

WJEC GCSE in English

Teacher assessment materials (TAMs) to support the
2015 WJEC GCSE specifications in English



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Audience

These resources are aimed at practitioners in Wales who will be teaching the WJEC GCSE specification in English from 2015, for award from 2017.

Overview

These resources are designed to support practitioners with the delivery of the WJEC GCSE specifications in English from 2015. The new GCSE English assesses functional skills that learners will need in their everyday lives, in the world of work and in other general curriculum areas.

Action required

Practitioners should have regard for these resources when teaching the new WJEC GCSE English specifications from 2015.

Further information

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Additional copies

This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at hwb.gov.wales

Related documents

There are a number of English TAMs available online at hwb.gov.wales. Please refer to the document *Teacher assessment materials (TAMs): Quick reference sheet* for titles linked to the relevant WJEC English specifications of your choice.

For each TAM title, there is an associated question document and notes for teachers. Further information, including specifications, sample assessment materials and guidance for teaching, on the WJEC English GCSEs (from 2015) can be found at www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/english-language-gcse/

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An introduction to the English teacher assessment materials

The English teacher assessment materials (TAMs) have been developed to help support teaching, learning and assessment as learners and teachers engage with the 2015 WJEC GCSE specifications in English. Each English TAM has clear links to the relevant WJEC GCSE English specifications.

What are the English TAMs?

The English TAMs are curriculum support materials which offer teachers and learners rich classroom opportunities to develop reasoning, be it through literature, oracy, writing and usually a combination of these. They are designed to complement the range of learning activities already in use in classrooms in preparation for the demands of the new WJEC GCSE examinations.

The resources include 138 questions, in a range of styles, many with tasks. These questions may be used in a number of ways – as starters to trigger some activity, thinking, challenge or discussion, or to ascertain just how much learners really understand about the topic, during the course of a lesson or as part of a planned plenary session.

In the tasks, there is often greater complexity and learners are challenged to use their English skills in familiar and unfamiliar contexts to solve the problems. Learners may have to sustain their work over a longer period of time, or use a combination of a range of English skills across oracy and writing. There is a variety of stimulus material – sometimes involving cards, PowerPoints, data, and online resources.

The question and tasks usually link several ideas and topics, and can be used at any time to assess how learners tackle open-ended problems, even if the topic has not previously been taught. All questions are supported by notes for teachers. These will show the areas of English that are being addressed with direct references to the Programme of Study for Key Stage 4 (and occasionally Key Stage 3 where appropriate, for some Foundation Tier objectives) and to the GCSE Subject content, as detailed in the WJEC GCSE specification guidance.

What are the English TAMs based on?

As the English TAMs have been developed as rich classroom resources to support and develop learning and teaching linked to GCSE study, they are underpinned by four fundamental priorities:

1. To develop learner independence.
2. To work beyond English, literacy, ICT and other subject areas, applying the English language in the real world.
3. To foster deeper understanding through the medium of English.
4. To ensure progress through the effective use of formative assessment.

Each of these priorities are explained in greater detail below.

Develop learner independence

One of the key indicators of progress in English should be the extent to which learners make their own decisions and develop their own reasoning when solving problems. Therefore, the first aim of these materials is to build learners' experiences of doing just that. The questions and tasks should be used in conjunction with the questioning guidance in the 'Development of Reasoning' pack, which challenges learners to reflect on how they solve problems (a practice also described as metacognition) so that they can apply similar strategies.

Work beyond English, literacy, ICT and other subject areas, applying the English language in the real world

A second aim is to give opportunity for learners to bring together English, literacy and ICT strategies and skills and for collaboration with other subject areas, to ensure a richer learning experience.

To foster deeper understanding through the medium of English

It is intended that through these materials learners have many opportunities to deepen their understanding through the medium of English, through dealing with misconceptions or errors through making links across different aspects of the English language, and through generalizing. The questions are not so much for reinforcement but for probing, to help teachers uncover any misunderstanding that learners have, address it and then help them make progress. For this reason, the activities are suited to collaborative learning – learners should work in pairs, groups, and as a whole class in exploring the questions and tasks.

Ensure progress through the effective use of formative assessment

These materials help teachers make the greatest difference to learners' progress. There is assessment support in each question and task to help teachers identify what pupils can do, and what they need to improve, linked directly to the statements in the Programme of Study.

How should the English TAMs be used?

The English TAMs are designed to be used flexibly by teachers as a learning and teaching tool. Guidance on how the resources may be used to enable teachers to give constructive comments on learners' work as they solve problems is offered in the form of questions or prompts for teachers, linked to the Programmes of Study at Key Stage 4. The ultimate aim of the English TAMs is to support improved outcomes – in both attainment and learner confidence.

Quick reference sheet

The accompanying document *Teacher assessment materials (TAMs): Quick reference sheet* provides an overview of the English TAM themes mapped to identify opportunities for learning and teaching linked to WJEC 2015 GCSE specifications for English. The English TAMs may be suitable for one or more tiers or specifications identified. As they are designed to be used flexibly, teachers may feel that the English TAMs could be used to support learning for tiers above and beyond those listed. Within the 'Notes for teachers', differentiation in terms of support and challenge via task or approach is frequently suggested for further guidance.