



Preparing for A-Level English Language



Introduction:

We would very much like to welcome you onto the A Level English Language programme of study in September. You have chosen to study a course that will not only build upon your skills developed at GCSE, but also will encourage you to think critically and prepare for whatever your next steps may be. The course content of A-Level, however, is significantly different to that of GCSE so in order to make an informed decision about your progression, it is important that you thoroughly prepare.

This booklet is broken down into two key sections covering aspects of Language that you might like to investigate and think about. Each section contains wider reading recommendations, possible research questions and some activities to help you make a strong start in September.

English Language covers a wide range of topics and you may find this initially quite daunting. However, the field of English Language is varied and wide, and as a result, lots of people like discussing it! Hopefully this guide will help you with some starting points to ease the transition from GCSEs to A Level.

Course details: AQA English Language

<https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/english/specifications/AQA-7701-7702-SP-2015.PDF>

You should read this document in more detail, but the overview is provided below.

Paper 1: Language, the Individual and Society

What's assessed?

- Textual Variations and representations
- Children's language development (age 0-11)
- Methods of language analysis are integrated into the activities

How will it be assessed?

- Written exam – 2 hours 30 minutes
- 100 marks
- 40% of the A-Level

Questions

- Section A: Textual Variations and Representations. Two texts (one contemporary and one older text) linked by topic or theme.
 - A question requiring analysis of an older text (25 marks)
 - A question requiring analysis of a second text (25 marks)
 - A question requiring comparison of the two texts (20 marks)

- Section B: Children's Language Development. A discursive essay on children's language development, with a choice of two questions where the data provided will focus on spoken, written or multimodal language (30 marks)

Paper 2: Language Diversity and Change

What's assessed?

- Language diversity and change
- Language discourses
- Writing skills
- Methods of language analysis are integrated into the activities

How will it be assessed?

- Written exam – 2 hours 30 minutes
- 100 marks
- 40% of the A-Level

Questions

- Section A: Diversity and Change. One question from a choice of two.
 - Either – an evaluative essay on language diversity (30marks)
 - Or: an evaluative essay on language change (30 marks)
- Section B: Language Discourses. Two texts about a topic linked to the study of diversity and change.
 - A question requiring analysis of how the texts use language to present ideas, attitudes and opinions (40 marks)
 - A directed writing task linked to the same topic and the ideas in the texts (30 marks)

Non-Examined Assessment

What's assessed?

- Language Investigation
- Original Writing
- Methods of language analysis are integrated into the activities

How will it be assessed?

- Word count: 3,500 words
- 100 marks

- 20% of A-Level
- Assessed by teachers
- Moderated by AQA

Tasks?

- A language investigation (2,000 words excluding data)
- A piece of original writing and commentary (1,500 words total)

From GCSE to A Level:

The shift from GCSE to A Level is often based upon the idea of independence. In English Language, the expectations will most likely be that you will take on a greater responsibility for your learning. What this means is that you will be having to come up with your own opinions and ideas about texts, discuss ideas without prompting and complete essays with fewer restrictions on how you approach the question compared with GCSE. You will be expected to complete work independently and quite often in advance of each lesson. You may also be required to deliver things such as short presentations and participate in seminars (discussion and debate-based learning).

Preparation Tasks

Task 1 - Glossary of terms:

The most challenging aspect of A Level English Language is getting to grips with the huge amount of terminology that you will be expected to know and use accurately. Start by creating a working glossary document so that you can collect all the key terms you learn in one place, making it easier to revise in the future.

<https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/english/AQA-7701-7702-GLOSSARY.PDF>

Don't be put off by the amount of terminology in this document – by the end of the course, you will be able to use everything confidently.

You should create this revision document in a format that suits your preferred style of revision.

Task 2 - Radio 4's 'Word of Mouth' programme:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qtnz/episodes/player>

Available on BBC iPlayer. In this half hourly programme, Michael Rosen discusses various sorts of language from broad areas, such as the use of slang and language linked to gender identity, to more niche areas such as the naming of diseases and clichés in football commentary.

Identify three talks to listen to and engage with, preparing notes to share with the class after the summer.

Task 3 - Ted Talks:

[https://www.ted.com/playlists/228/how language changes over time](https://www.ted.com/playlists/228/how_language_changes_over_time)

Listen to the following talks and explore the questions. When you have completed all of the talks, choose one of the following topics in bold to investigate further.

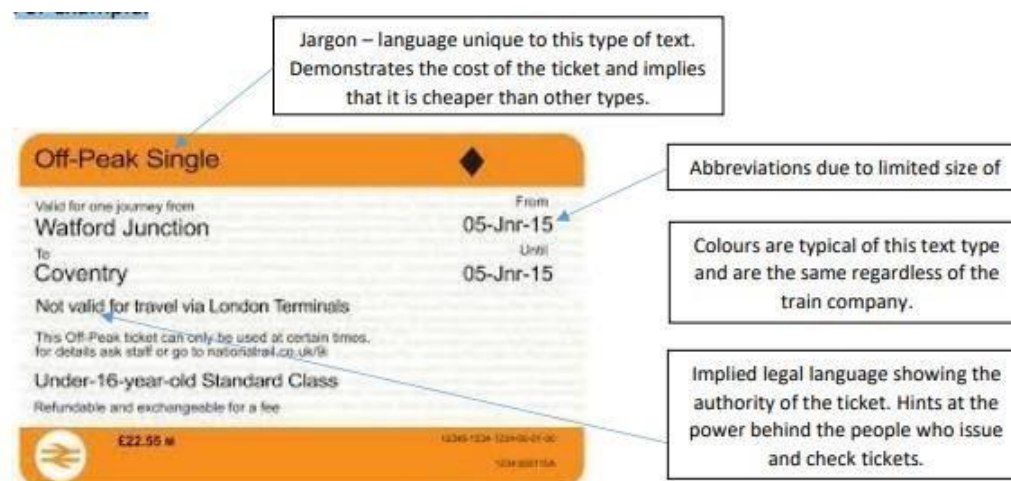
<p>Txting is killing language. JK!!!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your views on the way that texting (and social media in general) has influenced language? • What are the key differences between the way we use language in speech and the way we use it in language? • Look at the way the speaker discusses the use of the phrase 'LOL.' How far do you agree with his assertion that the role of 'LOL' has changed? Do you still use this technique? <p>Investigation: What are the key features of the way you use language in text messages and social media? What affects the way you use language in these situations?</p>
<p>Go ahead, make up new words!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How far do you agree with the idea that we are pre-programmed to apply certain grammatical rules such as plurals? • According to the talk, what are the different ways of creating new words? • Look at the new words that have been added to the Oxford English Dictionary (google 'new words list' and they will appear). What methods have been used? <p>Investigation: Try to create a new word and see if you can track its usage. Perhaps think about the ways this could be done (social media as a platform). Think about the gap you are trying to fill and how you will get the word to spread around different speakers.</p>
<p>How language transformed humanity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How essential is language to social learning? • Pagel presents an argument for a global language. What are your thoughts about creating a single global language? What are the potential benefits of such a situation? What are the potential downsides to this situation? <p>Investigation: Pagel discusses the idea that language is subversive and that there are certain words you cannot say. Discuss the words that are considered 'dangerous' or 'taboo' in modern society. How has this changed over time? Are there words that could be used 50 years ago that are considered inappropriate now? Why has this changed?</p>

Task 4 – Language Scrapbook

The joy about studying English Language is that it is everywhere.

As part of your summer work, start a ‘scrapbook’ where you collect different examples of language. Annotate the examples looking at how they use language to meet the demands of the different audiences, forms and functions of the text.

For example:



The expectation will be that you bring these scrapbooks to your first lesson back in September and it should be a book that you can add to throughout the two years you are studying English Language.

I would recommend buying a book like this:

https://www.amazon.co.uk/Artway-Enviro-Sketchbook-Cartridge-Hardboard/dp/B00IG6C8WS/ref=sr_1_5?dchild=1&keywords=scrapbook+white+pages&qid=1585519293&sr=8-5

To prepare for starting in September, we would recommend that you bought:

- Lever arch folder
- Dividers
- Punched Pockets
- Highlighters
- Scrapbook

We hope that you enjoy working through these tasks and gaining an insight into A-Level study.

This programme is very different to GCSE study and requires dedication from you to your research and personal study. However, you will find it interesting and rewarding – so we'll look forward to seeing you in September.