

Wyclif School GCSE Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)



The following FAQ is a summary of the GCSE syllabuses taught and examined at Wyclif Independent Christian School **from examination year 2024**. The subject teachers are in brackets.

Please note that for all GCSE subjects other than RS we follow AQA courses. AQA GCSE courses follow the new graded structure of 9-1, which is explained in the following diagram:

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

More information can be found here:

<https://ofqual.blog.gov.uk/2018/03/02/gcse-9-to-1-grades-a-brief-guide-for-parents/>

For general questions about exams etc, please refer to our senior school FAQ.

English Literature GCSE (Mr. Bilton & Mrs. Dubois-Jones)

Q. What syllabus do we teach?

We teach the AQA's GCSE English Literature. Information about the specification is available online here: <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/gcse/english-literature-8702>

Students study five units:

- Shakespeare (Romeo and Juliet)
- 19th-century novel ("The Sign of Four" by Arthur Conan Doyle)
- Modern prose or drama ("An Inspector Calls" by JB Priestley)
- Poetry anthology ("Power and Conflict")
- Unseen poetry

Q. How are students examined?

Students are examined on the five units (see above) in two papers at the end of Year 11. There is no coursework.

1. Paper 1 is 1 hour 45 minutes, 64 marks and is 40% of GCSE. It had two sections:
 - **Section A Shakespeare:** students will answer one question on their play of choice. They will be required to write in detail about an extract from the play and then to write about the play as a whole.
 - **Section B The 19th-century novel:** students will answer one question on their novel of choice. They will be required to write in detail about an extract from the novel and then to write about the novel as a whole.
2. Paper 2 is 2 hour 15 minutes, 96 marks and is 60% of GCSE. It has three sections:
 - **Section A Modern texts:** students will answer one essay question from a choice of two on their studied modern prose or drama text.
 - **Section B Poetry anthology:** students will answer one comparative question on one named poem printed on the paper and one other poem from their chosen anthology cluster.
 - **Section C Unseen poetry:** Students will answer one question on one unseen poem and one question comparing this poem with a second unseen poem.

Q. What resources does the school provide?

The school provides CGP text guides and a copy of the set text for all five of the above units. Students are also provided with supplementary notes where necessary.

Q. Are there any other recommended resources or activities?

There are many other text guides and online resources for all of the texts we have chosen. We often show students various productions of the texts, and we have frequently organised school trips to see live performances. However, we always encourage parents to take children along to see live performances if the opportunity arises.

English Language GCSE (Mr. Bilton)

Q. What syllabus do we teach?

We teach the AQA's GCSE English Language. Information about the specification is available online here:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/gcse/english-language-8700/specification-at-a-glance>

Q. How are students examined?

Students are examined across two exam papers. There is no coursework.

3. Paper 1 is 1 hour 45 minutes, 80 marks and is 50% of GCSE. It has two sections:
 - **Section A: Reading** Students will answer four questions on an unseen piece of creative writing from the 20th or 21st century..
 - **Section B: Writing** Students will complete one written task. They will be given a choice of descriptive or narrative writing.
4. Paper 2 is 1 hour 45 minutes, 80 marks and is 50% of GCSE. It has two sections:
 - **Section A: Reading** Students will answer four questions on two unseen pieces of nonfiction writing; one from the 19th century and one from either the 20th or 21st century.
 - **Section B: Writing** Students will complete a written task to “present a viewpoint”.

As part of GCSE English Language students also complete a Non-Examined Assessment (NEA) of their Speaking and Listening skills. This is an internal assessment that is graded (Distinction, Merit, Pass or Fail) separately to GCSE English Language.

Q. What resources does the school provide?

The school provides a CGP textbook and workbook that covers English Language GCSE. Students are also provided with supplementary notes where necessary.

Q. Are there any other recommended resources or activities?

There are many other textbooks and online resources for English Language GCSE. However, the biggest recommendation I make to students at GCSE is to get into the habit of reading widely and at a sophisticated level. Reading widely means students should read **both** fiction and non-fiction, and I encourage students to find genres of literature that particularly appeal to them (e.g. sports writing, film reviews, biographies etc).

History GCSE (Mr. Bilton and Mrs. Dubois-Jones)

Q. What syllabus do we teach?

We teach the AQA's GCSE English Language. Information about the specification is online: <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/history/gcse/history-8145>

Students study four units:

- One **period** study:
*We study **AB Germany, 1890–1945: Democracy and dictatorship***
- One **thematic** study:
*We study **AA Britain: Health and the people: c1000 to the present day***
- One **wider world** depth study:
*We study **BC Conflict and tension between East and West, 1945–1972***
- One **British depth** study including the historic environment:
*We study **BC Elizabethan England, c1568–1603***

Q. How are students examined?

Students are examined across 2 papers at the end of Year 11.

Paper 1 is called “Understanding the Modern World”.

It is 2 hours, 84 marks and 50% of the GCSE. It is divided into 2 sections:

- Section A is six compulsory questions (40 marks) on our chosen **period study** (Germany 1890-1945).
- Section B is four compulsory questions (40 marks) on our chosen **wider world depth study** (Conflict and tension between East and West, 1945-1972). 4 marks are also available for spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Paper 2 is called “Shaping the Nation”.

It is 2 hours, 84 marks and 50% of the GCSE. It is divided into 2 sections:

- Section A is four compulsory questions (40 marks) on our chosen **thematic study** (Health and the people: c1000 to the present day).
- Section B is four compulsory questions (40 marks) on our chosen **British depth study** (Elizabethan England, c.1568-1603). 4 marks are also available for spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Q. What resources does the school provide?

The school provides CGP textbooks for each of the 4 units. Students are also provided with supplementary notes where necessary.

Q. Are there any other recommended resources or activities?

There are plenty of additional textbooks published for all of the above units, and also plenty of resources online. However, we also encourage parents to look for opportunities to enrich their children's knowledge and understanding of the period by watching relevant films or, when possible, visiting relevant historical sites.

Geography GCSE (Mrs. Watson)

Q. What syllabus do we teach?

We teach the AQA's GCSE Geography. Information about the specification is online:
<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/geography/gcse/geography-8035/specification-at-a-glance>

Students study three units:

1. Living with the physical environment. This is broken into three sections:
 - a. The challenge of natural hazards
 - b. The living world
 - c. Physical landscapes in the UK
2. Challenges in the human environment. This is broken into three sections:
 - a. Urban issues and challenges
 - b. The changing economic world
 - c. The challenge of resource management
3. Geographical applications and skills. This section involves the completion of two fieldwork studies – one in physical geography and the other in human geography

Q. How are students examined?

Students are examined across 3 papers at the end of Year 11.

Paper 1 is 1 hour and 30 minutes, 88 marks and worth 35% of the GCSE.

The challenge of natural hazards, The living world, Physical landscapes in the UK and Geographical skills.

Paper 2 is 1 hour and 30 minutes, 88 marks and worth 35% of the GCSE.

Urban issues and challenges, The changing economic world, The challenge of resource management and Geographical skills.

Paper 3 is 1 hour 15 minutes, 76 marks and worth 30% of the GCSE.

Issue evaluation, Fieldwork and Geographical skills.

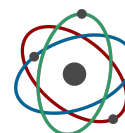
Q. What resources does the school provide?

The school provides a textbook approved by the AQA published by the Oxford University Press and a CGP workbook.

Q. Are there any other recommended resources or activities?

There are plenty of additional textbooks published for all of the above units, and also plenty of resources online. However, we also encourage parents to look for opportunities to enrich their children's knowledge and understanding of the subject by watching documentaries about both the natural and human world.

Physics GCSE (Mr. Corney)



Q. What syllabus do we teach?

We teach the AQA GCSE Physics. Information about the specification is available online here:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science/gcse/physics-8463>

The course consists of eight units: Students complete two separate exams at the end of Year 11, and complete a set of experiments in school that are prescribed by the examining board.

Q. How are students examined?

Students are examined across two exam papers. There is no coursework.

Paper 1

Topics 1-4: Energy; Electricity; Particle model of matter; and Atomic structure.

A written exam lasting 1 hour 45 minutes and accounts for 50% of your final mark. Foundation (C- G) and Higher Tier (A* - G) papers are available.

Paper 2

Topics 5-8: Forces; Waves; Magnetism and electromagnetism; and Space physics.

A written exam lasting 1 hour 45 minutes and accounts for 50% of your final mark. Foundation (Grades 5-1) and Higher Tier (Grades 9-4) papers are available.

Q. What resources does the school provide?

The school provides a CGP textbook and workbook that is designed for AQA Physics GCSE. Students are also provided with class notes, worksheets throughout the course.

Q. Are there any other recommended resources or activities?

Students can purchase CGP revision guides which are low cost and are an excellent revision tool. The school website has video resources for students. There are links to short 4m videos which recap all the Physics GCSE topics. There are also links to video demonstrations of all the 8 required practicals that the students complete in school.

In the Spring term, students are given past papers to practise and prepare for the summer examinations.

Biology GCSE (Mrs. Lloyd)

Q. What syllabus do we teach?

We study the AQA Biology GCSE (8461) syllabus, which is found online here:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science/gcse/biology-8461>

Q. How are students examined?

It is a two year course finishing with two written examination papers. The first four units are examined on Paper 1 and the last three units examined on Paper 2. Examination papers are 1 hr 45mins.

The course consists of 7 units:

1. Cell Biology,
2. Organisation,
3. Infection and Response,
4. Bioenergetics,
5. Homeostasis and Response,
6. Inheritance, Variation and Evolution, and
7. Ecology.

Students undertake 10 'required practicals' in school. A knowledge of these practical sessions is required and may be tested in the written examinations.

Students can sit this exam at either Foundation or Higher tier level.

Higher tier will give grades from 9 to 4 (Equivalent to A* to C)

Foundation tier will give grades from 5 to 1 (Equivalent to C to G)

There is a mathematical element to the course, so a calculator is required for both papers. All questions are compulsory on both papers. There is no coursework on this syllabus. The choice of paper sat will be made in conjunction with parents and student.

Q. What resources does the school provide?

We provide a text book for each student.

In year 11 we provide each student with a '10 minute test' booklet which serves as a class revision tool.

Q. Are there any other recommended resources or activities?

In year 11, students are given the opportunity to purchase revision books through school at a discount price.

Chemistry GCSE (Mrs. Harris)

Q. What syllabus do we teach?

We study the AQA Chemistry GCSE (8463) syllabus, which is found online here:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science/gcse/chemistry->

The course consists of 10 theory units:

1. Atomic structure and the periodic table.
2. Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter.
3. Quantitative chemistry.
4. Chemical changes.
5. Energy changes.
6. The rate and extent of chemical change.
7. Organic chemistry.
8. Chemical analysis
9. Chemistry of the atmosphere.
10. Using resources.

Students undertake 8 AQA required practicals which are examined at the end of the course along with the theory. They will also carry out other practicals to support their understanding of the theory.

Q. How are students examined?

This is a two year course finishing with two exams. The first 5 units are examined on Paper 1 and the last 5 units examined on Paper 2. Both papers are 1 hour 45 mins.

Students can sit these exams at either Foundation or Higher tier level..

Higher tier will give grades from 9 to 4 (Equivalent to A* to C)

Foundation tier will give grades from 5 to 1 (Equivalent to C to G).

The choice of paper will be made in conjunction with parents and student.

There is a mathematical element to the course, so a calculator is required for both papers.

There is no coursework on this syllabus.

Q. What resources does the school provide?

The school provides a CGP textbook and workbook which are linked to the syllabus. The students are also provided with notes and past papers to support their learning.

Q. Are there any other recommended resources or activities?

CGP revision guides are a useful resource which can be purchased cheaply through the school. There are also links to all 8 AQA required practicals on the school website.

Maths GCSE (Mrs. Lloyd)

Q. What syllabus do we teach?

We study the AQA GCSE Mathematics syllabus. This contains elements of number, algebra, ratio, geometry, probability and statistics. Yea

Q. How are students examined?

Students sit three examination papers, each one hour and thirty minutes duration.

All parts of the syllabus may be examined on each paper.

Paper 1 is a non calculator paper.

Calculators are required for papers 2 and 3.

Each paper makes up one third of the assessment.

Students may sit at either Foundation or Higher level,

Foundation tier may give a grade from 1 - 5 (G - C)

Higher tier may give a grade from 4 - 9 (C - A*)

Q. What resources does the school provide?

School provides a text book for the course.

In year 11 students are given the opportunity to purchase a revision guide through school at reduced cost.

Q. Are there any other recommended resources or activities?

Religious Studies O Level (Mr. Tamplin and Mr. Corney)

Q. What syllabus do we teach?

We teach the Religious Studies (Biblical Studies) 0-Level in Year 10. This qualification is provided by Cambridge International Board. It is a Level 2 examination which has equivalent status to the GCSE. The syllabus can be found online here:

<https://www.cambridgeinternational.org/programmes-and-qualifications/cambridge-o-level-biblical-studies-2035/>

Students require a detailed knowledge of specified portions of text from the Bible.

Q. How are students examined?

There are 2 written papers each of 1 hour and 30 minutes. Students answer a section of set questions and then are given a choice of 3 out of 5 extended answer questions on each paper. Results are awarded by A*, A, B, C, D or E.

Paper 1 The portrayal of God in the Bible (Mr Corney)

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God as Creator2. God as Covenant-giver3. God as Liberator4. God as King	<ol style="list-style-type: none">5. God as prophecy-giver6. Jesus as Saviour7. The Holy Spirit as Guide.
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Paper 2 The portrayal of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels (Mr Tamplin)

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The political and religious background to the life and times of Jesus2. Key events in the life of Jesus until the transfiguration3. Key events in the last week of Jesus' life, including his resurrection and ascension	<ol style="list-style-type: none">4. Conflict and opposition to Jesus5. The miracles of Jesus6. The parables of Jesus7. The teachings and sayings of Jesus
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Q. What resources does the school provide?

There is no textbook to support this course. The teachers provide study notes to cover all the topics.

Q. Are there any other recommended resources or activities?

Students must be able to recall extensive amounts of material from the set biblical texts. Tests and quizzes are set by the teachers most weeks. In the spring term, students are given past paper questions to practise and prepare for the summer examinations.

Spanish GCSE (Mr. Tamplin)

Q. What syllabus do we teach?

We teach AQA GCSE Spanish:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/languages/gcse/spanish-8698>

Q. How are students examined?

There are four exams, all completed at the end of Year 11:

- Listening Exam: 45', 50 marks, 25% of GCSE
- Speaking Exam: 10-12', 60 marks, 25% of GCSE
- Reading Exam: 1 hour, 60 marks, 25% of GCSE
- Writing Exam: 1hr 15min, 50 marks, 25% of GCSE

More details are available here:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/languages/gcse/spanish-8698/specification-at-a-glance>

Q. What resources does the school provide?

The school provides a CGP textbook and supplementary grammar notes/exercises where necessary.

Q. Are there any other recommended resources or activities?

Students are encouraged to listen to and read as much Spanish as possible. There are plenty of resources online eg, 'Easy Spanish' which contains many interviews with native Spanish speakers on a variety of topics. They are also encouraged to make vocabulary learning a regular part of their daily homework.

Art GCSE (Mrs. Harris)

Q. What syllabus do we teach?

We teach the linear AQA GCSE Art, Craft and Design course (8201).

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/art-and-design/gcse/art-and-design-8201-8206/specification-at-a-glance>

The course comprises 2 parts:

The portfolio - 60% of the GCSE.

The externally set task - 40% of the GCSE.

Q. How are students examined?

Both the portfolio and the externally set task are marked by the school but moderated by the exam board.

Students are marked according to how well they have achieved the following assessment objectives:

- AO1: Develop ideas through investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources.
- AO2: Refine work by exploring ideas, selecting and experimenting with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes.
- AO3: Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions as work progresses.
- AO4: Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and demonstrates understanding of visual language.

Students will have extensive practice at meeting these objectives before they embark on their main portfolio title.

Q. What resources does the school provide?

The school provides most of the art materials required by most students but if you wish to purchase better quality ones or additional materials, please do this.

We will also provide opportunities to collect sources of inspiration such as walks, gallery visits and workshops by visiting practitioners.

There is no textbook to support this course but the school does have an art library which students can use.

Q. Are there any other recommended resources or activities?

Inspiration for art can be found everywhere, for example, on walks, in town, at family events and on holiday. Please encourage your son or daughter to be looking for opportunities to sketch, draw and take photos. If you happen to visit a town or city with galleries, we'd be really grateful if you would take them to visit these. Photos can be emailed to the school for printing if you would prefer that.

