

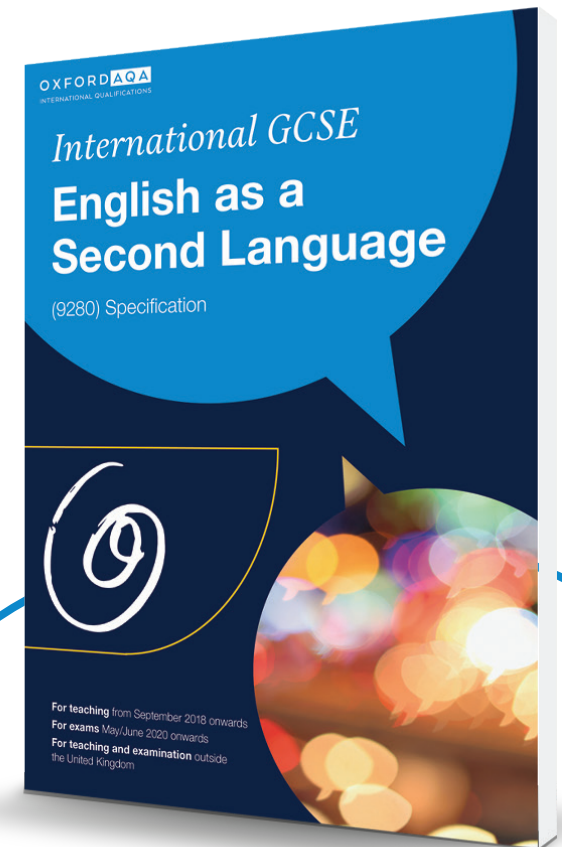
# Switching Guide

*International GCSE*

**English as a Second  
Language (9280)**

**Switching from Pearson Edexcel or  
Cambridge International to  
OxfordAQA International Qualifications**

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## Switching to OxfordAQA International GCSE English as a Second Language (9280)

The **OxfordAQA International GCSE English as a Second Language** qualification is designed for non-native English speakers who use English for their studies.

OxfordAQA assessments inspire and motivate students, providing appropriate stretch and challenge whilst ensuring, as far as possible, that the assessments and texts are accessible to the full range of learners.

The specification will enable students of all abilities to develop the skills they need to read, understand and analyse a variety of texts, styles and topics covering a wide range of subjects, including factual and literary texts. It will also give students the ability to write and communicate clearly, coherently and accurately using a range of vocabulary and sentence structures.

### The assessment

The assessment comprises four papers: the first is a reading paper and the second is a writing paper, each of which provide separate tasks; the third is a listening paper that uses recorded monologues and dialogues; and the fourth is a spoken language (oral) element that provides students with an opportunity to show their language skills.

#### Key features:

- Separate papers give students more opportunity to highlight their ability.
- Each paper has a distinct identity to better support high-quality and engaging teaching and learning.
- The speaking component is an integral part of the award and the test credits students on their speaking skills which is fundamental with regards to learning English.

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## Topic by topic comparison

OxfordAQA specification (9280)	Pearson Edexcel specification	Cambridge International specification
<b>Overall structure</b>		
<p>In order to achieve the award, students must complete all assessments at the end of the course and in the same series.</p> <p>Themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identity and culture.</li> <li>• Local, National, International</li> <li>• Global areas of interest and current and future study and employment</li> </ul> <p><b>Four exams, with separate reading and writing papers.</b></p> <p>The exams are not tiered and cover grades 9-1, with 9 being the highest.</p>	<p>Reading, writing and listening skills are tested through two exam papers. Speaking is tested through a face-to-face interview at the centre. The speaking test is optional and endorsed separately.</p> <p>Contexts and settings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School</li> <li>• The media</li> <li>• Studying</li> <li>• Local neighbourhood</li> <li>• Travel</li> <li>• Home or leisure</li> </ul> <p><b>Two exams; reading and writing, and listening. Speaking is optional.</b></p> <p>Single tier covering the whole range of grades A* to G.</p>	<p>Two syllabuses; one with a speaking endorsement, and one with a 'count-in' speaking specification. Students may follow either the Core curriculum only or the Extended curriculum which includes both the Core and Extended content.</p> <p>Students aiming for grades A* to B must follow the Extended curriculum.</p> <p>Contexts and settings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School</li> <li>• Future plans</li> <li>• Current affairs</li> <li>• Lifestyle</li> <li>• Hobbies</li> <li>• Jobs</li> </ul> <p><b>Speaking endorsement specification - two exams; reading and writing, and listening.</b></p> <p>Speaking component does not contribute to the overall grade.</p> <p>Students taking this component record separately the achievements of grades 1 (high) to 5 (low) for speaking. 'Count-in' speaking includes mark in the overall grade of qualification.</p>

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<b>Reading and Writing</b>		
<p><b>Two separate papers</b></p> <p>Writing: 1 hour 15 minutes – 60 marks – 30%</p> <p>Reading: 1 hour 15 minutes – 60 marks – 30%</p> <p><b>Reading:</b></p> <p>Four texts.</p> <p>Text 1 - short text (100-150 words) such as an email. Open and multiple choice questions.</p> <p>Assessment on: ability to select and identify detail, key points and ideas, show understanding of purpose and ideas. 6 marks.</p> <p>Text 2 - longer text (400-500 words) such as an advert. Open and multiple choice questions and collation tasks.</p> <p>Assessment on: select and identify detail, key points and ideas, show understanding of purpose and ideas, plus ability to draw inferences, make deductions and recognise meaning. 12 marks.</p> <p>Text 3 - text (400-600 words) such as an opinion article. Open and multiple choice questions and collation tasks.</p> <p>Assessment on: select and identify detail, key points and ideas, show understanding of purpose and ideas, plus ability to draw inferences, make deductions and recognise meaning. 18 marks.</p> <p>Text 4 - literary non-fiction text (400-600 words). Open and multiple choice questions and collation tasks.</p> <p>Assessment on: select and identify detail, key points and ideas, show understanding of purpose and ideas, plus ability to draw inferences, make deductions and recognise meaning. 24 marks.</p>	<p><b>1 paper</b></p> <p>2 hours – 100 marks – 66.66%</p> <p><b>Reading:</b></p> <p>Three parts.</p> <p>Part 1 - assessment on: skimming and scanning skills, requiring short answers from 10 questions. 10 marks</p> <p>Part 2 - assessment on gist and detail, answering short questions, (10 questions for 10 marks), multiple choice (5 questions for 5 marks), and choosing true/false statements.</p> <p>Part 3 - assessment on gist and detail, how they follow a line of argument or discussion, and identifying attitudes and opinions in the text. 5 questions on choosing true/false statements, (5 marks) and 10 questions where students fill gaps (5 marks).</p>	<p><b>1 paper (Core)</b> 1 hour 30 minutes – 70 marks – 70%</p> <p><b>1 paper (Extended)</b> 2 hours – 90 marks – 70%</p> <p><b>Reading:</b></p> <p>Three exercises.</p> <p>Exercise 1 - students write short text on one of the following: advertisement, brochure, leaflet, guide, report, manual, instructions.</p> <p>Assessment on: skimming skills. 7 questions. 7 marks.</p> <p>Exercise 2 - students read a text, such as a report or newspaper/magazine article.</p> <p>Assessment on: comprehension. 11 questions. 11 marks.</p> <p>Exercise 3 - requiring students to complete a form or notes using information provided on the question paper.</p> <p>Assessment on: reading and writing skills with regards to the transfer of information 14 marks.</p>

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<p><b>Writing:</b></p> <p>Four questions increasing level of challenge. All questions link to themes.</p> <p>Question 1 - students are given a photograph to describe. 30-50 words. 3 marks.</p> <p>Question 2 - students are asked to write a letter for a specified audience with compulsory points to include. 50-70 words. 12 marks.</p> <p>Question 3 - students are given four compulsory bullet points to create an extended piece of writing, eg blog or diary entry, report or article. 16 marks.</p> <p>Question 4 - students are required to create an extended piece of writing. 100-150 words. 23 marks.</p>	<p><b>Writing:</b></p> <p>Three parts.</p> <p>Part 4 - requires students to complete a short piece of writing in response to a situation. This can be in the form of a letter, fax or email. 75-100 words. 10 marks.</p> <p>Part 5 - requires students to complete a factual piece of writing, such as a report or an article. 100-150 words. 20 marks. The questions will be based on own knowledge and interests.</p> <p>Part 6 - extended writing exercise where students need to produce a summary for a given purpose. 100-150 words. 20 marks.</p>	<p><b>Writing:</b></p> <p>Exercise 4 - students make short notes under headings for 7 marks.</p> <p>Exercise 5 - students write a summary about aspects of the passage, and make use of the notes they made in the fourth exercise. 70–80 words. 5 marks.</p> <p>Exercise 6 - students write 100–150 words of prose, to an intended audience using a stimulus such as a picture. Total 13 marks.</p> <p>Exercise 7 - an extended writing of continuous prose of 100–150 words for an intended audience using a stimulus such as a picture.</p> <p>Exercise 8 - students write continuous prose, in response to a short stimulus and/or short prompts. The question includes information on the purpose, format and audience. 100–150 words. 13 marks.</p> <p>Exercises on the Extended specification follows the same structure, yet marks and word counts vary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise 1 - 9 marks.</li> <li>• Exercise 2 - 15 marks.</li> <li>• Exercise 3 - 8 marks.</li> <li>• Exercise 4 - 9 marks.</li> <li>• Exercise 5 100-120 words - 11 marks.</li> <li>• Exercise 6 150-200 words - 19 marks.</li> <li>• Exercise 7 150-200 words - 19 marks.</li> </ul>

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<b>Listening</b>		
<p>45 minutes - 40 marks - 20 % 5 tasks.</p> <p>Task 1 - brief monologues on everyday topics. 8 marks.</p> <p>Task 2 - dialogue such as a radio interview, broken into segments. 8 marks.</p> <p>Task 3 - monologue such as an autobiography, broken into segments. Students have to complete gap fill exercise. 8 marks.</p> <p>Task 4 - dialogue such as a radio interview broken into sections. Open questions and collation activities. 8 marks.</p> <p>Task 5 - monologue such as a travel podcast broken into segments. Multiple choice questions and open questions. 8 marks.</p>	<p>45 minutes - 30 marks - 33.33% 3 parts.</p> <p>Part 1 - short monologue giving factual information such as a radio announcement, telephone message or pre-recorded information. 10 marks.</p> <p>Part 2 - longer piece of recording, such as a leaflet, advert, articles, following a discussion or argument. 20 marks.</p> <p>Part 3 - longer piece of text/prose such as a report or an article, complex argument or discussion. 20 marks.</p>	<p><b>Speaking endorsed specification</b> - Core 30-40 mins - 30 marks - 30%</p> <p>Extended 50 mins - 40 marks - 30%</p> <p><b>Count-in specification</b> - Core 40 mins - 30 marks - 15%</p> <p>Extended - 50 mins - 40 marks - 15%</p> <p>Listening (Core) - 7 questions.</p> <p>Questions 1-4 - contains four questions with two sections where students need to listen to four short extracts and answer with the maximum of three words. 8 marks.</p> <p>Question 5 - formal talk. Gap fill exercise. 8 marks.</p> <p>Students who take the Listening (Extended) paper have an additional question which assesses the student on their note taking/bullet points and completing short sentences after listening to a talk. 10 marks.</p>
<b>Speaking</b>		
<p>10 minutes and 10 minutes supervised preparation time - 40 marks - 20%. Two parts.</p> <p>Students are allowed to use preparation notes in first part of exam then hand them to their teacher immediately before Part 2.</p> <p>Part 1 - photocard based on one theme chosen at random. Students discuss one photocard for 3-4 minutes. Teachers ask three prescribed questions and additional prompts if needed in teachers notes. Assessed for communication, knowledge and use of language. 15 marks.</p>	<p>Optional. 12 minutes - 20 marks. Three parts.</p> <p>Part 1 requires the interlocutor to have an introductory interview with the student (2-3 minutes) centred on a familiar topic.</p> <p>There are a set of prompts to work from.</p> <p>Part 2 focuses on the student talking (1 minute preparation, plus a talk of 1-2 minutes). The student is given a task card containing a topic and some bullet points and the student is given 1 minute to write some notes down on the subject.</p>	<p>Speaking endorsement specification or 'count-in' specification.</p> <p><b>Core specification</b> - students can choose to take the speaking test or the coursework. 10-15 minutes. 30 marks.</p> <p><b>'Count-in' specification</b> - speaking component is part of the overall grade - 15% 10-15 minutes. 30 marks.</p> <p>Students are given 2-3 minutes to conduct a warm up conversation which is followed by a 6-9-minute conversation with the examiner on a given topic such as past and present schooling, future plans, current affairs.</p>

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<p>Part 2 - general conversation based on the other two themes not used by the student in Part 1. 6-7 minutes. Assessed for communication, knowledge use of language, spontaneity fluency pronunciation and intonation. 25 marks.</p> <p><b>Audio recorded by teacher and marked by examiner.</b></p>	<p>The third part of the test is an extended discussion (maximum 5 minutes). More able students will lead on to talk about more abstract themes, after a discussion on more familiar everyday contexts.</p> <p>There is a single tier of entry. Students will be graded A*-G and this will be reported separately on the students certificate.</p> <p><b>Internally marked and externally moderated.</b></p>	<p>Students need to carry out a sustained conversation with confidence. With the extended curriculum requiring more competence.</p> <p>The speaking coursework component requires students to complete 3 speaking tasks which are chosen by the centre. Students are awarded a grade of 1 (high) to 5 (low) for speaking.</p> <p>Speaking test:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-assessed 'warm-up' conversation (approximately 2-3 minutes)</li> <li>• Time for the candidate to read the speaking test card and to prepare a response – students may not write notes (approximately 2-3 minutes). Assessed conversation (6-9 minutes).</li> </ul> <p><b>Internally marked and externally moderated.</b></p>

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**Benchmarked to UK standards, our exams only ever test subject ability, not language skills or cultural knowledge.**

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## **Get in touch**

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