

# GCSE and A-level changes give pupils advance warning of exam content

## Vocabulary Match

- |                  |                |                 |                    |
|------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1. disruption    | 4. an equation | ___ students    | ___ math statement |
| 2. an indication | 5. pupils      | ___ disturbance | ___ all-or-nothing |
| 3. formulae      | 6. high-stakes | ___ a sign      | ___ procedures     |

## Article

Teenagers in England will be given advance warning of some exam content next year because of disruption caused by Covid, the government says.

New plans also say GCSE and A-level students should sit three sets of mock exams to help decide grades, if exams are cancelled. Teacher-assessed grades have been used for the past two years and have had significantly higher results for GCSEs and A-levels. The headteachers' union said schools would be relieved - but that it placed "a great deal of pressure" on pupils.

Under plans confirmed by the Department for Education (DfE), AS and A-level students will be given some indication of the content exams will focus on, to help with revision. There will be more changes to GCSEs - with formulae provided in maths exams, and equations in physics and combined science assessments. In English literature, history and geography, schools will be advised to focus on a narrower range of content.

The DfE has also issued a back-up plan in the "unlikely" event that exams are cancelled. It advises that, for subjects which are usually assessed with exams, schools assess pupils three times: in the second half of the autumn term, in the spring term and in the first half of the summer term. It says these should be held "under exam-like conditions wherever possible" - meaning they should be timed, and without access to books and revision notes.

The cancellations mean that next summer more than 700,000 teenagers in England will sit high-stakes real exams for the first time in their lives.

*Based on a Nov 12th, 2021 article from BBC News (All Rights Reserved) [www.bbc.com/news]*

## Quiz

1. How have grades been decided over the last two years?
2. What is the DfE's back-up plan?

## Conversation

- A: Did you hear about the exam changes? We've got to do three sets of mock exams!
- B: What? How will that work? They'll give us a grade based on our average scores?
- A: Only if the final exams are cancelled. Otherwise, they won't count for anything!
- B: Oh jeez... I'm having a nervous breakdown just thinking about it.

## Discussion

1. What do you think about schools focusing on a narrower range of content?
2. Did you usually get better grades in coursework or exams? Which did you prefer?
3. If you were a student in the digital, post-Covid era, how would you like to study?