English Language

A-Level

NAME: _____

Welcome to A Level English Language!

Through a rich and varied programme of study, you will develop a deep knowledge of how English language works and a secure understanding of the language system. You will explore data and examples of language in use and apply concepts and methods appropriate for the analysis of language.

You will also undertake an independent investigation in an area of individual interest, and develop your skills as producers and interpreters of language.

There will be opportunities to engage creatively with topical issues relevant to language in use and you will develop your interest in and enjoyment of English.
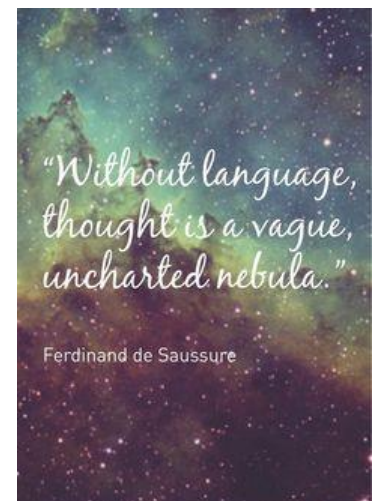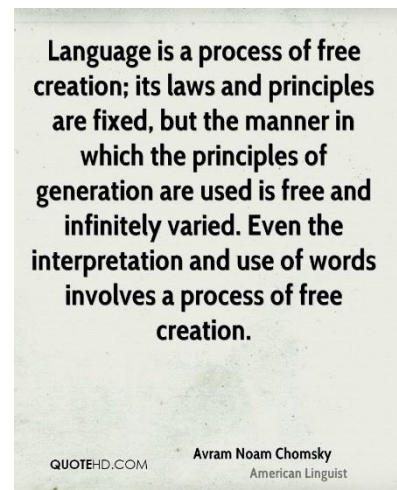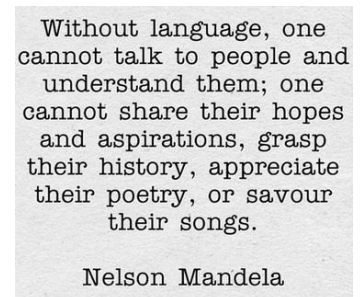
Aims and Leaning Outcomes
During this course, you will:
- develop and apply your understanding of the concepts and methods appropriate for the analysis and study of language;
- explore data and examples of language in use;
- engage creatively and critically with a varied programme for the study of English;
- develop your skills as producers and interpreters of language;
- independently investigate language in use.

Language is power, life and the instrument of culture, the instrument of domination and liberation.

Angela Carter

meetville.com

Without language, one cannot talk to people and understand them; one cannot share their hopes and aspirations, grasp their history, appreciate their poetry, or savour their songs.

Nelson Mandela

Language has no independent existence apart from the people who use it. It is not an end in itself; it is a means to an end of understanding who you are and what society is like.

-David Crystal

Language is a process of free creation; its laws and principles are fixed, but the manner in which the principles of generation are used is free and infinitely varied. Even the interpretation and use of words involves a process of free creation.

QUOTEHD.COM

Avram Noam Chomsky
American Linguist

"Without language, thought is a vague, uncharted nebula."

Ferdinand de Saussure

Teachers of English Language

Mrs Somel
Subject Leader of English

Mrs Thomas
Assistant Subject Leader of English (KS3 English)

Miss. Riley

Course Overview:

English Language (OCR H470 for first assessment in 2017)

Component 1 – Exploring Language
2 hours 30 minutes written examination in June of Y13
40% of A-Level
80 marks
Section A: Language under the microscope (20 marks)
Section B: Writing about a topical language issue (24 marks)
Section C: Comparing and contrasting texts (36 marks)

Component 2 – Dimensions of Linguistic Variation
2 hours 30 minutes written examination in June of Y13
40% of A Level
80 marks
Section A: Child language acquisition (20 marks)
Section B: Language in the media (24 marks)
Section C: Language change (36 marks)

Component 3 - Non-exam Assessment – Independent Language Research
20% of A-Level
40 marks
Section A: An independent investigation of language (30 marks)
A report of your independent investigation into an aspect of language use (2000-2500 words)
Section B: The academic poster (10 marks)

A well-researched and effectively organised overview of your own independent investigation in a form suitable for display at an undergraduate conference for English language research (750-1000 words)

How to succeed in English Language

The tips below will give you a baseline idea of how to write an academic A Level essay. The Basics:

1. **Write formally:** avoid imprecise language, use clearly defined paragraphs and subject specific vocabulary.

2. Guide the reader through the essay: use connectives to help you with this. One rule of thumb is that whenever you switch topics, you should try to provide a verbal clue that you are doing so, using transition discourse markers like "However, ...", "As a result, ...", "By comparison, ", etc. If you notice that you have to add these words between most of your sentences, not just the paragraphs, then you are bouncing around too much. In that case you need to reorganize your document to group related thoughts together, switching topics only when necessary. Once the organization is good, all you can do is read and reread what you write, rewording it until each new item follows easily from those before it.

3. Use tentative language: try to phrase your ideas in the subjunctive to demonstrate that your ideas are malleable and interpretative i.e. 'I*t could be* inferred that…'/ 'It seems that…'

4. Use third person: in the main bulk of your essay, it is better to write in third person i.e. '*It could be argued*' rather than 'I would argue'. However, this is not a steadfast rule and some students use first person in conclusions to great effect i.e. 'O*verall, I am convinced that……*'

5. Avoid contractions such as 'you're'; write 'you are' instead.

6. Use last names for authors,

7. Quote correctly and always try to embed quotations. Ensure you always use the correct punctuation around quotations.

8. Be concise: when two words will do, there is no need to write an entire paragraph. Keep your writing concise so you can get more high-quality ideas written in the timeframe.

9. Organise your writing, you should group and order your ideas logically, integrating counterargument and linking ideas together using discourse markers and connectives. You should support interpretations with quotations and regularly return to your line of argument. If you are asked to compare texts you should do so side by side, avoid writing long sections on one text after another and integrate analysis.

How to impress:

1. Have an opinion: you should create a 'thesis statement' when writing an academic essay. This is effectively your response to the question or task. You should refer back to this idea throughout your essay so that the whole piece links together clearly.

2. Always refer back to the question/task: this seems obvious but lots of students get

carried away and forget to do it.

3. Stay on topic: it can be really difficult to stay on topic when you feel like you have a lot to say – remember that you are assessed on how well you respond to the question/task, not on how much you know about the text.

4. Offer alternative interpretations: while you should have a viewpoint (thesis statement), it is important that you consider evidence for other interpretations.

5. Try to impress the examiner with your introduction and conclusion: be original, make sure you stand out. For example, you may wish to use quotations in your introduction and conclusion or you may wish to quote a critic you have read. Most importantly, start answering the question as soon as possible – don't waste time on longwinded introductions or repetitive conclusions.

Basic Essay writing technique

• In your introduction you should provide a **thesis statement*** which refers to the point(s) in the question, answering the question in this opening paragraph, if possible.

• You should **progress (develop) your argument** by building on points from paragraph to paragraph.

• **Signpost new paragraphs** clearly by leaving a line gap **or** indenting. You do not have to do both. Also, don't be tempted to start a new line just because you are beginning a new sentence.

• Don't digress: each of you paragraphs should be focused on the topic of the question. Use actual wording from the question from time to time so that you don't go off the point.

• **Use discourse markers** to make your points fluently and clearly. Phrases and connectives help you to make sense when discussing points in a text or linking ideas in and between paragraphs. These will also help the reader to 'navigate' your essay. For example:

At the beginning of the chapter/ poem… At the start of… At first / firstly…	Later on in the text… Further on… Next we see… Subsequent paragraphs…	Secondly… At the end of the chapter… As the text draws to a close… In conclusion / To conclude Finally / My final point is….
Similarly / Likewise In addition / additionally Furthermore Moreover	As well as this However Whereas Whilst Although Even though	As a result Due to (the fact that) Since / Because Consequently / As a consequence Subsequently

• Support your points with **evidence**

• Ideally, you should **re-read what you write** after each paragraph to check it makes sense and to help focus you on what to put in the next section of your discussion. In the very least, leave

time to scan through the whole essay to check it is clear.

• If relevant, include at least one point of **counterargument (antithesis)** in your essay to show that you are capable to balanced evaluative thought, and are able to consider other possible viewpoints.

• **Always write a conclusion**, even if you are short of time. You must frame your essay by ending it neatly, referring back to the main point(s) in the question.

• And finally, above all…if you are unsure of something, or uncertain about what you **want to write,** don't write it. Keep your points simple in this case, and don't try to use vocabulary that you don't understand.

Assessment Criteria

Assessment Objectives

It is important that you are familiar with the assessment objectives and that you understand how to demonstrate your skills for each objective examined on each examination question.

AO1	Apply appropriate methods of language analysis, using associated terminology and coherent written expression.
In your own words	
AO2	Demonstrate critical understanding of concepts and issues relevant to language use.
In your own words	
AO3	Analyse and evaluate how contextual factors and language features are associated with the construction of meaning.
In your own words	
AO4	Explore connections across texts, informed by linguistic concepts and methods.
In your own words	
AO5	Demonstrate expertise and creativity in the use of English to communicate in different ways.

In your own words	

EXAMPLE MARK SHEET

English Language   Component 2: Dimensions of Linguistic Variations   Section B: Language in The Media

NAME: DATE: TITLE OF ASSESSMENT: Language and Gender Mid-term Assessment OVERALL MARK (each AO mark added together):

Level	AO2 (/12)	AO3 (/12)
6 11-12	-Candidates show an assured knowledge and understanding of relevant concepts and issues. -Candidates engage critically with the ways concepts and issues inform their analysis of the text's patterns of language use.	-Candidates offer a discerning exploration of a range of contextual factors and language features, and how they are associated with the construction of meaning. -Candidates evaluate in perceptive detail how contextual features inherent in the text are associated with the construction of meaning.
5 9-10	-Candidates show a good knowledge and understanding of relevant concepts and issues. -Candidates use their knowledge and understanding of concepts and issues to offer informed comment of the text's patterns of language use.	-Candidates respond in detail to a range of contextual factors and language features, and how they are associated with the construction of meaning. -Candidates will analyse in detail how contextual features inherent in the text are associated with the construction of meaning.
4 7-8	-Candidates show a sound level of knowledge and understanding of relevant concepts and issues. -Candidates use their knowledge and understanding of concepts and issues to comment on some language features in the text.	-Candidates make a sound attempt to respond to a range of contextual factors and language features, and how they are associated with the construction of meaning. -Candidates make clear, relevant response to the contextual features inherent in the text and how these are associated with the construction of meaning.
3 5-6	-Candidates show a largely accurate knowledge and understanding of language concepts or issues, although is likely to lack the depth needed to be convincing. -Candidates use their knowledge and understanding of concepts and issues to comment generally on language use in the text.	-Candidates make some attempts to respond to contextual factors and language features and make some points about how they are associated with the construction of meaning. -Candidates make general comments regarding the contextual features inherent in the text, showing some understanding of how these are associated with the construction of meaning.
2 3-4	-Candidates' knowledge and understanding of concepts/issues is likely to have inaccuracies or be muddled. -Candidates use concepts/issues to comment on the text, although connections may be lacking or confused.	-Candidates make a limited response to contextual factors and language features and how they are associated with the construction of meaning. -Candidates show a basic understanding of how contextual features inherent in the text contribute to the overall meaning.

| 1 | -Candidates select irrelevant or unconnected concepts or issues, or presents erroneous accounts of concepts. | -Candidates make only one or at the most two references to contextual factors and language features and how they are associated with the construction of meaning. |
| 1-2 | -Candidates attempt to use concepts or issues to the text, although these will be superficial. | -Candidates make little attempt to show understanding of how one or more contextual features inherent in the text contribute to the overall meaning. |

The Study of English Language

There are some important areas that will be the basis of your study of the language of texts taken from everyday sources. You need to become confident in using them. You should become familiar with the following language levels and related concepts:

Language Levels

Lexis

Semantics

Grammar

Discourse

Pragmatics

Phonology

Related Concepts

Register

Mode

Idiolect

Sociolect

Dialect

Accent

Representation

The Basics

Texts Producers and Receivers

Context

Context of Production: all of the external factors that shape how texts are written or spoken, e.g. the intentions and motivations of text producers, time and place

Context of Reception: all of the external factors that shape how texts are read, heard or listened to, e.g. the intentions and motivations of a text receiver, the situation in which reading or listening takes place

Discourse Event

Using this term enables you to explore how texts are produced and received in specific times and places by real people with beliefs and intentions using language to express and understand their ideas and meanings.

Purpose and Audience involved in a Discourse Event

Purpose and audience relate to the concept of motivations and intentions of the text producer and receiver.

<u>Purpose</u>

In many cases, texts have a number of purposes and so can be termed 'multi-purpose'.

This term can be broken down into **'primary purpose'** and **'secondary purpose'**.

We should also explore the 'function' of a text – essentially: what is it used for?

<u>Audience</u>

There are two types of audience to be aware of: **implied reader** and **actual reader**.

The implied reader is a constructed image of a reader who best fits the central message, beliefs and world-views of the text is presenting.

The actual reader is anyone who engages with a text.

The same can be said for the author or speaker of a text: the implied writer is the person the reader constructs in their mind when engaging with a text, whilst the actual writer is the person who wrote the text in reality.

A larger group of readers who share beliefs, interests and intentions are members of a discourse community. A discourse community is usually a socially oriented group e.g. a year group or a profession.

KEY TERMS

Context –the external factors that shape how texts are produced and received

Discourse event –an act of communication occurring in a specific time and location involving writers/speakers and readers/listeners

Text producer – person/people responsible for writing/speaking to produce a text

Text receiver – person/people who read / hear / listen to a text

Multi-purpose text – a text with more than one purpose

Primary purpose – the main purpose

Secondary purpose – the subsidiary purpose(s) which might be more subtle

Implied reader – a constructed image of an idealised reader

Actual reader – any person or groups of people who engage with a text

Implied writer – a constructed image of an idealised writer

Actual writer – the 'real' person or people responsible for text production

Discourse community – a group of people with shared interests and belief systems who are likely to respond to texts in similar ways

Mode and Genre

<u>Mode</u>

Typically (according to the oppositional view) texts either belong to a written category or a spoken category. So we have two types of mode: **written** and **spoken**.

The oppositional view defines the differences between modes by arguing that they have completely different features:

Writing is:	Speech is:
objective	interpersonal
a monologue	a dialogue
durable	ephemeral
planned	spontaneous
highly structured	loosely structured
grammatically complex	grammatically simple
concerned with the past and future	concerned with the present
formal	informal
decontextualised	contextualised

Yet many texts do not fit into these opposite distinctions, so we could see spoken and written modes as on a '**continuum**'. Texts which have features associated with both traditionally or conventionally written and spoken modes are called '**blended-mode texts'**.

Example Continuum

Speech		Writing

A text could be said to be placed on this line of continuum depending on how conventional it is based on the traditional features we would expect from each mode.

To consider how to distinguish between degrees of speech and writing, we could use the 'prototype model'. Using this model, we could consider that some texts are prototypes (typical members) and others are less typical members. This enables a comparison to determine the degree to which a text is in the spoken or written mode.

Genre

Genre enables us to group texts based on shared characteristics and expected textual conventions.

However text producers can also use or refer to conventions of other texts and genres for a specific purpose or effect. This is called 'intertextuality'.

3. Variation, Register and Representation

Language use varies depending on the contextual factors influencing it.

Register

A register is a variety of language associated with a particular situation of use.

Situational Characteristics (key aspects of context)

Key questions to consider:

Who are the people communicating?

What is their relationship?

Where is the setting?

How are they communicating?

What is the purpose of the communication?

Representation

Language use also differs according to how events, people and circumstances are represented by different users, in different texts, and with different motivating factors.

The ways in which events, people and circumstances are represented are often affected by wider societal values and ways of seeing and constructing the world.

Narrative

As language users, we organise our experiences of events, people, time and places into structures called **narratives**. The **narrator** is the person who writes or speaks the narrative and the **narratee** is the person to whom it is told. The narrative is set within a time frame (the past, present or future).

We can further explore the concept of narrative by separating two components of the story telling process: the story and the narrative discourse.

Story – the building blocks of a narrative (events, characters, time and place)

Narrative discourse – the shaping of the story through choices in language and structure

The events of the story can also be further categorised into central events and additional events (ones secondary to the overall story).

Not all information required to understand the story is given by the narrator though. We fill in the gaps from our own understanding of the world to make meanings not stated explicitly by the narrator. This is called '**gap-filling**' and involves us adding a sense of meaning to individual words and phrases based on our own knowledge and the context in which words appear. This knowledge is called a '**knowledge frame**' and it is a mental store of knowledge about the world gained through experience.

Tellability

We might ask why do narrators narrate? What are the narrator's motivations and intentions and why is it worth reading / listening to?

The sociolinguist William Labov (1972) coined the term 'tellability' to identify the features of a narrative that make it worth telling.

He argued that there should be a strong reason for people wanting to read, listen and relate to them. Generally narratives have **high tellability** if they present interesting and engaging material in a compelling style and **low tellability** if the material is uninteresting and/or the way it is presented is uninspiring.

Lexis and Semantics

<u>What is **lexis**?</u>

Lexis is the term given by linguists to describe the vocabulary system of a language.

<u>What is **semantics**?</u>

Semantics refers to the study of meaning and how meaning is created within texts. It is also concerned with the relationships between lexical items and how these create textual cohesion (how a text is logically structured to create a coherent sense of meaning).

Word Classes

A word class will typically consist of lexical items (words) that share the same behavioural properties; they perform specific roles that distinguish them from other items in a different word class.

<u>Basics for Word Classes</u>

Word Class	Description/Function	Example
Noun	Names of objects, feelings, attitudes, people or places	cottage
Verb	Shows actions, events or states of being, feeling or thinking	seems
Adjective	Adds detail to nouns	bleak
Adverb	Adds detail to verbs or other adverbs	slowly
Determiner	Positioned before nouns to add detail or to clarify	the, a, an
Conjunction	Links words, phrases and clauses together	and, but, or, although, because
Preposition	Shows relation in terms of time or place	in, at, by, on
Pronoun	Replaces nouns and can also refer forwards and backwards to them in longer stretches of text	I, me, you, his, your

Across all the word classes we can also differentiate between **lexical words** (**open** word classes) which are open to new additions and derivations, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, and **functional** words (**closed** word classes) such as determiners, conjunctions, prepositions and pronouns, where new additions are rare. **When responding to Component 1A 'Language under the microscope', generally you should analyse functional words within your response to part (b) – sentence construction. You should analyse lexical words within your response to part (a) – lexis.**

Challenge yourself!

We can further classify word classes into sub-classes. For those higher marks for AO1, you should be able to also know and understand the sub-classes for each word class.

Nouns

Type of Noun	Example	Function
Proper	London, Henry	Refers to names of people or places
Abstract	pain, happiness	Refers to states, feelings and concepts that have no physical existence
Concrete	Countable, e.g. table Non-countable, e.g. furniture	Refers to objects hat have a physical existence

Verbs

Verb Process	Type	Examples
Material	Describes actions or events	hit, run, eat, push, read, paint, remove, hold
Relational	Describes states of being or are used to identify	be, appear, seem, become
Mental	Describe perception, thought or speech	think, speak. believe, love
Dynamic verb processes	Processes where there is a change in state over time	paint, remove, eat
Stative verb processes	Processes where the situation remains constant	love, believe, know

Modal Verbs
Will   Shall   May/Might   Would   Can/Could   Must   Should   Ought to

Modal verbs are used to express ideas such as possibility, intention, obligation and necessity e.g.
- I would have told you, if you had wanted me to.
- Yes, I can do that.

They are not used to talk about things that definitely exist, or events that definitely happened. These meanings are sometimes divided into two groups:

DEGREES OF CERTAINTY - certainty; probability; possibility; impossibility.
OBLIGATION/FREEDOM TO ACT - permission; lack of permission; ability; obligation.

Modal verbs are verbs that 'help' other verbs to express a meaning; it is important to realise that modal verbs have no meaning by themselves. A modal verb such as *would* has several functions: it can be used, for example, to help verbs express ideas about the past, the present and the future.

Adjectives and Adverbs

Sub-class	Description	Examples
Base	The basic form of an adjective or adverb modifying another word	big, interesting, carefully
Comparative	A form used to compare two instances either adding '-er' or 'more'	The parcel was bigger. That was a more interesting game. He read more carefully.
Superlative	A form used to compare more than two instances, identifying a best example	That was the biggest parcel. The most interesting game It was the most carefully he has ever read.

Pronouns

Type	Example
Personal	I, you, she, they
Possessive	My, his, our, their
Reflexive	Myself, himself, themselves
Demonstrative	this, these, that, those
Relative	who, whom, which

Personal pronouns change their form depending on number and function within a sentence as subject, object or possessive.

Number	Person	Subject	Object	Possessive
Singular	First person	I	me	my
	Second person	you	you	your
	Third person	he/she/it	him/her/it	his/her/its
Plural	First person	we	us	our
	Second person	you	you	your
	Third person	they	them	their

Cohesion can be provided by use of '**referencing**'. Pronouns could replace nouns to avoid repetition, but the text still remains coherent.

Anaphoric referencing – referencing back to an already stated lexical item

Cataphoric referencing – referencing forwards to an as yet undisclosed lexical item (perhaps to build suspense)

Lexical **Connotation**

Some linguists distinguish between the strict semantic meaning of a word and the associative meanings that it may conjure up in a given context; a distinction between denotation and connotation.

Denotation – a strict 'dictionary' meaning of a lexical item

Connotation – an associated, symbolic meaning relying on culturally shared conventions.

<u>Semantic Relationships</u>

<u>Semantic / Lexical Field</u>

Lexical items that share certain semantic value are said to be from a defined semantic or lexical field. This creates cohesion, but also might evoke effects in a literary text.

<u>Synonymy</u>

Synonyms are lexical items that have generally equivalent meanings:

E.g. cry, weep, howl, whimper.

We can analyse why or to what effect language users select particular lexical items when alternative synonyms are available. Sometimes their choice might be dependent on formality, for example a choice between the following synonyms: lavatory, toilet, water closet, bog. Words and phrases that are more acceptable substitutes for potentially distasteful language choices are known as **euphemisms**. The harsher alternatives are said to be **dysphemisms**. As with all synonyms, context and the intended impact of a text producer will govern language choice.

<u>Antonymy</u>

Antonyms are words with opposite meanings, e.g. alive – dead, true – false, man – woman.

In these examples, the antonym is **complementary** – a true opposite.

In other cases, antonyms are **gradable**, e.g. beautiful – ugly. Whilst someone might not be considered beautiful, that does not necessarily mean that he/she is ugly. However if someone is not alive, he/she is dead. Gradable antonymy is subject to an individual's perception and value systems.

<u>Hyponymy</u>

A hierarchical structure exists between lexical items, known as **hyponymy**.

Moving down the chain leads to a more specific lexical item, related to the item above it in a **subordinate** manner. The opposite movement leads to a more general **superordinate** item.

Hierarchical Structure
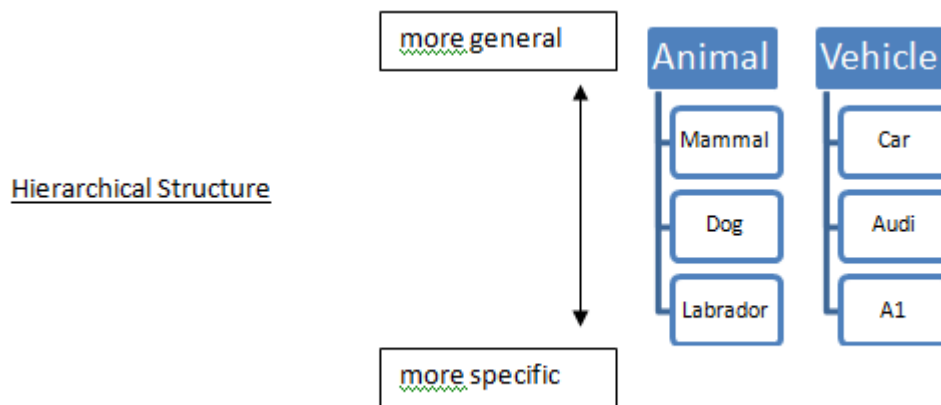
Different texts will exhibit use of varying degrees of specificity according to the hierarchical structure. For example a car manufacturer's sales brochure will be very specific regarding the makes and models of their vehicles using many subordinate lexical items, but a children's book describing a character travelling might only use the superordinate, 'car', to explain how a character moves from one setting to another.

Language users might also under-specify or over-specify for stylistic and comic effect.

Under-specificity – the inappropriately vague, rather general answer to a question

Over-specificity – the giving of an inappropriately too specific answer, sometimes with absurd effects.

Figurative Language

A final and very interesting aspect of semantics relates to the way in which we can understand an object, idea or concept metaphorically in terms of something else.

Metaphors are not only used in literary texts: much of the way we conceptualise and view the world can be understood in terms of metaphor.

Summary for Lexis

The words used in text or spoken data; the words, phrases and idioms of language.

Analysis of lexis might include exploring the text producer's:

• Choice of lexis, e.g. jargon (specialist terms), dialect, slang, colloquialisms, swearing, taboo terms, clichés, euphemisms, dysphemisms, archaisms (deliberate use of old-fashioned terms).

• Choices regarding levels of formality and education, e.g. low frequency elevated, literary, sophisticated, Latinate, unusual and polysyllabic terms (largely a reading or writing/planned vocabulary) as opposed to high frequency, simple, every-day, vernacular and monosyllabic terms (largely a speaking/spontaneous vocabulary).

• The concept of the lexeme.

• Types of word, e.g. compound, shortening, abbreviation, acronym, neologism, blend, loan word.

• Use of recurring lexis from particular lexical (semantic) fields.

• Collocations, whether common (predictable) or uncommon (deviant).

• Use of figurative language, e.g. metaphor, simile, pun, hyperbole, personification, metonymy, oxymoron.

## Grammar

Prescription or Description?

A **prescriptive attitude** to language often sees varieties of English other than Standard English as grammatically incorrect or 'bad', and is highly critical of uses of language that deviate from so-called established grammatical rules.

A **descriptive approach** to language study and grammar, on the other hand, has no such attitude. The aim of a descriptive study is to comment on actual usage and describe not whether rules are adhered to but how language operates in real examples and contexts.

Syntax and Morphology

We can divide the framework of grammar into two sub-methods: **syntax** and **morphology**. Whereas morphology is concerned with how words or lexical items are formed from smaller units called morphemes, syntax looks at how lexical items are sequenced into larger units of language.

The Linguistic Rank Scale

morpheme	lexical item	phrase	clause	sentence	utterance	text
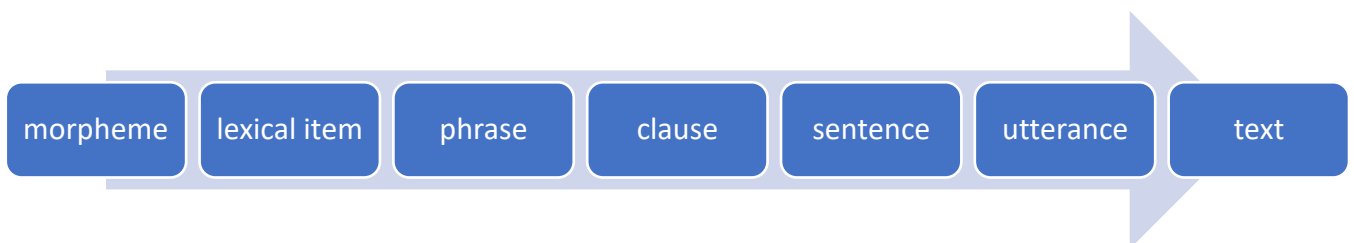
Morphology (the study of word formation)

KEY TERMS

root – a morpheme that can stand on its own and can usually form a word in its own right

suffix – a morpheme that comes after a root word to modify its meaning

prefix – a morpheme that goes before a root word to modify its meaning

affix – the overall term for an addition to a root (prefix/suffix) to modify its meaning or create a new word

inflectional function – the way that an affix shows a grammatical category such as a verb tense or a plural noun

derivational function – the way that an affix helps to form a new word by attaching itself to a root

Phrases

Words can form larger structures called 'phrases'. The two most important types of phrases are noun phrases and verb phrases:

Noun Phrases

These are phrases centred round a noun that acts as the 'head' of the phrase. Other words in the phrase fulfil certain functions in relation to this head.

These functions could be:

a determiner (d)

a modifier (m)

a qualifier (q)

E.g.

The	beautiful	house	by	the	sea
d	m	h	q		

h = head word

We can further categorise the modifier into a pre-modifier and a post-modifier.

A **pre-modifier** goes before the head noun to add detail or clarify some aspect of it.

A **post-modifier** comes after the head noun to add detail or clarify some aspect of it.

Verb Phrases

Similarly to the noun phrase, verb phrases are built around a head word, the main verb. They are generally less complex than noun phrases but can, in addition to the main verbs, include auxiliary verbs that help to show either tense (**primary auxiliary verbs** *be, do,* and *have*) or show someone's degree of commitment towards an event or person (**modal auxiliary verbs** such as *may, could, must).*

Clauses

Phrases can then form larger structures called clauses. These are groups of words centred round a verb phrase. This verb phrase combines with other phrases which are labelled according to their function.

Component	Description
Subject (S) – usually a noun phrase	Usually indicates the element of responsible for carrying out the verb process e.g. *Robbie* kicked the football.

Object (O) – usually a noun phrase	That affected by the action of the verb process, e.g. I kicked *the football*.
Complement (C) – usually a noun phrase	An attribute that provides more information about a subject or object, for example, 'She is *ill*', 'We painted the room *blue*'.
Adverbial (A) – usually an adverbial or prepositional phrase	The circumstances of the action or event (the where, when, how), for example, 'I saw him *at the concert*'.

Sentences

Clauses are the components of the larger grammatical structure of the sentence. A sentence contains one or more clauses and may be of one of the following **types**:

- Simple
- Compound
- Complex

Simple Sentence

This type contains only one clause. It includes a single main verb and a combination of some or all of the other clause elements (subject, object, complement, adverbial):

Joe lived in Glasgow.

His sister lived in London.

Compound Sentence

This type consists of two or more simple sentences joined by a **coordinating conjunction** (*and, but, so*). Each clause in a compound sentence makes sense on its own, and each is of equal importance:

Joe lived in Glasgow *and* his sister lived in London.

The exam was difficult *but* he passed.

You can jump in a taxi *or* you can wait for the bus.

Ellipsis occurs when part of a sentence is left out in order to avoid repetition. The last sentence above, for example, could be changed to:

You can jump in a taxi or wait for the bus.

This is still considered a compound sentence, because if the missing element is restored, *you can wait for the bus* can stand on its own as a sentence.

Complex Sentence

In complex sentences one or more of the clauses is of lesser importance than the **main clauses**. These lesser clauses are called subordinate clauses. Unlike main clauses, a **subordinate clause** cannot stand on its own and make sense.

Clauses might be linked by **subordinating conjunctions** (*because, when, after, although, as, except*) and expressions (*in order to, so that, as though* and *rather than*).

The most common types of subordinate clause are:

- **Clauses introduced by 'that'**, e.g. I thought that the journey was slow.
- **Clauses introduced by a 'wh-' word** (*what, when, who, whether*), e.g. He told me what he wanted to buy.
  She replied when I wrote to her.
- **Adverbial clauses which usually explain when, where or why something happened**.
  These are introduced by such conjunctions as *before, until, while, because and since*.
  E.g. She left before I arrived.
  She left because it was late.
- **Relative clauses which usually include the relative pronouns** *who, whose, which or that*.
  E.g. The passenger whose luggage had gone missing was late for his flight.

The Functions of Sentences

Another way of classifying sentences is to identify their functions:

Declarative Sentences

These make statements. The usual order of these sentences is subject-verb-object. E.g. I have read all of Shakespeare's tragedies. Information texts (such as leaflets or news reports), narrative texts and descriptive texts are likely to rely heavily on declarative sentences.

Interrogative Sentences

These ask questions. E.g. Have you read any of Shakespeare's tragedies? In a written text, interrogative structures are often associated with a direct address to the reader. Advertisements, for example, sometimes try to involve the reader by asking questions. In speech interrogative structures can be a way of making a command more polite e.g. Could you open the window?

Imperative Sentences

These give instructions of some kind – orders, warnings, advice, invitations. They usually begin with the verb and omit the subject.
E.g. Read Shakespeare's *Hamlet* by next week.
Have a cup of tea.

Exclamatory Sentences

These are emphatic sentences, which in writing are indicated by the use of an exclamation mark:

I've got to read Hamlet by next week!

Summary for Grammar

The way individual words are structured and arranged together in sentences.

Analysis of grammar might include exploring the text producer's use of:

- Functional word classes: pronouns, conjunctions, prepositions and determiners

- Features of the verb: main and auxiliary, tense, modal auxiliaries, active and passive voice

- Sentence types: declarative, interrogative, imperative, exclamatory

- Sentence complexity: minor, simple, compound, complex, relative length

- Unusual word order

- Standard or non-standard forms

- Other aspects: ellipsis, pre - and post - modification, subject / object, pronoun use, person, agreement, content and function words, noun phrase complexity

Word structure: prefix, suffix

Phonetics, Phonology and Prosodics

Definitions

Phonetics – the area of study that is concerned with investigating how sounds are actually produced by language users

Phonology – the area of study that refers to the more abstract sound system

Prosodics – the study of how speakers can shape meanings through emphasising certain aspects of intonation, speed and volume

The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is a system for showing the different sounds that we use in English in a way that the conventional alphabet for written language cannot do. E.g. in the words 'laughter' and 'naughty' the 'augh' is pronounced differently, as in the words 'row' (an argument) and 'row' (something to do in a boat). Although the spellings are the same, they are pronounced differently. Pairs of words like these are known as **heterophones**. **Homophones** are words that are pronounced the same but have a different meaning and may have a different spelling e.g. there and their.

The IPA allows us to distinguish between sounds so that we can describe how they are used in specific instances more easily and systematically. The IPA can span a range of languages as well. All sounds available to a language user are represented by a symbol. The table below illustrates the sounds and symbols for the English language. Note that it is based on an RP accent.

The International Phonetic Alphabet

vowels		consonants	
IPA	**examples**	**IPA**	**examples**
ʌ	cup, luck	b	bad, lab
aː	arm, father	d	did, lady
æ	cat, black	f	find, if
ə	away, cinema	g	give, flag
e	met, bed	h	how, hello
ɜː	turn, learn	j	yes, yellow
ɪ	hit, sitting	k	cat, back
iː	see, heat	l	leg, little
ɒ	hot, rock	m	man, lemon
ɔː	call, four	n	no, ten
ʊ	put, could	ŋ	sing, finger
uː	blue, food	p	pet, map
aɪ	five, eye	r	red, try
aʊ	now, out	s	sun, miss
əʊ	go, home	ʃ	she, crash
eə	where, air	t	tea, getting
eɪ	say, eight	tʃ	check, church
ɪə	near, here	θ	think, both
ɔɪ	boy, join	ð	this, mother
ʊə	pure, tourist	v	voice, five
		w	wet, window
		z	zoo, lazy
		ʒ	pleasure, vision
		dʒ	just, large

Consonant Sounds

Consonant Group	Description	Members
Plosive	Produced by the articulators coming together to stop airflow and then being released	b, p (labial); t, d (alveolar); k, g (soft palate)
Fricative	Produced by the articulators positioned together but a small gap remaining through which sound comes	θ, ð (dental) f, v (labio-dental: lower lip against upper teeth) s, z (alveolar)
Affricate	Produced by the articulators coming together, then released but in a way that is similar to the friction sound of a fricative	ʤ, ʧ (hard palate)
Nasal	Produced by articulators stopping the airflow with a release through the nose	m (labial)l n (alveolar); ŋ (soft palate)
Lateral	Produced by the articulators coming together and the air being released over the sides of the tongue	l (alveolar)
Approximant	Produced in a similar way to other consonant sounds but without the articulators fully coming together	w (labial); r (alveolar); j (hard palate)

Consonants

The consonant sounds shown in the IPA table can be grouped in terms of how they are articulated in the mouth. All consonant sounds involve the restriction of airflow by articulators: either the lips coming together (labial) or the tongue being positioned against the teeth (dental) or in some part of the roof of the mouth (alveolar ridge, had and soft palate).
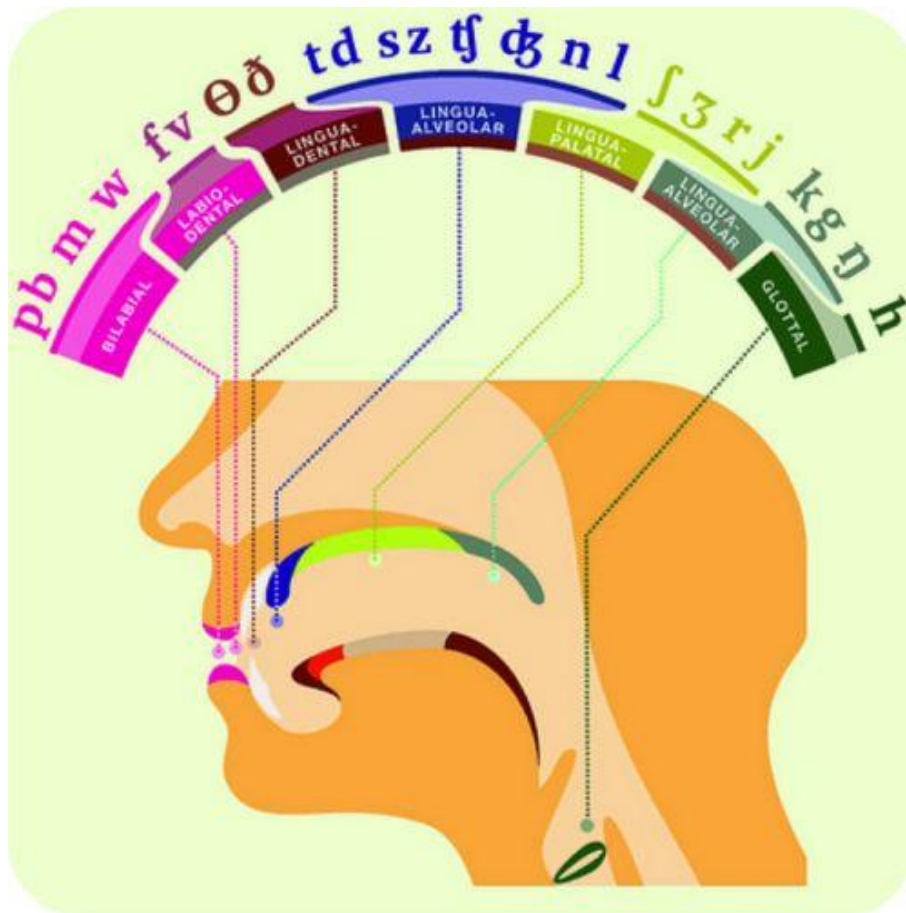
Vowels

Vowels, on the other hand, do not involve any restriction and release of airflow in the mouth. Vowels can be grouped depending on whether they are short, long, or are diphthongs (a combination of two sounds where a speaker moves from an initial sound to a second sound across the vowel).

Sound Iconicity

Text producers use sound patterns in the same way as other language features to help create effects. Often this involves using patterns where sounds mirror the actions they describe, or which are intended to draw attention to some relationship between sound and form.

Sound Patterns in Literature

Literary texts often make extensive use of sound iconicity, e.g. onomatopoeia, sibilance.

Key Terms

consonance – a pattern of repeated consonant sounds for effect e.g. plosives /p/ and /b/

assonance – a pattern of repeated vowel sounds for effect

sibilance – a pattern of repeated fricative sounds, especially /s/, for effect

lexical onomatopoeia – words that have some associated meanings between their sound and what they represent e.g. crash, bang

non-lexical onomatopoeia – 'non-words' that nonetheless are intended to signify some meaning through sound e.g. brrrm to describe the noise of a car

Language users also manipulate sound patterns for effect, particularly for jokes, e.g. 'I keep reading The Lord of the Rings over and over. I guess it's just force of hobbit'.

The words 'habit' and 'hobbit' are known as **minimal pairs** where the words only differ in one single sound. **Phonological manipulation** makes creative changes in sound patterns for effect, like to create humour.

Prosodics

Prosodic features provide non-verbal meaning, relying not on what speakers say but how they say it.

Pitch and Intonation

Differences in pitch can often signal important emotional aspects behind meaning. E.g. a lowering or raising of the pitch of their voice can show different attitudes, while rising or falling intonation can often be an important indicator of meaning, e.g. rising intonation at the end of a sentence to suggest a question or seek agreement.

Volume

Variation in volume can convey a number of possible emotions as well as emphasising certain parts of words that a speaker wants to emphasise.

Speed

Speeding up might convey a speaker's excitement or anger, while slowing down might convey their uncertainty or a lack of commitment towards something proposed.

Summary for Phonology

Analysis of phonology might include exploring:

- Characteristics of normal spoken delivery, e.g. volume, stress, pitch, intonation, (pitch pattern or melody), tempo, silent pauses, voiced pauses (fillers, e.g. 'er', 'erm'), alliteration, assonance. These are called **prosodic** features.

- Elision (partial loss of sounds from words in connected speech, indicated through spelling), e.g. I'm, can't, 'cos, fish 'n' chips, livin', cuppa tea).

- Phonology can even be a characteristic of written English as well as spoken and can be spotted in certain patterns. You will be used to this with the poems that you studied for GCSE, but remember that we are not just thinking about poems anymore. The patterns can include: rhyme, alliteration, onomatopoeia, rhythm, assonance.

- Significant aspects of accent, indicated by means of deviant spelling, e.g. West Lancashire 'th'reet mon' ('the right man'), Somerset 'zo I zaid' ('so I said').

Graphology

Many texts rely on the use of layout, space, images, colour and different font types to help convey their meaning.

Layout, shape and space

Layout is the physical organisation of a text. The layout of a text is often related to its genre, e.g. shopping lists, emails, menus and advertisements.

<u>Icons and symbols</u>

An iconic sign is a sing or image that is a direct picture of the thing it represents.

A symbolic sign is a sign or image where an associated meaning is drawn from some shared degree of knowledge. Colours can be strongly associative and text producers often make use of this kind of general knowledge, as well as expecting readers or listeners to draw on any highly personal associations that might come from personal experience.

<u>Typography</u>

Typological features are those related to the use of fonts in texts. These may include: type, size, colour, effects like bold, underlined, italicised, the choice of background and any spacing used to create effects on a text receiver.

<u>Multimodal Texts</u>

A multimodal text is a text that relies on the interplay of different codes e.g. visual and written to help shape meaning. Particular genres of texts make use of this e.g. young children's literature and advertising.

Pragmatics

Pragmatics is the area of language study associated with exploring how contextual factors influence meaning.

<u>Context, implication and inference</u>

Much of what is understood arises less from the literal semantic value of words than from the contexts in which they are produced and understood. Implied meanings where an intended meaning beyond the literal one is conveyed rely on implication on the part of the writer or speaker and on the ability of the reader or listener to infer. Most readers and listeners will choose the most relevant meaning for them in the context of what is being said

and other background knowledge. When hearing or reading a word or phrase, listeners and readers draw on a range of knowledge that might be personal memories and experiences (embodied knowledge) or a knowledge gained from a variety of sources from our experience of the world (schema).

Key Terms

embodied knowledge – knowledge that is associated with memories of physically experiencing something, for example the sights and smells of visiting a city

schema – a bundle of knowledge about a concept, person or event

Grice's Maxims

The linguist and philosopher, Paul Grice, developed the **cooperative principle** that suggests that all communication is essentially a **cooperative act**. He determined that speakers adhere to four maxims in maintaining cooperation:

1. **Quantity:** use an appropriate amount of detail.

2. **Quality:** speak the truth and do not knowingly mislead.

3. **Relevance:** keep what is being discussed relevant to the topic.

4. **Manner:** avoid vagueness and ambiguity.

When these maxims are broken or flouted, they can also give rise to an implied meaning, which Grice called an **implicature**.

Example

1.

A: Have you finished your homework?

B: Yes, I have finished my homework.

2.

A: Have you finished your homework?

B: What time are we going out?

In example 1, speaker B seems to flout the maxim of quantity by including the clause 'I have finished my homework' when a simple 'yes' would do. The implied meaning could be that the daughter is not happy with her father checking on her.

In example 2, speaker B flouts the maxim of relevance by changing the subject. We could assume her that either she wishes to know how much time is left to complete it or that she has not completed it and does not wish to discuss it.

Politeness

The idea of '**face**', similar to an individual's self-esteem, was first used by Erving Goffman and expanded by linguists Brown and Levinson to complement their own ideas on politeness theory.

In **politeness theory**, face can be categorised as either positive or negative face.

Positive face – the need to feel wanted, liked and appreciated

Negative face – the need to have freedom of thought and action and not feel imposed on

In everyday conversation there is the potential to threaten face, for example in asking someone to carry out a task or in speaking about a sensitive issue that may offend. These situations represent potential **face-threatening acts (FTA)** and a speaker has the choice of a number of different strategies to either minimise the loss of face or save face completely.

For example:

A friend has just bought a copy of the latest album by your favourite band and you (not having bought a copy due to financial difficulties) desperately want to listen to it.

This is a potentially face-threatening act, since your friend's positive- and negative-face needs are under threat. You could simply say, 'Give me that CD so that I can listen to it', which clearly threatens negative face and, except in extreme cases, would be considered rude and inappropriate. Or you could use a **positive politeness strategy** such as, 'I really appreciate all the music you've lent me recently, can I borrow that some time?' which would ensure that your friend feels valued and respected as an individual. Your third option would be to use a **negative politeness strategy** such as, 'I'm really sorry to ask you again, but is there any chance I could make a copy of that new CD?' In this instance, your aim is to not make your friend feel threatened or obliged to part with the album. Finally you could avoid being direct and hint at what you want without being explicit: 'It's a shame I won't be able to listen to that.'

Deixis

Deictic words are words that are context-bound in so far as their meaning depends on who is using them.

Deictic terms belong to one of a number of **deictic categories**:

- **Person deixis** (names and pronouns)
- **Spatial deixis** (adverbs of places such as 'here', 'there', demonstratives showing location such as 'this' and 'that' and deictic verbs such as 'come' and 'go')
- **Temporal deixis** (adverbs of time such as 'today', 'yesterday' and 'tomorrow')

Key Terms

proximal deixis – deictic expressions that refer to concepts, events or people close to the speaker

distal deixis – deictic expressions that refer to concepts, events or people at a distance from the speaker

<u>Summary for Pragmatics</u>

The study of the meanings people are really trying to communicate. For example, "How lovely to see you" can convey different meanings: the speaker is genuinely pleased to see the other person; the speaker is being sarcastic and would prefer not to see the other person; there might be an element of malice because of the appalling dress sense of the second person which provides entertainment; etc.

Analysis of pragmatics might include exploring:

- Specific features of turns in speech, e.g. utterance length, speech acts, indirectives, backtracking, repairing, forms (terms) of address, repetition, reformulation, minimal responses, backchannelling, hedging, mitigating devices.

- Recognition of function (force) where different from grammatical form, e.g. use of grammatical declarative to ask question or of interrogative to command.

- Grice's co-operative principle and four maxims.

- Politeness and face (positive v. negative), face-threatening act.

- Recognition of cultural allusions.

- Identification of implied meanings over and above the semantic or more obvious.

- Explanation and interpretation as to why speaker(s) or writer(s) make their particular choices of language in the specific context.

Discourse

<u>Types of Discourse</u>

Discourse is the level of language concerned with larger stretches of text. Here we will look at spoken discourse.

<u>Storytelling</u>

Labov's narrative categories

The sociolinguist William Labov (1972) suggested a structure for explaining how speakers gave accounts of personal experiences based on fieldwork he carried out in New York.

Abstract (A): an indication that the speaker wants the listener's attention and is signalling the start of the narrative

Orientation (O): the who, where, what and why – that sets the scene and provides background information that the speaker sees as important

Complicating action (CA): the main body of the narrative

Resolution (R): the ending of the narrative that ties up loose ends and provides closure

Coda (C): a signal that the narrative has ended.

In addition Labov suggested that at any point in a narrative, speakers could include what he called evaluation, additions to the narrative that the speaker felt were worth mentioning.

<u>Key Terms</u>

internal evaluation – an expression of attitude towards the events in a narrative that occur in the same time frame as the narrative action

external evaluation – an expression of attitude where the speaker 'stands back' from the main action

<u>Multi-speaker interaction</u>

The structure of turns:

The most simple structure in turn-taking is the adjacency pair, which consists of two turns uttered by different speakers, one in response to the other, as in the following:

A: Would you like to come with me to the cinema tonight?

B: Yes!

This is a simple question-answer adjacency pair. B responds in an expected manner, and probably in line with what A wanted her to say. In other words B's response is a **preferred response**. If B answered ambiguously or with 'no', this would have been a **dispreferred response**.

<u>Allocating Turns</u>

Many things can influence the taking of turns in a conversation, not least the relationship between the speakers and their relative status in terms of power.

<u>Key Terms</u>

preferred response – a second part of an adjacency pair that fits in with what the speaker of the first part wants to hear

dispreferred response – a second part of an adjacency pair that doesn't fit in with what the speaker of the first part wants to hear

insertion sequence – an additional sequence between the two parts of an adjacency pair

exchange structure – sequence of turns between speakers

transition relevance place – a point where it is natural for another speaker to take a turn

constraint – the influence a more powerful speaker can have on another speaker

<u>Summary of Discourse</u>

(i) *Longer stretches of text, looking particularly at aspects of cohesion (the way different parts of a text are connected through either grammar or lexis).*

(ii) *The way texts create identities for particular individuals, groups or institutions e.g. the discourse of law, politics, the media.*

Analysis of discourse might include exploring the following:

- The written genre

- The context of a conversation e.g. an unequal encounter or a peer group chat

- The speakers' roles

- In a written text, the point of view: perspective and voice

- Management by speakers of turn-taking and topics, openings and closings

- Register (topic, level of formality and tone), register switching

- External coherence established through consistent reference to the real world

- Intertextuality

- Use by speakers of frames (scripts or norms of interaction), discourse markers, adjacency pairs, interruptions and overlaps

Other spoken language features

Feature	Definition	Example
filler	a non-verbal sound that acts like a pause – can signal uncertainty or simply a 'breathing space' for the speaker	er, erm, like
false start	when a speaker begins to speak and then starts again	A: Well I was (1) well I was going to the shops
repair	when a speaker corrects an aspect of what they have said	A: I really want England to lose (.) I mean win (word repair 'lose' to 'win')
skip-connector	a word or phrase that returns the conversation to a previous topic	Anyway, coming back to what you said earlier
ellipsis	the omission of words for economical reasons/ because the context means that the person listening understands the shortened utterance	A: What do you want for lunch? B: ham sandwich (omitting 'I would like')
speaker support	words or phrases that show attention or agreement to encourage the speaker to continue	Mmm, yeah, OK

Please also see glossary of spoken terms at the back of the booklet.

Developing Independence and Becoming a Subject Specialist

English Language Wider Reading List:

The Basics

Language: The Basics - R. L. Trask
A Little Book of Language – David Crystal
The Adventure of English – Melvyn Bragg
The English Language – David Crystal
Mother Tongue – Bill Bryson
Language Myths – Laurie Bauer and Peter Trudgill
Describing Language – David Graddol, Jenny Cheshire and Joan Swan

Introduction to Language Analysis

OCR English Language Textbook

This is the textbook OCR recommends to support your course studies. You will find a course overview, an introduction to all topics, practice texts for analysis, an introduction to key terms and concepts, top tips for how to approach exam paper questions, and student exemplar responses to questions. You will also find a glossary of terminology in the back of the book.

AQA English Language B
This textbook can be used to develop your knowledge and understanding of the linguistic methods/frameworks and the key concepts and theories. You could also practise your analysis on the example texts in the book. However please remember that we are studying towards the new OCR specification, so the exam questions will be slightly different to those practice paper questions in this book.

Making Sense of Grammar – David Crystal

Rediscover Grammar – David Crystal

Developing Linguistic Analysis – Becoming an Expert
Working with Texts – Adrian Beard
Mastering Advanced English Language – Sarah Thorn

Language and Power
Language and Power – Norman Fairclough
Language and Power – Paul Simpson and Angela Mayr

Language and Gender
Language and Gender – Angela Goddard, Lindsey Mean
The Myth of Mars and Venus: Do men and women really speak different languages? – Deborah Cameron

Language and Technology
Language and Technology – Angela Goddard and Beverly Geesim
The Language Revolution – David Crystal

Language Change
From Old English to Standard English – Dennis Freeborn
Language Change – Adrian Beard

Child Language Acquisition
Child Language – Jean Stilwell Peccei
Sociolinguistics – Peter Stockwell
The Routledge Companion to English Language Studies – Janet Maybin and Joan Swan

Linguistic Investigation (Non-exam Assessment)
Projects in Linguistics and Language Studies – Alison Wray and Eileen Bloomer

Further Online Reading Suggestions
www.universalteacher.org.uk
Andrew Moore's teaching resource site – go to the A Level English Language page. Useful for definitions of terms and explanations of concepts and theories
http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/linguistics/a-level/
Lancaster University have created this online resource for A Level students to support their study of the subject. It contains recommended wider reading and useful websites for further exploration. There is also a list of questions about English Language and Linguistics with answers provided by linguists at the university.
https://www.theguardian.com/global/series/buzzwords
How does language shape the world around us, and vice versa? Buzzwords explores politics, speech and meaning, with plenty of linguistic tidbits thrown in for good measure.
http://englishlangsfx.blogspot.co.uk/

EngLangBlog is a blog written for English Language students and teachers. The posts give suggestions for wider reading and direct you to online resources and articles about controversial language issues in the media.

http://www.bl.uk/

The British Library website – head to the 'Discover' page of their website for information on English Language topics such as accents and dialects.

http://david-crystal.blogspot.co.uk/

A blog written by 'The Expert' in Language and Linguistics, David Crystal.

Blogs:

http://englishlangsfx.blogspot.com/search?updated-max=2017-09-10T15:17:00%2B01:00

Dan Clayton a senior examiner at AQA and a contributor the eMag- a magazine aimed at A-level students and teachers.

http://david-crystal.blogspot.co.uk/

A blog written by 'The Expert' in Language and Linguistics, David Crystal.

Podcasts

Tom Reed's Way with Words

Lexis Podcast:

https://www.listennotes.com/podcasts/lexis-lexispodcast-Jc0IA_BbH-r/