

**GCSE English Language**  
**RESULTS SNAPSHOT**

**2025**

June 2025 exams



# Welcome

This report provides a targeted snapshot of GCSE English Language June 2025 results, focusing on learners operating across the sector. It contains information on grade boundaries and performance for each question on the paper for all candidates. We've added guidance and feedback from the Exam report, as well as some tips and links to our training and resources.

## **For more information on the June 2025 results, you can:**

- access our free Data Insights tool. Find out more here: [AQA](#) | [Contact us](#) | [Secure services](#) | [Data Insights \(Data Insights\)](#)
- sign in to [Centre Services](#) to download the full Report on the exam for a detailed breakdown
- join us for our targeted training, [GCSE English Language: Preparing for 2026](#)
- find out more about specific GCSE English Language training by using our course finder [AQA](#) | [Professional development](#)
- watch the [English Language Inside Assessment](#) presentation video, which focuses on the benefits of having a single assessment objective per question and how those assessment objectives work.

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# How AQA's analysis can help your learners

This snapshot guidance on how learners have performed in the June 2025 GCSE English Language exams will help you plan for the year ahead.

The grade boundaries shown here are the same for all students who sit this paper, including post-16 students. We have shown the mean mark of how all students who sat the qualification have performed, and the mean marks for each question. This means that you can compare the data to that of your own students, as well as those who may join you this autumn, and get an idea about the focus areas for teaching in the year ahead.

Armed with this data, and the tips and signposts we offer on these pages, you can direct your English department to AQA resources which will develop confidence in identified areas of weakness.

Centres are reminded that the use of word processing can be arranged through the appropriate channels if this is the student's normal method of working. See page 58 of the [Access arrangements JCQ](#) document.

# GCSE English Language grade boundaries

Grade boundaries are set using a combination of statistics and expert judgement.

Our research team uses a range of statistics to make predictions, which suggest the most appropriate grade boundaries. The statistical evidence considers the prior attainment of the given cohort, as well as the distribution of marks. Senior examiners then review a script sample to confirm the statistically recommended marks are sensible for the grade.

Subject	Max mark	Grade boundaries 2025								
		9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
<b>English Language 8700</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>16</b>

Cumulative grade statistics can be found on the AQA website. Visit [AQA](#) | [Exams admin](#) | [Results days](#) | [Results statistics](#) for more information. GCSE exam results statistics for June 2025 can also be found on the AQA website.



**Boundary setting is overseen by Ofqual. To find more grade boundaries and learn how they are set, visit [AQA](#) | [Exams admin](#) | [Results day](#) | [Grade boundaries](#)**

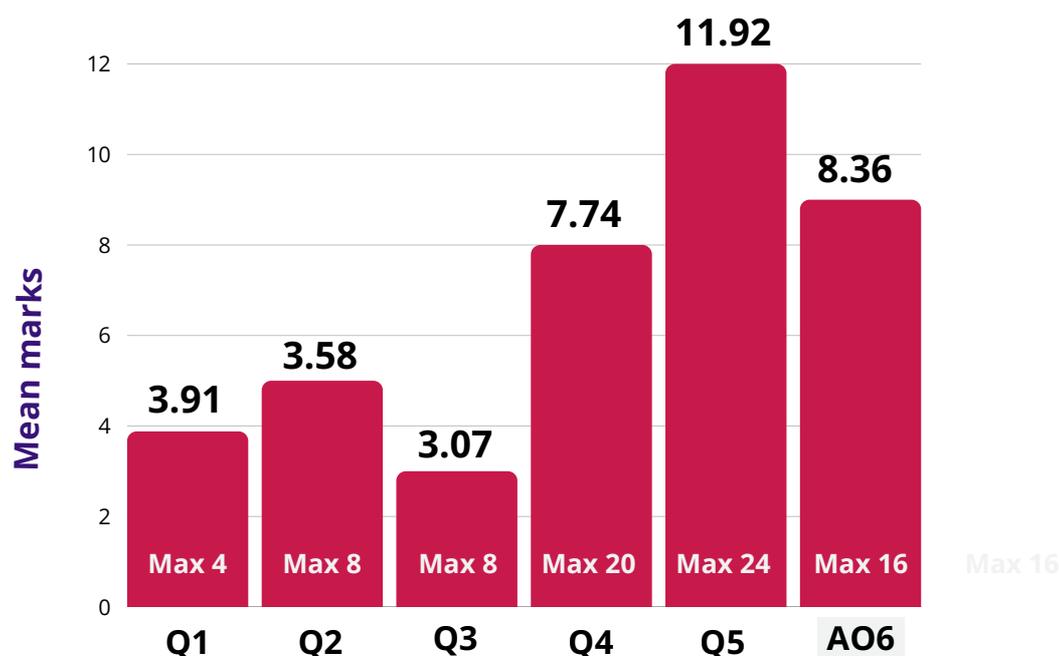


**In summer 2026, we'll be introducing small but meaningful changes to our GCSE English Language exam papers and mark schemes. Use this dedicated web page to explore some updated resources now, with more coming soon. [GCSE English Language](#)**



# Paper 1 insights

Average performance by question/mean marks: Paper 1



## Highlights from Paper 1

**The overall picture for performance on Paper 1 is very stable.**

Students performed well on Questions 1 and 2 with the Reading but struggled with Question 4. For these questions, there were increased numbers of answers where students wrote outside of the given lines. Question 3 showed that there has been increased confidence writing about the effects of structure. So, although the mean mark across the Reading was around the same, there were improvements in some questions and a weaker performance in others.

The narrative option for Question 5 was immediately engaging for many students, showing a real sense of horror that there might be an event where technology stopped. However, Question 5 continues to challenge those learners who attempt to write a whole narrative rather than an episode or an event. The difficulty with a whole narrative is that the writing tends to be superficial and it is often rushed.

You'll find a useful commentary and some tips below.

## Areas where students did well

### Question 1:

**Read again the first part of the source from lines 1 to 8. List four things which happened that night from this part of the source.**

This is often done well by students, and many obtain 3 or 4 marks. The context is that this is a simple retrieval question where the students had to pull out 'things' which happened that night.

Students can simply write one word on each answer line if they choose and do not have to write in full sentences. There were shorter, more concise statements this year, which suggests that students are more confident with their selection of evidence and do not feel the need to make their answers more complicated.



For ideas about teaching structure, log in to Centre Services and see our training event materials, such as [Stretching from Grade 3 to 4](#).



There is a lot of support around Paper 1, Question 4 in the [Spotlight Resources](#) including videos and teaching and learning ideas.



The [Spotlight on Writing Teaching guide](#) is a pack of targeted resources for post-16 classes, including top tips, presentation and video.

## Areas where students did less well

### Question 4:

**... A student said, "It is hard to understand what has happened to all the vehicles and people that approached Midwich. The writer makes it clear that it is a very mysterious situation."**

**To what extent do you agree? In your response, you could:**

- **consider what has happened to the vehicles and people that approached Midwich**
- **evaluate how the writer presents the situation**
- **support your response with references to the text.**

Supported perhaps by improved analysis for Question 3, more successful answers showed clear understanding of the increase in tension and mystery in the extract. Students who had a more confident approach to themes such as fear, power, mystery and the supernatural were able to extend their discussion with success.

Many answers focused on the section before the given lines, which creates a rubric infringement, as shown in the mark scheme. Some students wrote about how events were mysterious, but without much, or any, reference to specific details from the text. This was also seen in answers where students used the statement but did not add reasons why they agreed or disagreed.

## Areas where students did well

### Question 2:

**Look in detail at this extract from lines 9 to 18. How does the writer use language here to describe the early morning?**

**You could include the writer's choice of:**

- **words and phrases**
- **language features and techniques**
- **sentence forms.**

Though most students focused on the morning, some seemed to see the focus as the town of Midwich. Good answers explored layers of meaning e.g., the impact on nature and animals and how this added to the strangeness of the morning.

Examiners reported that the best answers dealt with the contrast between the two villages and how this was conveyed. Some answers explored the 'pocket of silence' and developed ideas about the pocket suggesting dark secrets hidden away, or how a pocket is self-contained and sealed off from the rest of the garment i.e., the rest of the world.

Some weaker responses started focusing on the text, but drifted away into generalised points, leaving the text behind. E.g., citing how an example makes the reader want to read on (Level 1). There were still some answers which 'feature spotted', using terminology but failing to make effective comments on effect. Features such as similes / metaphors need to be unpacked – often by discussing individual words within the longer image.

## Areas where students did less well

### Question 5:

**Either**  
**Write a description of a town or village, as suggested by this picture.**

[Image removed due to copyright]

**or**  
**Write a story about a day when technology stopped.**

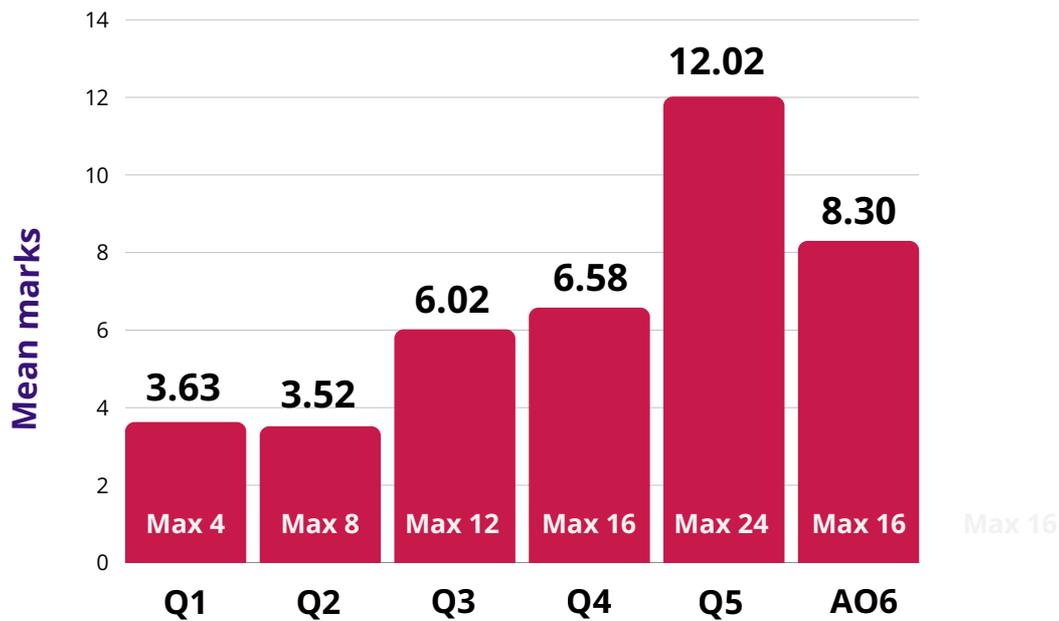
For the descriptive option, students who introduced an event or specific period were able to develop a more detailed style. Where responses stayed entirely within the image, students struggled to develop engagement.

Students with a focus on the kind of technology and the context/setting where this occurred tended to have more control over their narratives. Students' enjoyment of post-apocalyptic or dystopian fiction was evident in many answers, as well as alternative lifestyles being – or not being – problematic. More successful answers focused on a range of different types of technology such as the International Space Station, a sniper's rifle, a dialysis machine.

As always, showing the atmosphere, setting and/or characters' experiences, rather than telling, tends to be more successful. The ending of a narrative or description does not need to have all of the details resolved. An event or episode can end effectively as a moment in time.

# Paper 2 insights

Average performance by question/mean marks: Paper 2



## Highlights from Paper 2

The overall performance of students saw further improvements across the Reading and Writing sections of the paper, suggesting student performance on Paper 2 is secure.

The mean marks for the Reading section rose in most cases, which suggests an increased confidence amongst students as they approach the assessment and indicates that a secure foundation of skills has been established. The mean marks for Writing have also increased for both A05 and A06, representing progress in this area.

The source texts used in this series focused on the natural world and the lives and habitats of some of our native British wildlife. Students were often able to identify connections between the source material such as the environment prior to the changes of the Industrial Revolution; for example, of human interference, but also of the potential for harmony and inter-dependence between species. Both texts succeeded in engaging students and offering a richness of interpretation to support their responses.



This is only a snapshot. Log on to [aqa.org.uk/myaqa](https://aqa.org.uk/myaqa) and visit Centre Services to get the full Report on the exam.

## Areas where students did well

### Question 3:

**You now need to refer only to Source A from lines 11 to 20.  
How does the writer use language to describe the peregrine falcon?**

The task was to identify interesting uses of language and comment on the effects they create in relation to the focus of the question: the description of the attack.

Students were typically able to comment on a well-judged selection of linguistic features. For example, the image of the missile opened up a semantic field of warfare, which was often explored further by students, picking up on words such as 'switchblade', 'explosive', 'target' etc. At Level 3, students were able to explain that the 'missile' suggested the falcon was aerodynamic and/or destructive. The very best responses extended analysis of the 'missile' to explore the connotations of 'guided' to suggest the bird was programmed to destroy, as if at the behest of a greater power.

It's not enough to identify the effect without explaining how the language works to create that effect. It is the 'how' and 'why' which moves students from Level 2 to Level 3. Level 2 responses are rewarded for an 'attempt to comment on effect' e.g. where students showed some understanding of language by picking out the image of the missile and being able to identify that it suggested the violence of the peregrine or how dangerous it was – but with limited further explanation.

## Areas where students did less well

### Question 2:

**... The birds in Source A and Source B live in different habitats. Use details from both sources to write a summary of what you understand about the different places where the birds live.**

The focus for Question 2 is designed to avoid overlap with the focus for Question 4. The focus on the birds' habitats provided the opportunity to write about the places rather than the writers' perspectives. Students were invited to comment on whether the habitat was natural or constructed by humans; whether it was in a rural or an urban environment; whether the habitat was open or concealed and what resources each habitat offered. These ideas provided a rich pool of material for students to synthesise and interpret.

The best responses were those where students focused clearly on the places described in both texts. To achieve Level 3, students were able to identify 'like for like' differences in the habitats – the level of threat from predators for example – and to be clear in their interpretations and additional supporting details.

Weaker responses were often characterised by a lack of development in their answers. Students were able to identify, for example, that the city was busy and the countryside was peaceful, but were unable to interpret from that what it meant for the individual birds / creatures living in those habitats.

## Areas where students did well

### Question 5:

**'... Schools and colleges should provide outdoor spaces where students and staff can connect with the natural world.'**

**Write an article for your school or college website in which you argue your point of view on this statement.**

The mean mark for this question rose in 2025, compared to 2024. This reflects how students were comfortable with the task.

The highest-scoring students presented a coherent response to the statement which took a general view on nature as a source of wellbeing, then drilled down to explore that perspective using a range of specific examples to illustrate and develop their points. Students tended to focus on three other main themes – mental health, climate change or social media, and were able to weave their thoughts about these other topics into their main argument.

Examiners commented on the unnecessary length of some responses, with articles up to eight sides long reported. Students often achieve their optimum performance by the end of the second or third side of writing, and continuing to write at a greater length creates challenges in maintaining tone, style and quality of writing, and takes time which could more usefully be spent planning, crafting and editing a shorter piece.

Of continued concern is the use of prepared lists of vocabulary in responses.

## Areas where students did less well

### Question 4:

**... Compare how the writers convey their similar thoughts and feelings about nature.**

**In your answer, you could:**

- **compare the writers' similar thoughts and feelings about nature**
- **compare the methods they use to convey their thoughts and feelings**
- **support your response with references to both texts.**

The task in Question 4 allowed students to consider the text extracts as a whole. Many Level 3 responses offered a 'like for like' comparison based on the writers' admiration for nature's power and provision. Students demonstrating all three skills for this question – understanding, methods and comparison – were likely to be in the upper half of the level.

Weaker responses were able to identify the writers' perspectives, such as respecting nature or finding it beautiful, but lacked the clarity of explanation to substantiate their understanding to secure a Level 3 mark. It can be helpful for a student to begin a paragraph with the overarching comparison to ensure they are comparing 'like for like' before going on to explain how this is shown in each of the two extracts.

Too many students failed to mention methods in their answers. There were a wide range of methods to comment on beyond language devices, including use of tone, tense and narrator positioning.

# Next steps

## Take a look at what else we can offer

With resources and expertise you can trust, we can help you to support your students and enable them to realise their potential.

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Language Post-16  
Preparing for 2026](#)



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Questions matter