

## Linear and unitised qualifications

GCSEs are assessed in different ways. Some are unitised (also known as modular) with units that can be assessed at different points during the course, while others are linear with all exams taken at the end of the course.

### Linear qualifications

Linear qualifications require that all exams be taken at the end of the course. For GCSEs this would typically be at the end of a two-year course of study.

With a linear structure, teachers have more flexibility around how they deliver the course content. It also means that students get more time to build their knowledge and skills and to develop a more rounded understanding of the subject. In subjects such as Welsh language and English language, students' performance will improve with time as their maturity develops.

#### **GCSE English Language is a linear qualification:**

Although the qualification is structured in units, all the assessment takes place at the end of the two-year course. This gives students an opportunity to develop and to mature their reading, writing and oracy skills.

## Unitised qualifications

With unitised or modular qualifications, learners can be assessed on individual units while the course is still being taught. Students get results for the units they sit, but they don't get an overall grade for the qualification until they have completed all their units.

The structure of unitised qualifications allows for content to be divided up into clearly defined chunks, allowing focus and clarity for both delivery and learning. Students also have the choice of spreading their exams out over the course and reducing some of the pressure of sitting all their exams together at the end.

Whether a GCSE is unitised or linear depends on which is more appropriate for the content that students must be assessed on.

### **GCSE History is a unitised qualification:**

In Unit 1 learners study Wales and the wider perspective, Unit 2 is History with a European focus and Unit 3 looks at Thematic Studies from a broad historical perspective. While key skills and learning objectives underpin each unit, the subject content is distinct so a unitised structure is the right model for this qualification.



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