

GCSE GRADES EXPLAINED

Understanding grades 9-1

How are GCSEs graded?

GCSEs are graded from 9-1, with 9 being the highest.

When did GCSE grades change from letters to numbers?

The reform was phased in over a number of years, starting in 2017 with just English Language, English Literature and maths. All subjects have been graded 9 to 1 since summer 2020.

How do the scales compare?

The number scale is not directly equivalent to the letter scale, but the grading was designed so that it is easy to compare at key grades like A, C and G.

9 = high A*	4 = low C
8 = low A* or high A	3 = D or high E
7 = low A	2 = low E or high F
6 = high B	1 = low F or G
5 = low B or high C	U = U

New grading structure	Old grading structure
9	A*
8	A*
7	A
6	B
5 (strong pass)	C
4 (standard pass)	C
3	D
2	E
1	F
1	G
U	U

Which grade is considered a pass?

A grade 4 is considered a 'standard pass' and 5 is a 'strong pass'. School league tables are based on the percentage of pupils who achieve a 5 or above in English and maths GCSEs.

Do you need certain GCSE grades to undertake an apprenticeship?

Some employers have no formal GCSE or other qualification requirements, while others require specific grades depending on the level of apprenticeship, the job role and the sector.

Do you need to do Functional Skills qualifications during an apprenticeship if you don't have GCSE grade 4s in English or maths?

It depends on the apprentice's age, the level of apprenticeship they are doing and if they have any additional needs. You can find out more about Functional Skills qualifications in the Rapid Read linked below.



Linked resource

Find out more about Functional Skills qualifications in this useful guide (see link below).



[Click here to view or scan the QR code](#)

