

## UNDERSTANDING THE NEW GCSE SYSTEM

In August 2017, the first students to sit the new GCSEs in English, English Literature and Maths will be nervously awaiting their results. But as they tear open that envelope, they're going to be opening up a whole new world – indeed a whole new language. There, on their results slip will be the numbers nine to one instead of the familiar A\*- G.

Let's start with the basics then... the higher the number, the better the result. Nine is the top grade, decreasing down to one at the bottom, and there's still a U for candidates who fall below that level

Firstly, a grade four\* is going to be set at the bottom level of a current grade C. What this means practically is that the same proportion of students who would achieve at least a grade C now will achieve at least a grade four\* under the new system. We also understand that a grade seven is going to be set at the level of the current A. That means we've now got grades four, five, and six to cover C and B... and grade seven, eight and nine to cover A and A\*. And if we look a bit more at this very top level – where three grades now allow for greater differentiation – we might expect the top half of the current A\* students to achieve a nine grade in the new world.

Schools will begin teaching the new GCSEs in English, English Literature and Maths in September 2015.

\*The *Department of Education* have yet to decide whether a grade 4 or 5 will be the international benchmark equivalent grade (old C grade).

For more detailed information on this subject, please refer to the *Department of Education* web pages