FOR PARENTS · GCSE RESULTS

Richmond Tutoring

GCSE grades explained: 9 to 1

How the number grades compare with the old letters, what counts as a pass, and what the grades mean for your child's next step.

NEW GRADE	OLD GRADE	
9	A*	----- Grade 9: the very top. Fewer students get a 9 than used to get an A*.
8		
7	A	----- The bottom of a 7 lines up with the bottom of an old A.
6	B	
5		----- Grade 5: the government's "strong pass".
4	C	----- The bottom of a 4 lines up with the bottom of an old C. Grade 4 is the "standard pass".
3	D	
2	E	
1	F / G	----- The bottom of a 1 lines up with the bottom of an old G.

Ofqual fixed three points (the bottom of 7, 4 and 1). The other letters are a rough guide, not an exact match.

What the grades mean next

English and maths

Students who don't get at least a 4 in English or maths usually keep studying it after 16, alongside their other courses.

Sixth form and college

Many sixth forms ask for 5s or 6s overall, and often a 6 or 7 in any subject your child wants to take at A-Level. Check each school's own entry rules.

Maths tiers

Foundation tier papers give grades 1 to 5. Higher tier papers give grades 4 to 9, with a 3 allowed for students who just miss a 4.

How many students get each grade?

67.0% of GCSE results in England were grade 4 or above in summer 2026.

21.8% of GCSE results in England were grade 7 or above in summer 2026.

Source: Ofqual, GCSE results 2026 at a glance (20 August 2026). Ofqual, GCSE 9 to 1 grades: a brief guide for parents.

Mock grade not what you hoped? Grade boundaries are set after each exam and move every year, so a mock grade is an estimate. Ask how many marks your child is from the next grade, and which topics those marks are in.

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