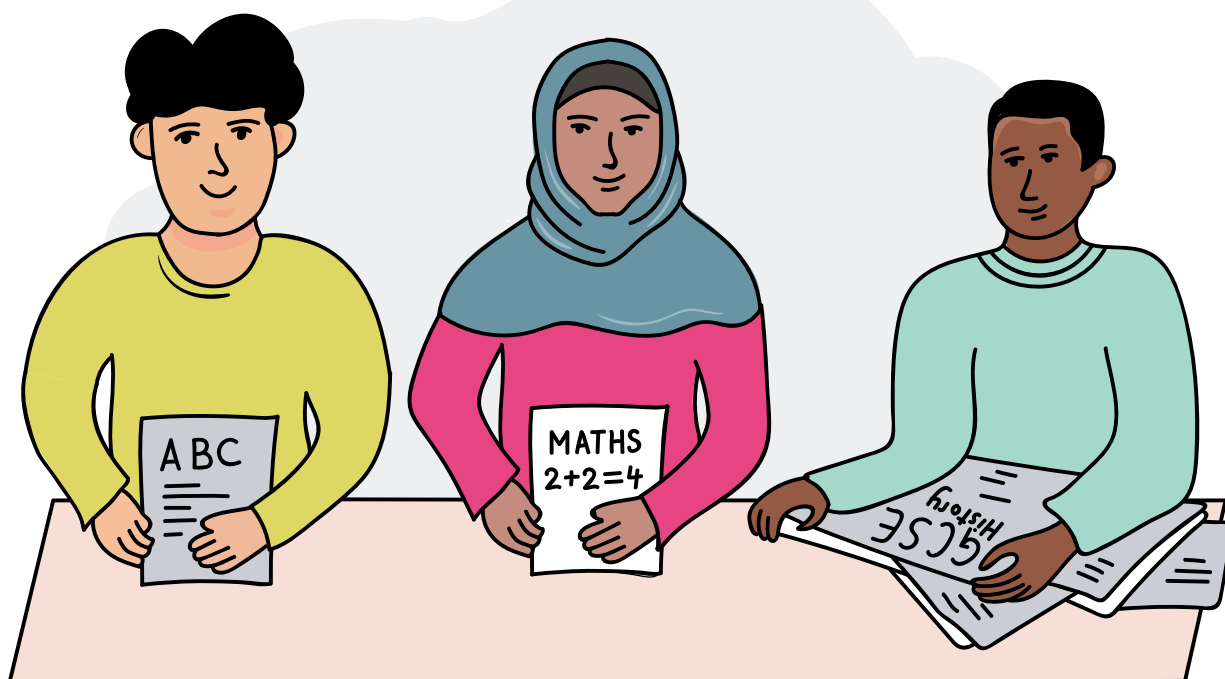


How schools will decide GCSE grades in 2021

Guidance for learners who use English as an Additional Language (EAL)



What does this guidance cover?

Here you can find information about how schools are going to decide your GCSE grades in summer 2021 and advice about what you can do to prepare.

Over the last year, many schools had to close for long periods of time because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Because of this, the government has decided it would be unfair to have GCSE exams this year. Instead, teachers will assess you and decide on your grades in other ways.

This guidance gives you information about:

- How your school and your teachers will decide your grades
- What your rights are and what you can do if you are not happy with your grade or grades
- What you can do to prepare for teacher assessments

To read the full government's guidance, visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/awarding-qualifications-in-summer-2021/awarding-qualifications-in-summer-2021>

1. How will schools decide on your grades?

Schools were closed for many weeks for most learners and most teaching took place online during that time. This is why the government has decided that exams would be replaced by teacher assessment for GCSE, AS and A levels.

- There will be no exams for you to take in summer 2021. Teachers will assess your work only based on your work during online lessons and classroom learning. Teachers may use mock exams and assessment papers from exam boards to help decide on your grades.
- There are no exams this summer but getting good grades should not be more difficult than in other years.
- If your teachers did not teach all the lessons in their teaching programme (“curriculum”), they will only assess the content they taught you.
- To decide your grade, your teachers can look at all the work you have produced in a subject course, for example, any of the work you completed for in English during Key Stage 4.
- Your teachers will decide on your grades later this year. This is because they want learning to continue for as long possible as many lessons were lost during the lockdowns. Teachers must decide grades by **18 June 2021**.
- Some subjects in secondary schools have different assessments to exams, for example subjects such as Dance, and Design and Technology. These are *non-exam assessments* (NEA). You should continue to prepare for your NEAs: your teachers will mark them, and they will be a part of your final grade in those subjects.
- Please do not worry if you cannot finish your NEA because something happened because of the Covid-19 pandemic. If this happens, you will not get into trouble or lose marks.
- In GCSE, AS and A levels, in Art and Design your grade will be based only on your portfolio. (“A portfolio” is a collection of all of your drawings, documents and designs that you made in this subject.)

2. What can you do if you do not agree with your grade?

If you are not happy with a grade you receive, you can ask to change it. This is called “appealing your grade”. You might want to do this because of two reasons:

1. Administrative or procedural errors:

These problems are caused by someone entering your grade incorrectly into a computer or a form.

- You should first ask your school to check if they made the error.
- If there is an error, your school will contact the exam board. If the examination board agrees, they will change your grade.



2. Academic judgement errors:

These errors are caused by a teacher, marking the quality of your work incorrectly, in your opinion.

- If there was no administrative or procedural error, you can ask your school to appeal to the exam board on your behalf (this means “in your name”). The exam board will decide if your teacher who marked your work made an *academic* error. If they agree with you, your grade will be changed.
- *Academic* errors made by your teacher must be very serious for the board to change your grade.



Remember that your appeal process could change your grade to higher or lower.

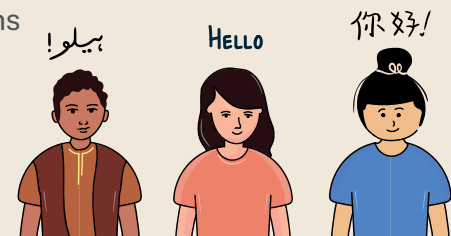
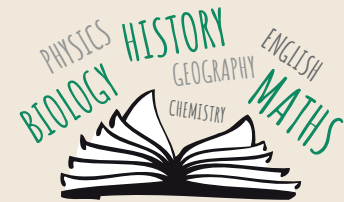
You will receive your grades on **10 August 2021 for AS and A levels** and on **12 August 2021 for GCSE**.

3. What can you do before your teachers decide on your grades?

Before your teachers decide on your grades and send them to the exam boards in the summer, it is important that you continue to work hard at school. This is still a very important time. You can improve your grades if you do your best between now and the summer.

Prepare for your assessments:

- Think of your different subjects. Decide which of them will need more work from you than others: which subjects are your strengths, and which are you weaker at?
- There will be no exams, but your teachers can use past exam papers or questions from past exam papers as part of your assessment. Learn how to answer exam questions by:
 - Checking if you understand the meanings of all instruction words in past papers ([these resources](#) from Trinity Immigration Initiative could be very helpful to you)
 - Reviewing, remembering and using instruction words in your writing
 - Highlighting or underlining instruction words in questions
 - Annotating model answers (if you have such models)
- Learning does not need to be in English: you know more than one language. You can research your topics and your subjects by searching for websites in your own language and you can watch videos in your own language.
 - [Khan Academy](#) is a good resource for revising many subject topics and it is translated into 30 different languages.
- Your parents or other adults in your home might be able to help you with your work. If your parents speak little English, they could support you through your family language.



Metacognitive skills:

Metacognitive skills allow you to understand how you learn, plan, and check what you know. They are very important skills, especially before your final assessments. You can improve these skills by:

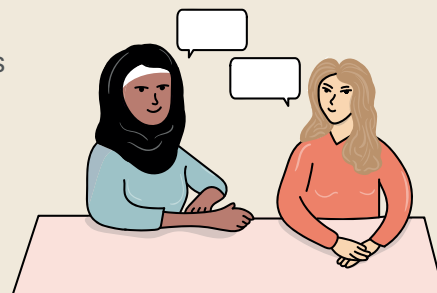
- Testing yourself (before your teachers test you) by asking yourself these questions:
 - What do I already know?
 - What don't I know yet?
 - What do I want to learn next?
 - What will I do to learn it?
- Creating a plan for what you will learn:
 - This can be in a calendar form, a drawing, a chart or a poster. It is your plan, so it can be in your own language.
 - Divide your larger pieces of work into smaller steps. They are easier to complete in one day and easier to remember to do.



The importance of developing your English language skills:

Because all the work and any assessments you do will be in English, it is very important to continue to develop your English language. You will show your knowledge and skills to your teachers better if you can express it clearly and precisely. Consider these ideas to improve your English language:

- Find a friend who you can talk to in English about your work and your assessments. They could also review your written work and assess it before you hand it to your teacher.
- Read as much as you can. It will help you improve your understanding of English grammar and vocabulary. You could use 'graded readers', which are books re-written for different English language levels (for example, beginner, intermediate, advanced). Both [Penguin Graded Readers](#) and [Macmillan Graded Readers](#) have large collections of such books.
- Develop your formal academic English language by listening to speeches and lectures on different topics. [TED Talks](#) is a great website with many videos. Almost all of them have subtitles in many languages.
- Use a bilingual dictionary. If your family cannot buy it, you could ask your school to buy one for you. If this is not possible, you can use an online website such as [Google Translate](#).
- Start a glossary (a mini-dictionary) to record important words in the subjects you learn about and translate these words into your language. You can come back to your glossary later if you forget what the words mean.



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