



A Level

English Literature

**English
Literature
'A' level****Introduction**

Welcome to your 'A' level English Literature course.

The Specification (or Syllabus)

This course has been designed to give you a full and thorough preparation for the AS level or A level English Literature A 2740 specification, set by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA). This specification includes coursework at both AS and A2 levels.

The **Subject Code** for entry to the AS only award is **1741**.

The **Subject Code** for entry to the A2 (A level) award is **2741**.

Please be aware that the A level examination includes **coursework**. Although the coursework is supervised by Oxford Open Learning and marked by AQA, you **must** ensure that your exam centre makes the appropriate **examination entry** for your coursework unit(s) in addition to the written paper entries. Without this you will not be graded.

Private Candidates

The AQA specification is open to private candidates. Private candidates should contact AQA for a copy of *Information for Private Candidates*.



Oxford Open Learning

Arrangement of Lessons

Introductory Module: Literary Analysis

Lesson 1	Imagery
Lesson 2	The Sounds of Language
	Tutor-marked Assignment A
Lesson 3	Characters
Lesson 4	Descriptive Writing
	Tutor-marked Assignment B
Lesson 5	Point of View
Lesson 6	Tone of Voice
Lesson 7	Feelings
	Tutor-marked Assignment C

AS Modules

Module One: Victorian Literature (Poetry)

(a) Introduction to Victorian Literature

The first four lessons require *Three Victorian Poets*, ed. Janet Ogborn (Cambridge University Press, 1998, ISBN 0 521 62710 9)

Lesson 8	The Victorian Period
Lesson 9	Alfred, Lord Tennyson
Lesson 10	Elizabeth Barrett Browning
Lesson 11	Robert Browning
	Tutor-marked Assignment D
Lesson 12	The Importance of Oscar Wilde
Lesson 13	Dickens and <i>Hard Times</i>
	Tutor-marked Assignment E

(b) Thomas Hardy: *Selected Poems*

Lesson 14	Introduction to Hardy's Poetry
Lesson 15	Hardy looking out at the World
	Tutor-marked Assignment F
Lesson 16	Hardy looking inwards at his Experience
	Tutor-marked Assignment G

Module Two: Victorian Literature (Prose and Drama)

(a) Charlotte Brontë: *Jane Eyre*

Lesson 17	<i>Jane Eyre</i> in Context
Lesson 18	Jane and Rochester
	Tutor-marked Assignment H
Lesson 19	<i>Jane Eyre</i> and Romances
Lesson 20	Recreating <i>Jane Eyre</i>

(b) Tom Stoppard: *Arcadia*

Lesson 21	<i>Arcadia</i> : Scenes 1-2
Lesson 22	<i>Arcadia</i> on Stage
Lesson 23	<i>Arcadia</i> : Literature and History
	Tutor-marked Assignment I
Lesson 24	<i>Arcadia</i> : Recreation

A2 Modules**Module Three: Love through the Ages**

Lesson 25	The Module 3 Exam
Lesson 26	The Middle Ages and the Invention of Love
Lesson 27	Chaucer on Love
Lesson 28	Shakespeare on Love
Lesson 29	The Sonnet
	Tutor-marked Assignment J
Lesson 30	John Donne and the Metaphysicals
Lesson 31	Wordsworth's Natural Love
	Tutor-marked Assignment K
Lesson 32	John Keats: a Romantic on Love
Lesson 33	The Rise of the Novel
	Tutor-marked Assignment L
Lesson 34	From Jane Austen to Mills & Boon
Lesson 35	Twentieth-Century Poetry and Song
	Tutor-marked Assignment M

Module Four: (a) Literary Connections

Lesson 36	Introduction to <i>Tess of the d'Urbervilles</i>
Lesson 37	Language and Style in <i>Tess of the d'Urbervilles</i>
Lesson 38	Introduction to <i>The French Lieutenant's Woman</i>
	Tutor-Marked Assignment N
Lesson 39	Language and Style: <i>The French Lieutenant's Woman</i>
	Tutor-Marked Assignment O
Lesson 40	Introduction to the Study of Shakespeare
Lesson 41	Shakespeare: Historical and Social Background
Lesson 42	Introduction to <i>Othello</i>
Lesson 43	Character, Language and Style in <i>Othello</i>
Lesson 44	Form and Structure in <i>Othello</i>
Lesson 45	Sexual Morality: The Double Standard
Lesson 46	Male Desires and Illusions
	Tutor-Marked Assignment P
Lesson 47	Narrative Structure and Desire

Texts Required for this Course

Introductory Module

'Literary Analysis'; no set texts: covers a wide range of unseen literary material

Module 1 Victorian Literature (Poetry)

(set) Thomas Hardy: *Selected Poetry* (Everyman, ed. Norman Page, ISBN: 978-0460879569) and
Three Victorian Poets, ed. Janet Ogborn (Cambridge University Press, 1998, ISBN 0 521 62710 9) (optional)

Module 2 Victorian Literature (Drama & Prose)

(set) Charlotte Brontë: *Jane Eyre* (Penguin Classics, ISBN: 0141441143) and
(set) Tom Stoppard: *Arcadia* (Faber & Faber, 1993; ISBN 0-571-16934-1)

Module 3 Love through the Ages

A number of texts are required for relatively brief periods of study. Advice on suitable editions is given and the student should aim to buy, borrow or access on the internet all the texts mentioned here.

Module 4 'Literary Connections'

selected texts: Thomas Hardy: *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (Penguin ISBN: 0-141-43959-9)
and John Fowles: *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (Penguin, ISBN: 0-099-47833-1)
Shakespeare selected text: *Othello* (Arden [Thomson] edition; ISBN: 978-1903436455)

These are the selected texts, set or otherwise, for the **2011** and **2012** examinations (and probably also 2013, but please check with AQA if that is your examination year). One easy way of acquiring accompanying textbooks is through the Oxford Open Learning website (www.ool.co.uk).

Further Reading

Do not be deceived into thinking that you will do well in 'A' level English Literature simply by studying the set books. As with all 'A' levels, it is important to read around the subject. The assessment objectives of your course (below) specifically require that you compare the responses of different readers, and that you show some understanding of the historical and cultural background of your texts. Each module will give you suggestions for supporting reading which is appropriate to the study of that particular set book. Your tutor may also be able to advise you on supplementary reading.

The only books you will *have* to buy are the set texts themselves; the purchase of supplementary reading books is optional. Indeed, some of the supplementary reading will have gone out of print and

so be unavailable in the shops. Your local library should be able to help you get hold of the supplementary texts.

Amongst the optional texts, you are particularly recommended to read the following Nelson Thornes texts:

AQA English AS Literature A: Victorian Literature by Ian Stewart (ISBN: 978 0 7487 8293 2).

AQA English Literature A2 Students' Book by Stella Canwell & Jane Ogborn (ISBN: 978-0-7487-8295-6).

Your ability to write English well is particularly important as far as the examiners are concerned. It may be that you need an extra course on essay-writing skills. Alternatively, there are a number of good textbooks which would help you with this. Any good library or bookshop should be able to help you to find an appropriate book, should you require one.

Aims and Objectives of the Course

This course has been designed and written with the purpose of preparing you to sit and pass the Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and the Advanced Level (A2) English Literature Examination of the AQA (Assessment and Qualifications Alliance). This specification, based on the Subject Core for English Literature, is designed to encourage candidates to develop interest and enjoyment in literary study, through reading widely and critically.

The AS provides a platform from which candidates may move to deepen and widen their studies at A Level. The A2 builds on the foundation offered by AS studies. The specification encourages students of English Literature to develop as autonomous critics of literary texts by reading across centuries, styles of writing, genres and gender, and, at A2, through contact with an extensive range of views about texts and how to read them.

Wider reading should encompass the great traditions of English Literature as well as the new. It may include literature in English from outside the United Kingdom as well as literature in translation, non-fiction as well as fiction. The aims of the AS and A Level specification are therefore to:

- encourage candidates to develop interest and enjoyment in literary studies through reading widely, critically and independently
- introduce candidates to the traditions of English Literature

Using the Course Materials

The Oxford Open Learning course gives you considerable help with all six modules on the specification. After the additional introductory module, in which a variety of literary and critical skills are revised, the course follows the syllabus, starting with Module One, 'Victorian Literature: Poetry', and ending with Module Four, 'Literary Connections'.

You are advised to work through the course in the order in which the modules occur. However, it would be a good idea to get hold of a copy of each of your set texts early on in your studies, and read all of these from beginning to end as soon as possible. This means that when you come to study a particular book in detail, its general outline will already be familiar to you.

You should aim to read each set text from beginning to end at least twice, and preferably three times during your course of study. By the time you write the exams, you should be thoroughly familiar with the contents of each text. Remember that you will also need to read some criticism and some historical background, so altogether you have a lot of reading ahead of you.

You will find that there are generally three or four TMAs in each of the modules. Your answers should normally be submitted to your tutor for marking. When the marked script is returned, you should receive a set of Suggested Answers.

Besides the TMAs there are a number of self-assessment tests (SATs) to be found at certain points in the course, usually at the ends of lessons. *It is vital that you undertake these as full-scale written work.* Only after you have done what is asked to the best of your ability should you look at the Suggested Answers provided. Probably the single most important thing about English Literature 'A' level is that *you should form your own judgements* on what you study. It is no use regurgitating somebody else's opinion, even if you have found it in these lessons! It is difficult to argue a point well unless you have thought of it for yourself and *believe* in it. Have the courage to form your own opinions.

In addition, there are many, many activities throughout the course, located within the lessons. These are smaller pieces of work, usually requiring brief written answers. You will see that there is a space immediately beneath the activity for you to write in the answer. The size of the space is a clue to how much you might write, but do not be afraid to continue on a separate piece of paper. Suggested answers are usually given at the end of the lesson but most activities are open-ended and you may well have produced very different answers. The important thing is that you actively engage with the text. The work you do in the boxes is evidence of your

active study and it will also help when you come to revise your work for the examination, taking you back to your train of thought at an earlier date and organising your notes for you.

The Suggested Answers (in particular, the TMA answers) demonstrate the writing style and level of detail you should be aiming for. The standard of the answers is purposefully high. This is the standard you will be working towards, and tutors will not necessarily be expecting you to be writing at this level in the early stages of the course. To ensure that you are actively working towards the style of writing required, it will be useful to read the Suggested Answers in conjunction with the section on Essay Writing Skills at the end of this Introduction.

You will need to plan your study timetable carefully. You should aim to complete your basic studies at least two months before you plan to take the examination, in order to leave you ample time for revision. Most modules will give you further advice on how to plan your revision although there is no one method that will suit everybody.

The 'AS' level and 'A' level System

The new AS exams were set for the first time in 2009 and the A2 exams for the first time in 2010. The main change is that there are only two units in each year (four in total) whereas in earlier years there were three per year. But in the case of English Literature, there are other major changes to the syllabus.

The Advanced Subsidiary (AS) Level

Advanced Subsidiary (AS) courses may be used in one of two ways:

- As a final qualification, allowing candidates to broaden their studies and to defer questions about specialism;
- As the first half (50%) of an Advanced Level qualification, which must be completed before an Advanced Level award can be made.

Advanced Subsidiary is designed to provide an appropriate assessment of knowledge, understanding and skills expected of candidates who have completed the first half of a full Advanced Level Qualification.

The Advanced Level (AS + A2)

The Advanced Level examination is in two parts:

Advanced Subsidiary (AS) - 50% of the total award;
A second examination, called A2 - 50% of the total award

Most Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced level courses are modular. The AS level normally comprises two teaching and learning modules and the A2 comprises a further two teaching and learning modules. These modules generally match the Units of Assessment (or Exam Papers).

Examination Flexibility

The new style 'A' levels allow for considerable flexibility in the taking of exams. The two most popular options are:

- AS is completed at the end of one year and A2 at the end of the second year;
- AS and A2 are completed at the end of the same year.

Both of these options are open to students following this course as it is divided into two halves and follows the same modular sequence as the specification.

Grading and Shelf-Life

The AS qualification will be graded on a five-point scale: A, B, C, D and E. The full A Level qualification will be graded on a six-point scale: A*, A, B, C, D and E. To be awarded an A*, candidates will need to achieve a grade A on the full A Level qualification and an A* on the aggregate of the A2 units. For both qualifications, candidates who fail to reach the minimum standard for grade E will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate. Individual assessment unit results will be certificated.

Unit results remain available to count towards certification, whether or not they have already been used, as long as the specification is still valid. Candidates may re-sit a unit any number of times within the shelf-life of the specification. The best result for each unit will count towards the final qualification. Candidates who wish to repeat a qualification may do so by retaking one or more units.

The Examination Structure

The following information is taken from the AQA website, correct at the time of going to press. Please check that it remains current as you proceed through the course.

AS level

Candidates should study **six** texts - **three** (one of each genre) in detail, and **three** texts for wider reading and contextual support. The expectation of this specification is that the three texts for wider reading will be delivered mainly through an equivalence of extracts.

Other requirements at AS are that:

- at least one text will have been written between 1800 and 1945
- at least one text will have been written post-1990

In addition, the following choices may be made;

- one text (or its equivalent) may be non-fiction, literary criticism or cultural commentary
- one text (or its equivalent) may be literature in translation

AS Options

The specification offers **three** alternative areas of study at AS level. Candidates will choose **one** of the **three** areas of study:

- Either Option A: Victorian Literature
- Or Option B: World War One Literature
- Or Option C: The Struggle for Identity in Modern Literature.

This course has already made the selection for you – **Option A**.

The three optional areas of study will not change for five years (until 2014). The chosen area of study will be assessed at AS by two units: a two hour written examination (unit 1) and coursework (unit 2). At AS candidates are required to study six texts. Candidates should select **three** texts (one of each genre) for close study as follows:

- For Unit 1, one poetry text from a set text list of three.
- For Unit 2 (coursework) one drama text from a suggested list of three texts and one prose text from a suggested list of ten texts.

Having chosen the three texts for detailed study, one must also choose **the equivalent of three** texts (that is, relevant **extracts** from appropriate texts) of any genre as **wider reading**. Suggested texts for wider reading from which extracts might be taken are provided for each option at the end of Section 3 of the specification. Dickens, Wilde, Browning and Tennyson are amongst the authors named.

As well as these restrictions, a candidate's reading should comprise (for Option A):

- 1 of the 6 written between 1800 and 1945
- 1 of the 6 written post 1990 - this will link to Victorian Literature by theme, setting etc

- 1 text (or its equivalent) *may* be literature in translation (none included here)
- 1 text (or its equivalent) *may* be non-fiction, literary criticism, cultural commentary

Unit One: Texts in Context (Unit Code: LTA1 A)

This unit will examine one set poetry text and a collection of wider reading. (The drama and prose set texts will be assessed by coursework in Unit 2).

The Unit One examination will take the form of a 2-hour examination paper. The paper will consist of two sections and candidates will answer **one question** in each section.

The paper will be marked out of 90. **Candidates may bring their set poetry text into the examination room. This text should be a clean text, that is, free from annotation.**

The aim of this unit is to encourage:

- **wide reading** within the chosen option. This will be across all three genres, across time and across genders
- **close reading** of a poetry text.

Section A Contextual Linking 45 marks

The **context question** in Unit 1 is central to the whole AS course. It invites candidates to use appropriate references to their reading for the whole course in their response to a short, unprepared non-fiction prose extract, synthesising their knowledge and understanding of their wide reading within the shared context.

Section B Poetry 45 marks

There will be a choice of two questions on each set poetry text. Candidates answer **one** question. One question will foreground one particular poem and its relation to the whole text, the other will provide a view about the poems for candidates to discuss.

Suggested Additional Reading for Unit One

Students will also benefit from reference to the following texts:

Hardy: *The Mayor of Casterbridge*

Sarah Waters: *Fingersmith*

A.N. Wilson: *The Victorians* (Arrow, 2003), and/or

Jenkins and John: *Rereading Victorian Fiction* (Palgrave, 1999, 0333714458)

Unit Two: Creative Study (Unit Code: LITA2)

This unit is assessed by means of a coursework portfolio which, along with the work for Unit One, will form a coherent course of study within the chosen area of study. Candidates should select one prose text and one drama text. The coursework folder will contain **two** pieces of writing; one will be on the selected prose text and the other will be on the selected drama text. The two texts chosen for study in this unit form part of a coherent selection of texts. They may also be used in the response to question 1 on Unit 1.

The coursework folder will consist of two pieces as follows;

The **first piece** of writing in the folder will focus on a personal, informed response to the prose text, and will be:

Either a. creative (as in personal/original) interpretation
Or b. creative/transformational writing *30 marks*

The **second piece** of writing in the folder will be on the chosen drama text. Candidates will be invited to connect it to a prose text, focusing on aspects of the text such as theme, structure or characterisation. The prose text *could* be the same one as for the first piece of coursework but you should *not* repeat ideas you have already used in the first piece. *30 marks*

The two pieces of work should be 2000-2500 words in total.

The A2 Specification

The requirements for all A2 specifications in Literature are that candidates will study six texts (or their equivalent) covering all three genres (two of each genre).

At A2, as at AS, one has the freedom to make appropriate choices of texts for both units at A2 in order to construct a coherent course of study. The units may be linked or they may stand separately.

Unit 3 has the theme *Love through the Ages* as its focus. In order to prepare candidates for the examination, teachers need to construct a course of reading and study which spans the centuries and explores the theme as it is expressed through all genres and by both genders. The examination paper will consist of unprepared texts, thematically grouped. Skills of close reading and analysis, interpretation, comparison and the ability to evaluate the influence of various contextual factors will be assessed.

For **Unit 4** (coursework) teachers need to ensure that each candidate will have the opportunity to write a sustained comparative essay on three texts of their own choice linked by either the theme of *Love Through the Ages* or by a theme of their own choice.

Unit Three: Reading for Meaning (Unit Code: LITA3)

This final examination paper synthesises the skills and learning of the whole course. Candidates should read at least **the equivalent of three texts** (using whole texts and extracts) in order to prepare for a paper which will contain unprepared passages for close study, comparison and critical commentary.

The topic for this unit is **Love through the Ages**. The topic will not change for at least five years.

Candidates' reading in the literature of love should include:

- the three genres of prose, poetry and drama
- literature written by both men and women
- literature through time (from Chaucer to the present day)
- some non-fiction texts

The examination

The examination will take the form of a 2-hour written examination. The paper will be marked out of 80. The **compulsory** question will require candidates to:

- comment critically and closely on the extracts which will be linked by theme
- compare four extracts - one prose, one poetry, one drama and one non-fiction - and connect them to their wider reading
- offer informed and creative interpretations
- evaluate the significance of contextual factors

Detailed Study

This course is still in preparation but will include extended study of most of the following texts:

Chaucer: *Troilus and Criseyde* or *The Miller's Tale*

Shakespeare: *Romeo and Juliet* or *The Taming of the Shrew*

Jane Austen: *Mansfield Park* or *Emma*

John Keats: *Selected Poems and Letters*

Wordsworth & Coleridge: *Lyrical Ballads*

D. H. Lawrence: *The Lost Girl*

Ian McEwan: *Enduring Love*

Alice Walker: *The Color Purple*

Maya Angelou: *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

Unit Four: Extended Essay and Shakespeare Study (Unit Code: LITA4)

For this unit teachers have the freedom to create a course of study which will be assessed by coursework. The unit will encourage reflection on ways of reading and writing about texts (including creative interpretations) and will form an appropriate foundation for the work in the final examination paper (Unit 3).

For Unit 4 (coursework) teachers will help candidates to select three texts with a shared theme. One text will be a Shakespeare play; the other two texts will be wider reading texts of any genre. Candidates will write an extended comparative essay on the three texts.

Assessment Objectives

In planning your studies, it is helpful to be clear on the assessment objectives which are assessed in each paper and piece of coursework. Four objectives are given in the specification for the A-level as a whole:

- AO1 Articulate creative, informed and relevant responses to literary texts, using appropriate terminology and concepts, and coherent, accurate written expression
- AO2 Demonstrate detailed critical understanding in analysing the ways in which structure, form and language shape meanings in literary texts
- AO3 Explore connections and comparisons between different literary texts, informed by interpretations of other readers
- AO4 Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received

The course will also guide you on which of these is most important at different stages.

Studying the Syllabus

You should be sure to acquire your own copy of the syllabus, either via the AQA Publications Dept or from the website www.aqa.org.uk.

The syllabus can be purchased from

AQA Publications
Unit 2, Wheel Forge Way,
Trafford Park
Manchester
M17 1EH

(tel: 0870-410-1036)

or downloaded from www.aqa.org.uk/qual/gce/pdf/AQA-2740-W-SP-10.PDF.

We advise that you obtain a copy of the syllabus so that you can assess which topics you have covered in the most detail and which ones you will feel happiest about in the exam. AQA can also provide advice booklets on your course, including 'Supplementary Guidance for Private Candidates'. As you approach the examination, it will also be helpful to purchase and tackle past papers from AQA.

Using the Internet

All students would benefit from access to the Internet. You will find a wealth of information on all the topics in your course. As well as the AQA website (www.aqa.org.uk), you should get into the habit of checking the Oxford Open Learning site (www.ool.co.uk) where you may find news, additional resources and interactive features as time goes by. If you have not already done so, you may register for your free copy of *How to Study at Home*, our 200-page guide to home learning, or enrol on further courses. Put it on your Favourites list now!

Essay Writing Skills

Being able to write a literature essay is an important skill for success at English Literature A level. Your essays and literary responses need to be coherent and well-expressed, and although a sophisticated style cannot make up for lack of content, strands of the assessment criteria do refer to the *way* your answers are written. Candidates are expected to be able to communicate their knowledge, understanding, opinions and judgements in an appropriately confident, formal and accurate style. It is recommended that you treat all appropriate self-assessment tests, as well as TMAs, as formal opportunities to practise essay writing.

Steps to a Successful Essay

Thinking

Do not expect to be able to write your essay in one session. Ideally, you should read the task instructions or the essay title one or two days before you begin work on the essay. Go back over the lessons and any advice you have received from your tutor. Build the time needed for this part of the process into your learning programme. Give yourself time to understand exactly what is being asked. Read and re-read the title, highlighting key words and checking the meaning of any terminology used. Your 'thinking' time should also include brainstorming the answer (mentally or, preferably, on paper) so that by the time you get to the planning stage you should be beginning to select material to include in your writing.

Planning

Whether you plan on paper or using a word-processor, be aware that this is an essential stage in producing a well-structured, appropriately detailed essay. It is important to practise planning so that you can do it as effectively in exam situations. By the time you finish planning, you should have clear ideas about:

- i) the number of points you are going to include, and notes of textual evidence you are going to use in your answer
- ii) the order of the points you are going to make, remembering that the aim should be to:
 - use your introduction to set up the position you are taking or the argument at the heart of the essay
 - base the main part of your essay around a sequence of clear points, all supported with textual reference
 - conclude powerfully, presenting an overview of your argument and ending on a challenging, punchy note.

Writing

If you have given sufficient time to thinking and planning, the actual writing of the essay will be easier. Try writing your first draft quite quickly, following your plan. Your second draft is the time to refine choices of expression and proofread your work so that spelling, sentence structure, punctuation and paragraphing are accurate. Do not try to adopt a style that is unfamiliar to you; it is better to express your ideas clearly and simply. Avoid over-complicated sentence structures and vocabulary, although you will need to use some specialist terminology correctly. Keep referring to your plan and keep re-reading as you write to make sure you are answering the question. Be aware of the need for a clear structure and focus:

i) **Structure**

Coherence and clarity will only be achieved if you link paragraphs and shape the essay so that the reader feels guided through the argument. You can get ideas about how to do this from the Suggested Answers. Use phrases to signpost the direction of your discussion (such as 'In addition', 'However', 'Nevertheless', 'On the other hand').

ii) **Focus**

Do not stray too far from the title. Each paragraph should add to the sense that you are building towards an argument. Embed one-word and short-phrase quotations into your sentences, interspersing this type of "shorthand quotation" with longer references to text. Remember that marks are awarded for analysis and think very carefully before quoting more than two lines of poetry or two sentences from a prose text. Follow the 'point +

evidence + analysis / evaluation' model you will find in the answers provided.

Following these steps each time you complete a task or essay should ensure that these techniques become second nature to you. Obviously, in an exam situation there is a need to work more quickly, but do not be tempted to miss out the thinking and planning stages, or you will risk compromising the quality of your response.

An Overall Timetable for your Studies

In this course, we have put Unit 1 before Unit 2 and Unit 3 before Unit 4 because that is how they have been arranged by AQA. But there is no law that says you have to study them in this order.

Instead, there are good arguments for prioritising Units 2 and 4 ahead of 1 and 3. This is not because they are "easier" but because there are early deadlines for the submission of coursework and a considerable gap between those deadlines and the Unit 1 and 3 examinations. There are a number of stages to researching, planning and writing your coursework and it is as well to allow as much time as possible in order to give yourself the best chance.

On the other hand, studying Unit 1 gives you a great deal of background knowledge that will help you with your Unit 2 coursework and Unit 3 also provides vital background for your Unit 4 coursework. So AQA have not made it easy for you to plan your studies effectively.

If you miss your coursework deadlines, there are no excuses or second chances, so that is the first priority. Your overall strategy should be to get ahead of schedule so that you have covered *both* units by the time you must work on your coursework in earnest.

Your tutor should be able to give you suitable advice on what would constitute a sensible schedule to ensure that you give yourself the best chance of doing well on both units.

Good luck!

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