The New Grade 9-1 GCSEs Explained

What's changing at GCSE?

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The new GCSE Maths course started in September 2015, and other subjects (including GCSE Science and English) followed suit in September 2016.

The new courses are more challenging than ever, with all the exams set at the end of Year 11. There is a new '9-1' grading system, where Grade 9 will be reserved for the very top tier of students, expected to be higher than the A*.
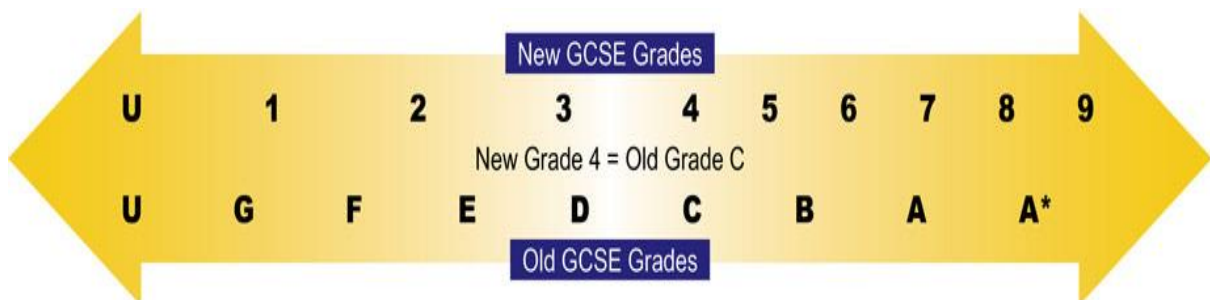
Students, who started GCSE courses last September in maths, will be graded 9-1 when they get their results in summer 2017. All other subjects results will remain A*-G in 2017.

The new grades will be reported for most other GCSEs in the following year, 2018. These include English and English literature, art and design, computer science, drama, French, history, music, physical education, religious studies, and Spanish taught from September 2016, with exams in 2018.

A third wave of 9-1 graded GCSEs and IGCSEs will start teaching in September 2017 with exams in 2019. These include business studies, biology, chemistry, design technology, media studies, and physics. Most of the IGCSE subjects that we offer are moving to the 9-1 grading system. One exception, currently, being Geography which remains on A*-G grading.

Coursework and practical assessments play a much smaller part in the new GCSE courses, which means most of the marks are in the exams at the end of Year 11.

In summary, GCSE results in 2017 will be in 9-1 for maths, and A*-G for all others, as outlined above. The pass grades of A* - C fall between the numbers 9 - 4. For example, grade C falls between 5 and 4, with a good C at the top end of the C boundary being 5, a middle or lower end mark will be a 4.

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Year 11 2017 will have their results reported as a number for maths but letter grades for all other subjects.

Year 10, when they are in Year 11 in 2018 will have most of their subject results reported as a number.

Year 9, when they are in Year 11 in 2019 will have most of their subject results reported as a number with only one or two IGCSE exceptions.