GCSE GRADES OLD VS NEW

A simple guide to the 9–1 grading system and the former A*–G system

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

BROAD GRADE COMPARISON
How the 9–1 and former A*–G grades broadly compare

STANDARD AND STRONG PASSES
What GCSE grades 4 and 5 mean

UNDERSTANDING YOUR RESULT
Entry requirements, quick reference and Results Day guidance

GCSE GRADES: OLD VS NEW

A SIMPLE GUIDE TO THE 9–1 GRADING SYSTEM AND THE FORMER A*–G SYSTEM

GCSEs in England now use a numerical grading scale from 9 to 1, with 9 being the highest grade. The numerical scale replaced the former A*–G grading system. The two systems were designed differently, so there is no exact grade-for-grade conversion.

BROAD COMPARISON

Current grade	Broad old-grade comparison	Useful description
9	Above the former A* standard at the very top end	Highest numerical grade
8	Between former A* and A	Very high attainment
7	Broadly aligned with former A	High attainment
6	Broadly around former B	Above the key pass thresholds
5	Broadly around a high C / low B	Strong pass
4	Broadly aligned with former C	Standard pass
3	Broadly around former D	Below grade 4 threshold
2	Broadly around former E/F	Below grade 4 threshold
1	Broadly around former F/G	Lowest numerical grade
U	U	Ungraded

What do grades 4 and 5 mean?

Grade 4 – Standard Pass. Grade 4 is broadly comparable to the former grade C and is an important threshold used in many contexts.

Grade 5 – Strong Pass. Grade 5 represents a higher level of attainment than grade 4 and is commonly described as a strong pass.

IMPORTANT: THIS IS NOT AN EXACT CONVERSION

The old A*–G and current 9–1 systems should not be treated as directly interchangeable. For example, grades 9, 8 and 7 span attainment that broadly overlaps the old A*/A range, but each numerical grade does not correspond to one single former letter grade.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR RESULT

The meaning of a particular GCSE grade can depend on what you plan to do next. Schools, sixth forms, colleges, apprenticeship providers and other organisations may set their own entry requirements. Students should therefore check the specific requirements for their chosen course or next step.

Quick reference

- 9 is the highest GCSE grade.
- 7 is broadly aligned with the former grade A.
- 5 is commonly described as a strong pass.
- 4 is commonly described as a standard pass and is broadly aligned with the former grade C.
- 1 is the lowest numerical GCSE grade.
- U means ungraded.

For GCSE Results Day

When you receive your results, read the information supplied by your school or college carefully.

If a result affects your planned next step, speak to the relevant school, college or provider about their entry requirements and the options available to you.

01205 212157 - info@mrjamesmathstuition.co.uk - www.mrjamesmathstuition.co.uk
Facebook and Instagram @mrjamesmathstuition - X @mrjamestuition