



Tibshelf Community School

Do you know about the new GCSE courses and grading system?



GCSEs in England are changing...

GCSE courses and exams are changing, with the hopes of ensuring that young people leave secondary school with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in the real world.

The government has said that the more challenging courses are designed to match the standards of other education systems around the world.

A key element of the current GCSE system that is currently undergoing change is the grading system. The new GCSEs are graded on a scale of 9-1 rather than A*-G grades – with 9 being the highest grade.



What are the new courses like?

The new GCSEs will be phased into schools over a few years – schools began teaching the new GCSEs in English (language and literature) and maths in September 2015, but what do these new GCSEs look like?

The main features include the following:

- A new 9-1 grading scale, with 9 being the top grade
- Assessment will mainly take the form of exams
- The content of courses will be more demanding
- Courses will be designed for two years of study and will be linear, meaning they will no longer be divided into different modules – pupils will take all of their exams at the end of the course
- Exams will only be split into 'foundation tier' and 'higher tier' if one exam paper does not give all pupils an opportunity to show their abilities
- The opportunity to resit will only be available in November in English language and maths



How is the new grading system different?



The aim of the numerical grading system is to better differentiate between pupils' performance and clearly distinguish between the new and old GCSEs.

The highest grade that can be achieved is a grade 9 – this will be awarded to fewer pupils than the current A*.

The government has said that the new grading scale does not directly compare to the old letter scale; however, there are three points where they align:

- The bottom of **grade 7** is aligned with the bottom of **grade A**
- The bottom of **grade 4** is aligned with the bottom of **grade C**
- The bottom of **grade 1** is aligned with bottom of **grade G**

If you're concerned that your child will get a lower grade under the new system...

Exam regulator, Ofqual, will ensure that broadly the same proportion of pupils will receive grades 1, 4, 7 and above in any subject as would have achieved grades G, C, A and above in the lettered system.

Changes to the pass grade...

In the lettered GCSEs, a C grade is classed as a pass; however, under the new system there are now two pass grades.

 **Grade 4 = 'standard pass'**

 **Grade 5 = 'strong pass'**

If your child does not receive at least a grade 4 in English and maths, they will need to continue to study these subjects as part of their post-16 education.

If your child receives below a grade 4 in any other subject, they will not be required to re-take the subject.

How does this affect your child in the future?



Sixth-form colleges, universities and employers set their own entry requirements based on GCSE grades.

They have been advised that if their minimum entry requirement under the lettered system is a grade C, it is reasonable to set the requirement at grade 4 under the new system, unless they have made the deliberate decision to raise their entry threshold.



Even though a grade 4 is classed as a pass, it is possible that colleges, universities and employers may set their minimum requirement at a grade 5.

Make sure you and your child are aware of the entry requirements for different colleges, universities and employers.

When is this happening?

The reformed GCSEs will be phased in over a few years, meaning that, for a time, lettered and numerical grades will be used for GCSE results.



The following timeline has been set out by the government:

- The first numerical results will be awarded in Summer 2017
- All GCSEs will be in the new form by 2018, with results for these released in 2020
- By 2020, all GCSE exam certificates will contain only numerical grades

The full list of when subjects will transition to the new form can be found at this website address:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/get-the-facts-gcse-and-a-level-reform/get-the-facts-gcse-reform>