

Dear Student

January 2020

### **National Reference Test 2020**

I am writing to you because you have been randomly selected to take part in this year's National Reference Test (NRT).

Ofqual's NRT was introduced from 2017 to provide additional information to support the awarding of GCSEs in the future. The purpose of this test is to provide information on how students' performance standards are changing over time. Your participation in the NRT will not affect your assessment results in school. Due to the importance of the test, the government has introduced legislation which means that the test is compulsory for most of the schools that have been selected to take part.

Ofqual regulates qualifications and exams in England. The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) is an independent, charitable organisation that provides educational research and development services. Ofqual has asked NFER to develop and administer the NRT.

### **Why have I been selected to take part?**

Your school is one of over 300 that is taking part and has provided NFER with a list of all its year 11 students who will be taking GCSE English language or GCSE maths in summer 2020. You have been randomly selected from this list to take part in the NRT by taking either the English or maths test; you will not be asked to do both.

### **Why is my participation in the test important?**

The NRT provides additional information to support the awarding of GCSEs so that in the future they can be awarded with greater reliability. It is very important that all selected students take part to ensure that the data from the test is representative of the GCSE student population across the country.

For your help with the NRT, you will be entered into a draw for a prize of a tablet. There is one national prize draw for students doing the English test and one for students doing the maths test.

### **How long will the test take?**

For both English and maths, the test lasts one hour. You will need to be available for up to one hour and 30 minutes. After the test, you will be asked to complete a short five minute survey about your experience of the NRT and your preparation in general for your GCSE exams. Please ensure that you arrive at the time that your school has advised so that the test can start promptly.

### **What is expected of me in the test?**

The test will be similar to the GCSEs in style so it will be familiar to you. You can use this as an opportunity to practise taking a test in formal exam conditions before your actual GCSEs. Please ensure you arrive promptly to start the test at the time given to you by your school. The test should be completed using a black pen or sharp HB or 2B pencil. You must **not** use gel pens. If you are completing the test in pencil, please write firmly.

You do not need to prepare for this test in advance. You should make your best attempt at the whole test, even if there are questions or areas that you are not sure of. If you finish early, use the remaining time to check over your answers. If there is anything you are unsure of and you need to ask any questions during the test, raise your hand and a member of staff present will help you.

### **Can I talk about the test to other students?**

The test is confidential. You must not take test materials out of the exam room at anytime during or after the test and you must not discuss the contents with anyone after the test. If you are not sure what you can and can't do, please ask the NFER member of staff for advice.

### **How will you use data about me?**

We will not publish the names of schools or students who take part in the NRT or your answers to any of the questions.

To see the full privacy statement please visit

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-reference-test-your-information-and-your-privacy>. If your responses to any of the questions make us concerned about your safety, we may need to share your answers to the NRT with your school.

### **Contact information**

For further information about the NRT, please visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/an-overview-of-the-national-reference-test>

Thank you for your help with the NRT. Your contribution is very much appreciated. If you have any questions or concerns about these tests, you can speak to your teacher, or you can contact NFER by email at [NRTkeystage4@nfer.ac.uk](mailto:NRTkeystage4@nfer.ac.uk).

Yours sincerely



Jo Nossiter  
Project Leader  
Research and Product Operations