

The GCSE grading system

New grading structure	Current grading structure
9	A*
8	
7	
6	B
5	
4	C
3	
2	D
1	
U	E
	F
	G
	U

GOOD PASS (DfE)
5 and above = top of C and above

AWARDING
4 and above = bottom of C and above



Maximising performance in year 11

September 2021

Subject information

Pillars of success

Revision techniques

Key dates



- Friday 1st October – revision skills and timetabling.
- Thursday 14th October – year 11 reports issued to parents/carers.
- Thursday 21st October – KS4 to 5 Options Evening.
- Monday 1st November – Mock exams fortnight begins.
- Thursday 9th December – Mock results day. Students presented with the results of their mocks and discussion with a senior teacher about next steps and the results.
- Also Thursday 9th December – year 11 Parents' Evening. Details to follow.
- Monday 7th February – second Mocks fortnight begins.
- Friday 31st March – written reports to parents/carers.
- Monday 16th May – GCSE written exams begin.



Key people

- Tutor – subject teachers/leaders who are using tutor time for revisions and learning.
- Head of Year 11 – Mr J Chambers.
- Head of English – Miss R O'Connor.
- Head of Maths – Mrs D Cole.
- Head of Science – Mr C Campbell.
- Deputy Head Teacher – Mr S Woodhouse.
- Deputy Head Teacher – Mr A Kennedy.

COVID adjustments to exams



- Given the disrupted nature of the past two years, there is a current Ofqual consultation going on about how next summer's exams need to look.
- When we know more, we will let all students and parents/carers know.
- Ofqual are currently suggesting that announcements will be made in October at the earliest.



Catch-up programme

- Revision skills and timetabling.
- Wellbeing workshops.
- Directed after-school subject sessions.
- Access to library in the mornings for private study.
- Holiday revision sessions.
- Invitation to the National Tutor Programme.

GCSE English Language: Edexcel

Paper 1: 19th Century Fiction and Imaginative Writing (40% - 64 Marks)

- Students examine an extract from an unseen 19th Century novel, such as “The Woman in White” by Wilkie Collins or “Crime and Punishment” by Fyodor Dostoyevsky.
- SECTION A: They must respond to a range of tasks that are based on the skills of inference, analysis, and evaluation (24/64).
- SECTION B: They then produce an extended creative response to prompts or images and will be judged on their ability to structure and craft with language in varied ways with sophistication and accuracy (40/64).

Paper 2: 20th and 21st Century Non-fiction and Transactional Writing (60% - 96 Marks)

- Students examine two 20th and 21st century non-fiction texts across a range of forms such as, letters, articles, obituaries, websites or diary entries.
- SECTION A: They must respond to two texts using skills of inference, analysis, evaluation, comparison and the synthesis of information (56/96).
- SECTION B: They then produce an extended transactional response to one of two tasks that takes its themes from the Section A texts. Much like Paper 1, students will be judged on their ability to structure and craft language in varied ways with sophistication and accuracy but with additional focus on writing for a specific audience and purpose (40/96).

GCSE English Language: Edexcel

Spoken Language Endorsement:

- All students are required to complete the Spoken Language Endorsement (SLE). This is common across all GCSE exam boards and, without it, students will not be able to certificate.
- The SLE does not carry any weight toward the overall qualification.
- Students research, plan and deliver a short (4-5 minutes) presentation on an appropriate, and mutually agreed, topic.
- They must answer questions posed at the end of their presentation.
- Students be awarded a Pass, Merit or Distinction for their efforts.
- Students are judged on their ability to speak with clarity, order and sophistication. They will also be judged on the depth and challenge of their responses to questions posed.

COVID CHANGE: It is no longer a requirement that we record student performances as a part of this assessment.

GCSE English Language: Top Tips

- **Read widely** – the more familiar you can become with the complex grammatical structures and overly wordy styles of 19th Century Literature the better off you will be... writers typically got paid by the word and published weekly so it was in their best interest to be verbose!
- Don't stop at the end of the 19th century – read as many non-fiction texts, in as many different styles, genres and forms, as you can. This means going beyond the internet – visit the non-fiction section of the library – and read newspapers, magazines, journals, biographies, reports...the list is endless.
- Expand your vocabulary - the greater range of ways in which you are able to describe, explore, detail and shape what is thought, felt and imagined, the better your responses will be.
- Walking Talking Mocks – use the videos stored in the student drive to learn the key skills for each question and the process by which you should approach each one.
- Past Papers and WAGOLL – complete and re-write past question papers wherever available (there are lots on the shared area). Use the exemplar responses (WAGOLL) to identify areas for development in your own responses and then re-write them for improvements.
- Get to know the criteria – the more familiar you are with expectations the more able you will be to effectively review your own responses and adjust your responses accordingly.
- Talk to your teachers – English is a subject all about words; use them 😊 Share your thoughts, your concerns and your achievements in our lessons so we know how to help you and can personalise your lessons as best we can.
- Take detailed notes in all lessons and respond to ALL feedback – you will rely on these notes and responses for revision!
- Attend the revision sessions recommended to you...f we invite you, it's because we want to help you!! 😊

GCSE English Literature: Edexcel 2022

Paper 1: Shakespeare and Post 1914 Literature (50% - 80 Marks)

- Students focus closely on “Romeo and Juliet”.
- They first answer one extract based task and then a second task that focuses on the thematic issues raised in the extract, as they can be evidenced throughout the play as a whole. They will also be expected to comment on the relationship between the play and the context(s) in which it was written and performed (40/80).
- Students also study a work of Post 1914 literature from prescribed list; we study “An Inspector Calls” by J B Priestley. Students will be given a choice of two tasks that are based on key elements plot, theme and character. Their response should examine such elements closely as well as make links to the context(s) in which the play was set, written and performed. Students will also be awarded a mark for the quality of the written communication (40/80).

Paper 2: 19th Century Novel **OR** Poetry since 1789 (50% - 40 Marks) PENDING CONFIRMATION

Option 1: 19th Century Novel

- Students study a 19th Century novel from a prescribed list; we study either “Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde” by Robert Louis Stevenson or “A Christmas Carol” by Charles Dickens.
- Much like the Shakespeare task on Paper 1, students complete a two part task: one with an extract (20/40) and one that examines the whole text (20/40) However, students are not expected to comment on the context of the novel.

Option 2: Poetry since 1789

- Students work in their Edexcel Poetry Anthology to analyse one of three clusters of poems; we focus on the “Conflict” cluster, which features work from poets such as Wordsworth, Tennyson, Byron, Clarke, Duffy, Blake and Hardy. We focus on a range of literary devices as well as the context of each poem. In the exam students are given one of the poems studied and asked to compare it, based on a thematic steer, to one of the other poems studied (20/40).
- Finally, students will be given two unseen poems and are asked to compare how a specific element, usually content based or a thematic idea, can be evidenced (20/40).

Both exams are closed book – students will not have full copies of the set texts with them in the exams.

GCSE English Literature: Top Tips

- **Read the set texts**...more than once! It is absolutely crucial that you know every aspect of the texts we study because the task could be on anything. It's not enough to know the main events – you must know it all!
- **Quotations** – although the Literature exams are closed book, you will still be required to reference them closely, which means you need to know lots of quotes. Start building your quotation banks now. Write them on post its, spare rolls of wall paper (NOT the actual wall!) or a paper tablecloth and surround yourself with words!
- **“Super Quotes”** – not all quotes are created equal. Some are multi purpose and considered higher tariff because they allow you to comment on character AND theme AND setting AND context...they won't be enough on their own but focusing on these to begin with is an efficient use of revision time.
- As with English Language...**use the WAGOLL's**, get to know the criteria, talk to your teachers and take very detailed notes.
- **Attend the revision sessions** recommended to you...if we invite you, it's because we want to help you 😊

GCSE Mathematics

Linear Course with AQA (8300)

Paper 1: non-calculator	+	Paper 2: calculator	+	Paper 3: calculator
What's assessed Content from any part of the specification may be assessed		What's assessed Content from any part of the specification may be assessed		What's assessed Content from any part of the specification may be assessed
How it's assessed <ul style="list-style-type: none">written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes80 marksnon-calculator33⅓% of the GCSE Mathematics assessment		How it's assessed <ul style="list-style-type: none">written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes80 markscalculator allowed33⅓% of the GCSE Mathematics assessment		How it's assessed <ul style="list-style-type: none">written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes80 markscalculator allowed33⅓% of the GCSE Mathematics assessment
Questions A mix of question styles, from short, single-mark questions to multi-step problems. The mathematical demand increases as a student progresses through the paper.		Questions A mix of question styles, from short, single-mark questions to multi-step problems. The mathematical demand increases as a student progresses through the paper.		Questions A mix of question styles, from short, single-mark questions to multi-step problems. The mathematical demand increases as a student progresses through the paper.

Foundation examines grades 1 -5

Higher examines grades 4 -9 and assumes grades 1 – 3 as prior knowledge

Weightings of topics vary depending on tier of entry

Topic Area	Foundation Tier (%)	Higher Tier (%)
Number	25	15
Algebra	20	30
Ratio	25	20
Geometry	15	20
Probability and statistics (combined)	15	15

The most successful approach to Maths is:

- * little and often
- * work on the things you know you can't do
- * use past paper questions to see how all the different topics tie in together
- * stay positive – ask for help when needed.

Useful resources in Maths:

- PiXL Maths App, tracks individuals areas of strength and weakness and addresses the weakness (free through school)
- CorbettMaths website – free revision videos with corresponding worksheets and examination questions.
- Hegarty Maths website
- Revision guide and workbook – various publishers available

GCSE Science

At Prince William all students follow the OCR GCSE Science courses.

Some students are following the Triple Science route and will gain separate GCSE grades (1-9) for Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

Most students are following the GCSE Combined Science route. This course covers material from Biology, Chemistry and Physics but will result in two Science GCSEs grades (1,1 to 9,9) which come from the average performance across all the GCSE Science exams.

Students on either route can apply to study any A-level Science course

The GCSE exams

All students will sit 6 GCSE science exams in the summer; 2 in Biology, 2 in Chemistry and 2 in Physics.

For the Triple Science groups, each exam will be 1 hour 45 minutes long to examine the additional content covered in Triple Science.

For the Combined Science groups, each exam will be 1 hour 10 minutes long.

Practical work in Science

There is no longer any GCSE coursework or ISAs which make up any part of the overall GCSE assessment. The final grade is purely based upon performance in the summer GCSE exams.

The course does contain required practical activities. These are experiments are done in the classroom under the guidance of Science teachers. Each exam will contain questions which test understanding of these experiments. This could be anything from planning experiments, processing and analysing data, or drawing appropriate conclusions.

Making the most of your time in Year 11

Ensure you bring the correct equipment to each lesson, particularly the correct exercise book and your own scientific calculator.

Address weaknesses, or anything you don't understand, as they arise. All the Science teachers are happy to go through tricky concepts again at lunchtime or after school – don't be afraid to ask!

Try to attend every lesson. If you are absent be proactive and ask your teacher what you have missed; it could have been a required practical activity which you will need to do at some point.

The Science department will put on extra revision sessions throughout the school year. Do your best to attend these sessions.

Revising at home

Purchase a GCSE revision guide; we recommend the CPG revision guide. Feel free to bring this to lessons as well as using it to aid your revision at home.

Look at the OCR specification and either download or print a copy for the course you are following. This is a list of everything you will need to know for your GCSE exam. A good tip is to tick off each topic as you revise it.

Revise the required practical activities as well as the content covered in each lesson. The exam board is required to include questions on these experiments.

Revise for your mock exams. There is no doubt that students who work hard in preparing for their mock exams will ultimately make the most progress.



TASSOMAI

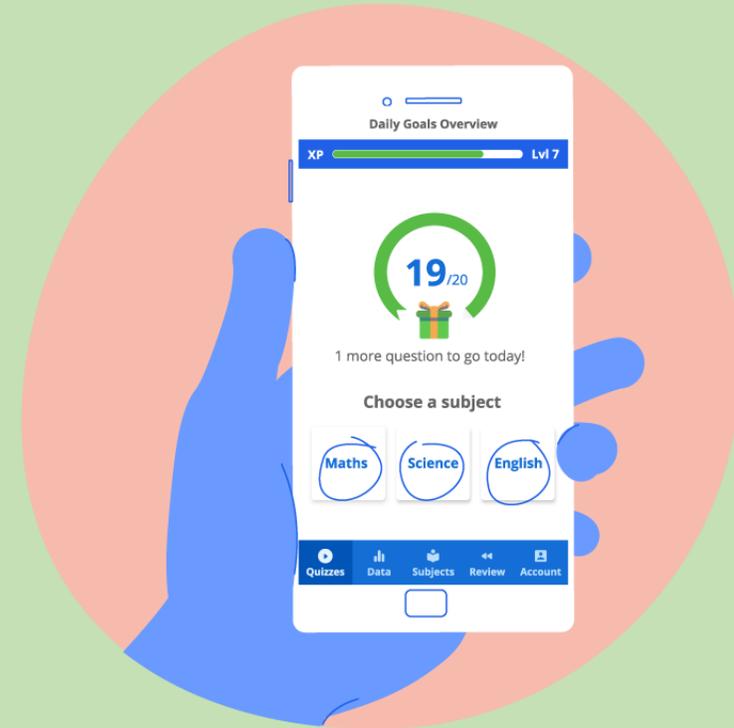
The Learning Program

Tassomai

As part of the PWS catch up strategy, government funding has been used to purchase Tassomai for all our students.

Tassomai is an interactive learning app which helps students to revise through multiple choice quizzing.

This year Tassomai have expanded and can be used to revise English Literature and Maths as well as Science.

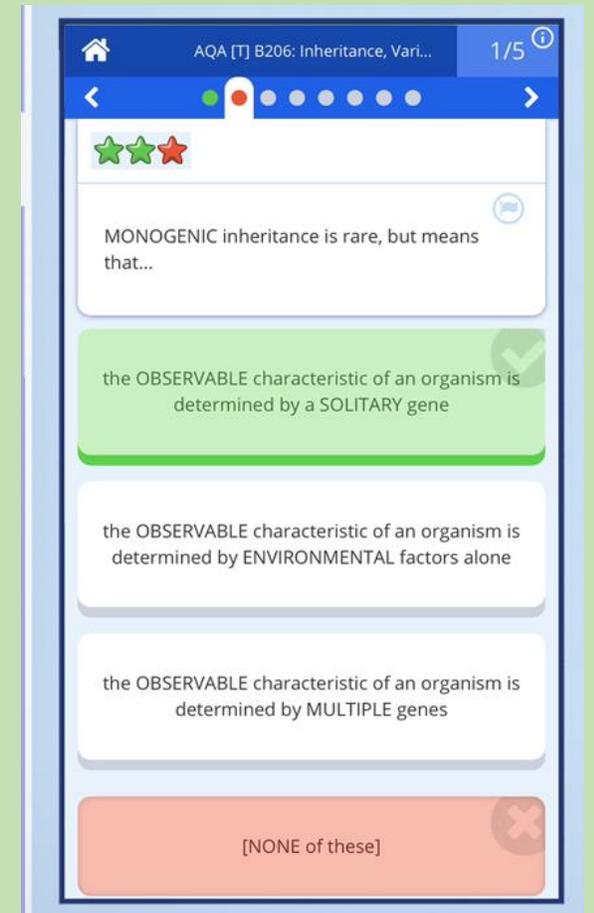


Tassomai

One thing that sets Tassomai apart for similar learning platforms is that each student has their own account.

This means that each quiz is tailored to match a student's ability as well as being matched to the correct exam board and tier of entry.

Tassomai 'remembers' an individual's answers to questions and uses an algorithm to customise the next revision quiz



Tassomai

Teachers track each student's use of Tassomai and identify areas of strength or weakness

This will be used to inform revision or intervention sessions to increase their impact



Tassomai

A new feature allows parents to track their child's use and progress.

The aim of Tassomai is to spread out revision and encourage little and often rather than cramming.

Parents can support by encouraging children to spend 15 mins every day or so attaining their 'daily goals'





Central pillars to success

- Establish plans for September 2022 as early as possible.
- Begin revision now.
- Work hard in class.
- Complete all homework.
- Ensure that your focus is on success at GCSE. Don't be distracted by issues that are not about learning and progress.
- Attend school as much as possible.





Next Step

- Year 11 is very challenging. The sooner a young person knows why they are doing all this hard work, the more likely they will be to do it.
- Look at websites for all the local providers.
- Explore open evenings at PWS (24th October) or other colleges in the area.
- Talk to careers advisors or complete on-line careers services to explore the possibilities that are out there. All students will have a 30 minute session with an independent careers advisor in December.
- Think about the different routes – A levels, vocational courses, apprenticeships...
- By law, all students need to complete some form of education or training until they are 18.



Next Step

- Aim to have it in place by Christmas.
- Applications should be complete for everything except apprenticeships which open later in the year.



Revision

- Learning to revise is a key factor in success at GCSE.
- Start by making a timetable. Aim to establish a routine whereby a student is completing 10 hours/week of revision now.
- This will take the pressure off later in the year.
- 1st October – morning session about how to revise and how to make a timetable for revision.



Revision – things to try

- Revision must be ACTIVE.
- Try –
 - Mind mapping
 - Summarising
 - Internet resources/Apps – [Free Homework & Revision for A Level, GCSE, KS3 & KS2 \(senecalearning.com\)](https://www.senecalearning.com)
 - Coloured cards
 - Post-its
 - Teaching the cat/your parent/sibling
 - Revision books - CGP
 - Past paper practice – [pastpapers.com](https://www.pastpapers.com) is useful for this
- Think about a rewards structure.



Approaching the exams

- Reduce other commitments like work or hobbies – but keep enough to maintain good mental health.
- Ensure that attendance is good. Medical appointments need to be outside school time (as far as possible) and please do not take holidays during term time.
- Plan quality time off.
- Students should work increasingly in silence with no electronic distractions.



During the exams

- Get plenty of rest.
- A good breakfast – bananas make the brain work.
- Hydration is important.
- We will provide a snack on the morning of exams.

- Know your exams – what does each day's paper look like?

- **BREAKING NEWS** – no watches at all will be allowed in any public exam. Of course, phones have been banned for a few years.

And finally,

Best of
luck!



Summary page

- Applications for September 2022 should be in by Christmas
- Maths – AQA (8300), Science – OCR, English – Edexcel
- Start revising now
- Make a timetable and be ACTIVE
- Attend school 100%
- Make the most of every learning opportunity in school
- Practise past papers as the exams approach
- Mocks start 1st November and 7th February