

The New GCSEs

What are the new GCSEs?

GCSEs are being reformed to have a more demanding content developed by the government and exam boards. This year the new GCSE exams are in English and mathematics. These will be awarded 9-1 grades. All other subjects will be the same as last year.

What are the new grades?

English and mathematics will be awarded grades 9 to 1, where 9 is the top grade. This scale is intended to better recognise the achievements of high-attaining pupils.

- The bottom of grade 7 is equivalent to the bottom of grade A in the old system.
- The bottom of grade 4 is equivalent to the bottom of grade C in the old system.
- The bottom of grade 1 is equivalent to the bottom of grade G in the old system.

Grade 4 is called a standard pass, and Grade 5 is a strong pass. Grade 5 will be positioned in between the old Grade C and B.

New GCSE grading structure



Grading new GCSEs from 2017

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

In the first year, the same proportion of students will achieve a grade 7 and above

achieve a grade 4 and above

achieve a grade 1 and above

as currently get A and above

as currently get C and above

as currently get G and above

Why is this happening?

The government says it has revised GCSE qualifications in England so that young people will have the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in 21st Century Britain. The aim is also to match high-performing education systems elsewhere in the world.

The school performance measures have been designed to: encourage schools to offer a broad and balanced curriculum; remove the incentive to focus on pupils working around particular grade boundaries; and reward schools for progress made by pupils between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 rather than simply focusing on end results.