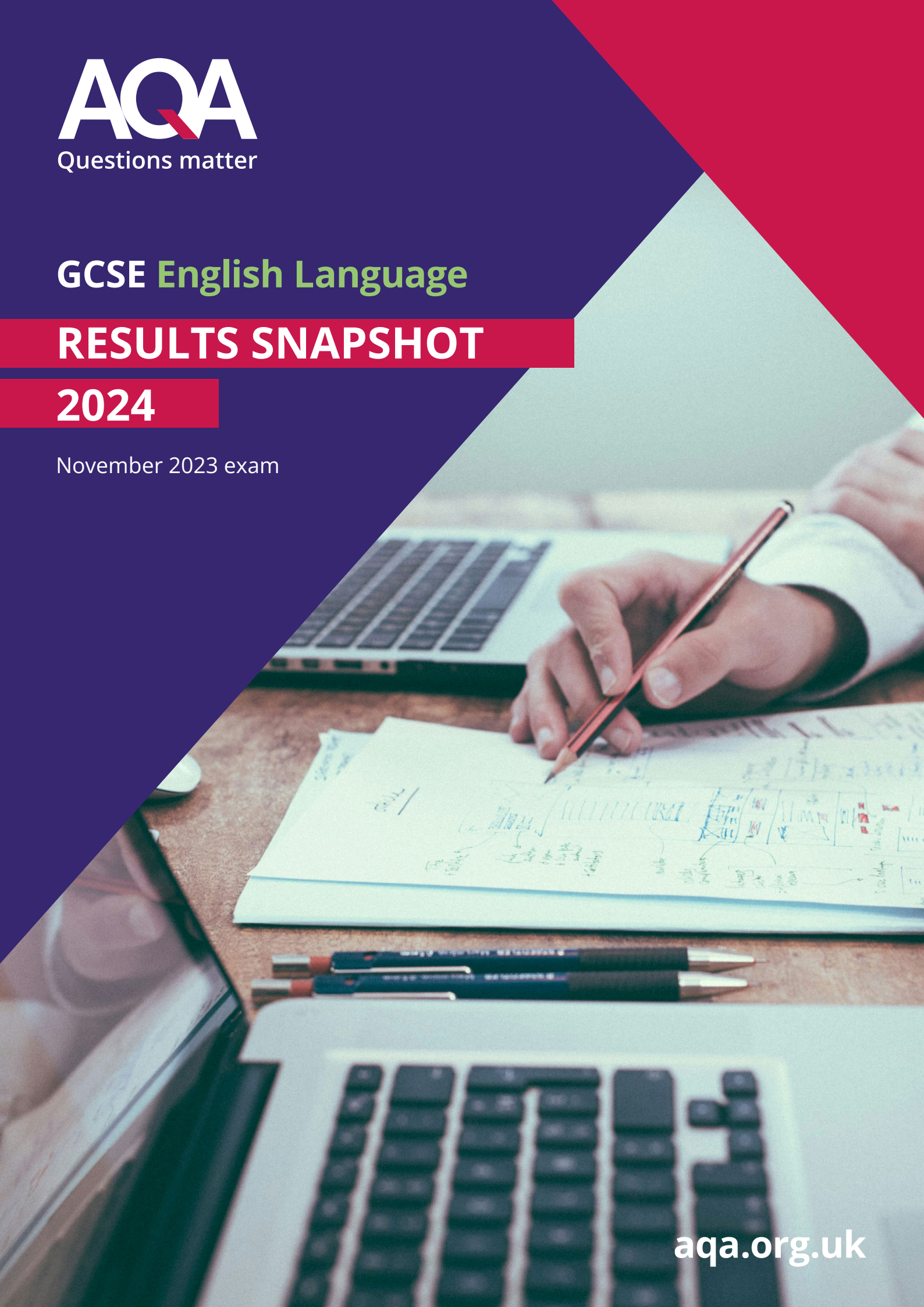


GCSE **English Language**

**RESULTS SNAPSHOT**

**2024**

November 2023 exam



# How to use this report



This report provides a snapshot of November's results. It contains information on grade boundaries and performance by paper. For more information on results:

- access our free Enhanced Results Analysis tool. Find out more here: [AQA | Contact us | Secure services | Enhanced Results Analysis \(ERA\)](#)
- sign in to [Centre Services](#) to download the full Report on the exam for a detailed breakdown
- book on to a [Feedback event](#). See examples from real student responses to highlight common areas where students did well and where there's room for improvement
- find out more about training for your subject 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.



# Content

Qualification summary	4
Grade boundaries	5
Paper 1 insights	6
Paper 2 insights	9
Next steps	12

# Qualification summary

November 2023 attracted a larger cohort than in previous series and more in line with the size of cohort that we saw before the pandemic.

The cohort continues to be mainly students who wish to obtain a Grade 4 having failed to do so in the Summer series, though there are some students who simply want to try and improve the grade they obtained previously.

The data indicates that students' performance is similar to previous November cohorts. The overall mean mark on Paper 1 is slightly higher than the overall mean mark for Paper 2.

Before getting into the detail, it's worth noting that students' mean marks were slightly higher across the Writing questions than the Reading questions on both papers.

Also, examiners reported that there appeared to be a significant increase in responses that were very challenging to read. Although all efforts are made to read student responses, there are some obvious barriers to awarding marks for accuracy in spelling when, for example, the writing cannot be deciphered.

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](#).



# Grade boundaries

Subject or paper	Max mark	Grade boundaries 2023								
		9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
English Language: 8700	160	120	110	101	90	80	70	52	34	16

## How to interpret 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 that 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.

Boundary setting is overseen by Ofqual. To find more grade boundaries and learn how they are set, visit <https://www.aqa.org.uk/exams-administration/results-days/grade-boundaries>



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

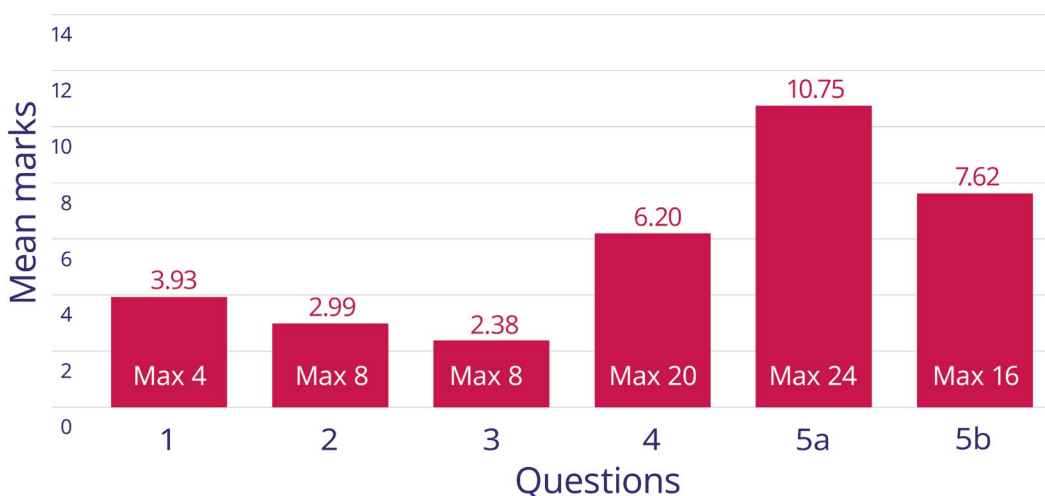


GCSE Exam results statistics for November 2023 can be found on the AQA website. View the document [here](#).

# Paper 1 insights

This is only a snapshot. Learn more about every question from the November 2023 series in the Reports on the exam. Access Centre Services to download the full Report on the exam for a detailed breakdown. Sign in to your [AQA account](#).

## Average performance by question/mean marks: Paper 1



AQA GCSE English Language

## Highlights from Paper 1

The overall picture of performance on Paper 1 is very stable when compared to previous November series. Students performed well on the Writing question this series and this is shown by the mean mark being in the middle of Level 2 of the mark scheme, whereas across the Reading questions, the mean mark is either at the top of Level 1 or the bottom of Level 2.

## Areas where students did well

### Question 1:

**0 1** Read again the first part of the source, from **lines 1 to 5**.

List **four** things about Roland from this part of the source.

1 \_\_\_\_\_

- Question 1 was even more successful this year, with many students gaining the full 4 marks in their first statements.

## Areas where students did less well

### Question 3:

**0 3** You now need to think about the **whole** of the source.

This text is from the beginning of a novel.

How has the writer structured the text to interest you as a reader?

You could write about:

- what the writer focuses your attention on at the beginning of the source
- how and why the writer changes this focus as the source develops
- any other structural features that interest you.

- Students had some difficulty because they appeared to be less confident with structural shifts and the effects of those shifts.
- Temporal markers were noticed by many students but it led some to misunderstand their use in the passage; they assumed that it meant that time was passing quickly for Roland when, in fact, the opposite was true.
- There were common misunderstandings of the extract, for example, not realising that the letters inside the book rather than the book itself were the surprising find, or misunderstanding of the characters and their relationship to one another.
- Focusing only on the beginning, middle and end – as a recount merely of what happens in that order – limited what many students would achieve. There needs to be some comment on why the writer uses these features in a specific part of the text to move through the mark scheme.

## Areas where students did well

### Question 5:

0 | 5 A magazine has asked for contributions for their creative writing section.

Either

Write a description of a library as suggested by this picture:

Image removed due to copyright

or

Write a story about discovering a hidden object.

(24 marks for content and organisation)

- On the whole, students in this cohort performed well across the writing questions.
- The strongest responses are often those that are planned in some manner, although some students appeared to plan in such depth that it must have taken valuable time from elsewhere.
- The narrative option, writing about the discovery of a hidden object, appeared to be the more popular.
- Some students chose to write in the style of an adventure story, whilst others borrowed from myth or fantasy. These students had an awareness of atmosphere and how unpacking the event could be more successful than a fast-paced action scene.
- Students appeared to engage readily with the setting of a library and many were able to describe a relevant atmosphere and the studious use of a library by different types of people.
- Many students used the image as a guide as intended but were able to extend beyond the limitations of the image and add their own imaginative ideas.

## Areas where students did less well

### Question 4:

0 | 4 Focus this part of your answer on the second part of the source, from **line 18 to the end**.

A student said, "It is clear that the letters Roland finds within the book must be something special. The writer shows us that it is not surprising that Roland steals them."

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

- consider your own impressions of the letters
- evaluate how the writer describes Roland's reactions to finding the letters
- support your response with references to the text.

(20 marks)

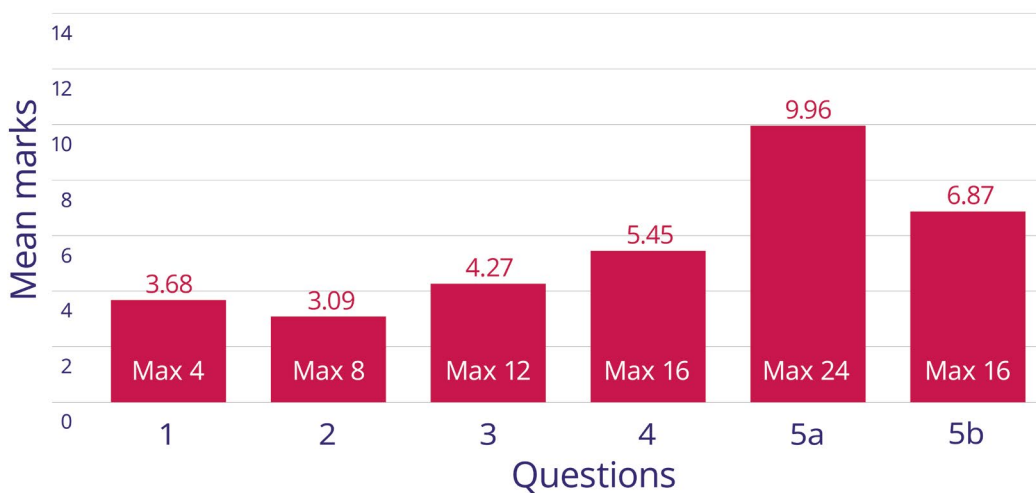
- Many students in this cohort struggled with this question.
- Methods were often missed in responses to this question. Students could be reminded that commenting on the writer's use of language, structure, setting etc can also gain marks. Some students found it supportive to address the statement directly in relation to the use of methods.
- The fact that letters were found inside the book confused many students. It was commonly misread that the book itself was the remarkable discovery, not the letters. This meant that some students confused themselves, knowing that Roland was studying books in the library but commenting that this book didn't seem that interesting after all.



# Paper 2 insights

This is only a snapshot. Learn more about every question from the November 2023 series in our Reports on the exam. Visit [aqa.org.uk/log-in](https://www.aqa.org.uk/log-in) and follow: Secure key materials > GCSE > English > English Language (new specification) > Reports on the exam. Additionally, you can visit Centre Services at <https://onlineservices.aqa.org.uk/resources/assessment-and-training/subject/English>

## Average performance by question/mean marks: Paper 2



AQA GCSE English Language

## Highlights from Paper 2

Performance for November 2023 has continued to show a strengthening of students' skills. The trend in students' achievements is upwards, with evidence of a gradual return to the levels of achievement last seen in November 2019. This reassuring trend suggests that students are slowly recovering from any impact felt by a period of disruption in their education.

The two texts were accessible and the theme familiar. The similarities invited a natural synthesis and comparison of views and attitudes and there were very few misunderstandings of either source.

## Areas where students did best

### Question 1:

0 1 Read again the first part of **Source A** from lines 1 to 9.

Choose **four** statements below which are **true**.

- Shade the **circles** in the boxes of the ones that you think are **true**.
- Choose a maximum of **four** statements.
- If you make an error cross out the **whole box**.
- If you change your mind and require a statement that has been crossed out then draw a circle around the box.

[4 marks]

- A The writer is about to sit his chemistry exam.
- B The writer has just returned from Mount Stewart.
- C The writer has been busy and is feeling very tired.
- D The writer is trying to make sense of his recent experiences.
- E It is a warm day.
- F There are ducks sitting on nests of eggs.
- G The writer believes that humans can learn about relationships from trees.
- H The writer finds the wonders of nature stop him being worn down.

- The percentage of students achieving the full 4 marks rose to 75%.
- Students who scored full marks were able to identify the information accurately. They made effective inferences regarding the narrator's experience and were able to track the information in the eight statements chronologically through the given extract.

## Areas where students did less well

### Question 2:

0 2 You need to refer to **Source A** and **Source B** for this question.

**Both** sources describe the similar ways nature can help people.

Use details from **both** sources to write a summary of what you understand about the similar ways nature can help people.

[8 marks]

- The question focused on how nature can help people. It was a more abstract focus than some of the more recent tasks in Question 2, but most students were able to extract this information and relevant ideas from the two texts.
- Weaker responses were characterised by paraphrase rather than interpretation.
- Many students struggled to make inferences about the ways nature helps people, as well as to identify similarities between the two texts.
- Many provided an account of the ways nature helps people – with textual detail to support the response – but without any attempt to interpret the information and ideas.
- Students should be reminded that, in an English Language exam, their own understanding of environmental issues needs to be grounded in the text and they shouldn't be distracted by everything else they know about nature which is extraneous to the texts.

## Areas where students did best

### Question 3:

**0 3** You now need to refer only to **Source A** from **lines 10 to 20**.

How does the writer use language to describe his experience in London?

- Students awarded Level 3 offered clear explanations, for example, of how the writer was disappointed by the response of the minister because his words 'shapeshifted'.
- They typically commented on how the image of shapeshifting creates an effect of the words transforming into something other than what was intended.
- Some students commented on how the connotations of shapeshifters are linked to lies and deceit and that this shows the minister was untrustworthy and his words were unreliable.
- It was the explanation of the link between the image and the effect that was crucial for achieving Level 3. How and why has this particular word been chosen, and what effect does it create?

# Next steps

Access our full suite of support and resources:

[Enhanced Results Analysis](#)



[Reports on the exam](#)



[Feedback events](#)



Visit [Exampro](#) for past papers, related mark schemes and examiner comments



Watch our [Inside Assessment](#) videos to find out more about how your subject is assessed



## Contact us

T: 0161 953 7504

E: [english-gcse@aqa.org.uk](mailto:english-gcse@aqa.org.uk)

[aqa.org.uk/english](https://www.aqa.org.uk/english)

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Questions matter