attentively to familiar peers and adults in supported groups or 1:1, especially on matters of interest.
- Engage with others eg agree or disagree with a comment or idea.
- Take turns.

AO9

- Use appropriate personal pronouns and begin to use different language to adults and peers.

8 Appendix A

Accrediting the achievement of individual Entry Level Certificate components through the AQA Unit Award Scheme (UAS).

What is the UAS?

UAS allows students to receive formal recognition for each individual unit completed as they progress through the Entry Level Certificate course. It is a recording of achievement scheme, not a qualification, and has been in operation since 1984.

In recognising these smaller steps of achievement, UAS encourages and motivates students for whom the final award of an Entry Level Certificate may seem a distant goal. Also, for those students who cannot, for whatever reason, complete the required number of units to be entered for the qualification, they can receive formal recognition for each unit completed.

What UAS certification is offered?

Each time a student completes a unit, they can have this achievement recognised through the issue of a UAS certificate called a *Unit Award Statement.*

This *Statement* shows all the skills, abilities, knowledge and understanding which has been achieved by the student, together with any experiences, but does not show a level. *Statements* are issued promptly after the student has completed a unit and this can happen at any time of year.

How do UAS and Entry Level Certificate requirements differ for the student?

To receive accreditation for completion of a unit with UAS, a student must show achievement of all outcomes in that unit. This may be different to the requirement for the Entry Level Certificate, where students may not need to provide evidence for all outcomes, but are encouraged to complete as much as possible, thereby enabling them to reach a moderated level of Entry 1, Entry 2 or Entry 3.

Some Entry Level specifications require the completion of externally-set tasks. For UAS, these tasks do not have to be completed although such evidence may be submitted as part of the other evidence required for a unit. In summary, with UAS, provided there is evidence that all outcomes have been achieved, the unit will be awarded.

What about UAS registration?

Schools and colleges wishing to use UAS must be registered specifically for UAS, and this is a separate registration process from that required for the Entry Level Certificate. Centres may choose to register students for:

- the Entry Level Certificate only
- the Entry Level Certificate and UAS or
- UAS only.

Centres can join UAS at any time and should contact the UAS department for further information about joining, costs and how to use UAS.

There is more information on the UAS website.

AQA Unit Award Scheme, 31-33 Springfield Avenue, Harrogate, HG1 2HW

E: unitawardscheme@aqa.org.uk

T: 01423 534 323

Get help and support

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at aqa.org.uk/5970

You can talk directly to the Step Up to English subject team:

E: english-gcse@aqa.org.uk

T: 0161 9537504

aqa.org.uk