

English
Language
A-level

Introduction

Welcome to your A-level English Language course. This Introduction should provide you with all the information you need to make a successful start to your studies.

The Specification (or Syllabus)

This course has been designed to give you a full and thorough preparation for the AS level or A-level English Language 7700 specification, set by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA).

The **Subject Code** for entry to the **AS-only** award is **7701**.

The **Subject Code** for entry to the **A-level** award is **7702**.

Please be aware that the A-level examination includes **coursework** and the AS level does not. Although the coursework is supervised by Oxford Open Learning and marked by AQA, you **must** ensure that your exam centre makes the appropriate **examination entry** for your coursework unit(s) in addition to the written paper entries. Without this you will not be graded.

Private Candidates

The AQA specification is open to private candidates. Private candidates should contact AQA for a copy of '*Information for Private Candidates*'.



Oxford Open Learning

Arrangement of Lessons

AS/1st Year Course

Module One: Introduction to Language Analysis: Language Frameworks

	Reading refs (Clayton)
Lesson 1: Modes of address: Lexis and Semantics	5-10, 17-22
Lesson 2: Modes of address: Grammar and Graphology	23-25 (27)
TMA A: 7701/01 AS model task Analysing modes of address: spoken, written and multi-modal texts	
Lesson 3: Modes of address: Analysing spontaneous speech – phonetics, phonology and prosodics	12-16
Lesson 4: Modes of address: Pragmatics and discourse	25-29
TMA B: 7702/01 Extending learning: A-level model task: Evaluating Textual variations	

Module Two: Textual Variations and Representations

Lesson 5: Variations in spoken, written and multi-modal texts	30-50
Lesson 6: Representations -Texts in Time	52-55
TMA C: 7701/01 Comparing Textual Variations and Representations AS model practice paper	
Lesson 7: Representations – Texts in Context	50-52
Lesson 8: Language, Power and Identity	56-59
TMAD: Extending Learning: 7702/01 A-level model Section A task: Evaluating Textual Variations and Representations	

Module Three: Language Diversity

Lesson 9: Sociolects – Social and Occupational groups	59-65, 78-85
Lesson 10: Sociolects – gender and ethnicity	86-94
TMA E: 7701/02 AS model Section A task : Understanding Language Diversity	
Lesson 11: Accents and Dialects – Regional varieties	66-77
Lesson 12: Global English – National and International varieties	180-197
TMA F: Extending Learning: 7702/02 A-level model Section A Task: Evaluating Language Diversity	

Module Four: Language Discourses

Lesson 13: ‘Standard English’ : Caxton’s Eggs and historical attitudes	173-176
Lesson 14: Attitudes to diversity and change – constructing identity	-
TMA G: 7701/01 AS model Section B task: Understanding Language Discourses	
Lesson 15: Attitudes to diversity and change – positioning and influencing the reader	171-173

Lesson 16: Attitudes to diversity and change – future discourses	177-179
TMA H: Extending Learning: 7702/02 A-level model Section B Task: Evaluating Language Discourse	

Students have the option of taking the AS qualification at this point. Module Five, although included in the 1st Year pack, is mainly relevant for candidates tackling the full A-level. But we recommend tackling it in the summer of the 1st year if possible.

A-level Part Two

Module Five: Language in Action: Investigating Language

Lesson 17: Identifying an investigation topic/ research questions	199-210
Lesson 18: Methodology: Data collection and language analysis – transcripts, content analysis and qualitative feedback	210-215
TMA I: 7702/03 Language Investigation – Methodology and data analysis draft submission	
Lesson 19: Evaluating findings	(215)
Lesson 20: Language concepts and writing up	-
TMA J: 7702/03 Language Investigation – Evaluation and language concepts draft submission	

Module Six: Understanding Children’s Language Development

Lesson 21: Functions of Children’s Language Use	Reading references to be confirmed
Lesson 22: Language Development: Phonology and Grammar	
TMA K: 7702/02 A-level model Section A task – Understanding Children’s Language Development	
Lesson 23: Language Development: Lexis, Semantics and Pragmatics	
Lesson 24: Comparing development in spoken and written texts	
TMA L: 7702/02 A-level model Section A task – Evaluating Children’s Language Development	

Module Seven: Applying Theories of Language Development to Analysis of Speech and Writing

Lesson 25: Genres of children’s speech and writing	TBC
Lesson 26: Modes of communication – spoken, written and multi-modal texts	
TMA M: 7702/02 Model Section B task: Evaluating Children’s Language Development	
Module 7 Lesson 27: Theories of Children’s Language Development	
Module 7 Lesson 28: Researching Children’s Language Use	
TMA N: 7702/02 Practice Paper 2	

Module Eight: Introduction to Language Change

Lesson 29: Diachronic Change and Diversity: Language use from 1600 to present day	TBC
Lesson 30: Processes of Diachronic Change	
TMA O: 7702/02 Model Section B task: Understanding Language Diversity and Change	
Lesson 31: Synchronic Change and Diversity: The future of English?	
Lesson 32: Evaluating language change in written texts and transcripts	
TMA P: 7702/02 Model Section B task: Evaluating Language Diversity and Change	

Module Nine: Evaluating Language Change

Lesson 33: Using language data to evaluate diachronic change	TBC
Lesson 34: Using language data to evaluate synchronic change	
TMA Q: 7702/02 Model Section B task: Understanding Issues and Debates	
Lesson 35: Attitudes to language change: Prescriptive models	
Lesson 36: Attitudes to language change: Descriptive models	
TMA R: 7702/02 Model Section B task: Evaluating Issues and Debates	

Module Ten: Language in Action – Original Writing

Lesson 37: Original Writing Option 1 – The Power of Persuasion	TBC
Lesson 38: Original Writing Option 2 – The Power of Storytelling	
TMA19: 7702/03 Original Writing Text- Draft Submission	
Lesson 39: Original Writing Option 3 – The Power of Information	
Lesson 40: Producing an Evaluative commentary	
TMA20: 7702/03 Original Writing Commentary – Draft Submission	

Additional Textbooks

To do well in any A-level, it is necessary to acquire suitable accompanying textbooks and consider a variety of perspectives on key topics and skills. This course has been written in conjunction with the following text, with suitable reading references provided:

Dan Clayton, Angela Goddard, Beth Kemp & Felicity Titjen: *AQA A Level English Language: Student Book* (Oxford University Press, 2015); ISBN: 978-0198334002

Reading references to this text are given above and on the first page of the lesson concerned. Some students may prefer to undertake this reading and associated exercises before studying our course materials; others may prefer to do so afterwards. The more practice you gain, the better.

For those who would like additional resources linked to this specification, we recommend:

Marcello Giovanelli & 4 others: *A/AS Level English Language for AQA Student Book*. (Cambridge University Press, 2015); ISBN: 978-1107465626

NB This is optional and no reading references are supplied.

Although detailed references are not given in the course, the following older texts linked to previous specifications may also be obtainable:

Sara Thorne: *Mastering Advanced English Language* (Palgrave Master) (ISBN: 978-1403994837)

Gardiner, Alan. *Revision Express English Language* (Pearson); ISBN: 978-1405821254

Look out for other new books that will help your studies.

As you work your way through this course, you will encounter a number of technical terms which are used in the study of English Language. Some of these may already be familiar to you; others you will find explained as you go along. You will, however, need to look up the meaning of some of the terms yourself – this will help you to acquire the habit of checking meanings and roots of unfamiliar words.

You will need a good dictionary. We would recommend *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 12th edition (2011) (ISBN: 978-0199601080). It would also be helpful for you to be able to refer to *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (2 volumes) or the complete *Oxford English Dictionary* from time to time. One easy way of acquiring accompanying textbooks is through the Oxford Open Learning website (www.ool.co.uk).

Other Suggested Reading

We would strongly encourage you to do as much background reading as you can, in order to deepen your knowledge and understanding. But with so many books available, where do you begin? This list will hopefully be helpful in giving you a starting point and narrowing down the field a little. It is not intended that you buy every, or even any, book on this list! Most will be readily available in libraries so you can refer to them when you need to.

You'll probably find that these older books vary considerably in depth and difficulty but they're well worth looking at. You might

want to 'dip into' them or use them as a reference source rather than reading them from cover to cover.

Crystal, D *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of English Language* (CUP, ISBN: 978-0521596558).

Crystal, D *The English Language* (Penguin, ISBN: 978-0141003962).

McArthur, T [ed.] *The Oxford Companion to the English Language* (OUP, ISBN: 978-0192806376).

Student-based Texts

The books in this section are usually more easily digestible. At the same time they'll provide you with a closer look at specific aspects of the course.

Rain, F and Rain, R *The Grammar Book* (National Association for the Teaching of English).

Crystal, D *Discover Grammar* (Longman).

Freeborn, D *Varieties of English* (Second edition, Macmillan).

Goddard, A et al *English Language 'A' level: The Starter Pack* (Framework Press).

Hudson, R *Language Workbooks* (Routledge).

Jago, M *Language and Style* (Hodder and Stoughton).

Keith and Shuttleworth, *Living Language* (Hodder and Stoughton).

Salkie, R *Text and Discourse Analysis: Language Workbooks* (Routledge).

Stilwell Peccei, J *Child Language: Language Workbooks* (Routledge).

Thorne S *Mastering Advanced English* (Macmillan).

Trudgill, P *Dialects: Language Workbooks* (Routledge).

Wainwright, J & Hutton, J *Your Own Words* (Nelson).

Websites

You might find the following websites helpful.

List of web-based resources for English A' level support:

www.revisiontime.com/alevel_english.html

Oxford English Dictionary:

www.askoxford.com

BBC English AS Guru:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/asguru/english/language.shtml>

'A' Level Qualifications

The Advanced Subsidiary (AS) Level

Advanced Subsidiary (AS) courses have been redefined as follows:

- As a final qualification, allowing candidates to broaden their studies and to defer questions about specialism;
- As roughly half of the total A-level studies

The AS no longer constitutes the first half of an Advanced Level qualification and no marks may be carried forward to that qualification. So, if you are expecting to complete the full A-level, there is no obligation to attempt the AS examinations at the halfway point.

The AS is designed to provide an appropriate assessment of knowledge, understanding and skills expected of candidates who have completed the first half of a full Advanced Level Qualification.

All topics and study required for AS level are also required for the full A-level, although not necessarily on the same examination paper.

In the 1st Year/AS course, you will see that the first assignment (TMA) in each module is designed to match the AS exams and the 2nd one is more suited to those students who expect to tackle the full A-level, requiring evaluation as well as understanding. Although students aiming for AS exams *might* miss out these "harder" TMAs, we recommend that all students do *all* TMAs – the dividing line between understanding and evaluation is a thin one, after all.

The Advanced Level (A-level)

The A-level consists of two written exam papers, both of which must be tackled at the same exam sitting (i.e. it is no longer possible to carry forward the marks from one paper to a later sitting), plus coursework.

Students following this course have the option to take either the AS or the full A-level examination. Studies for the AS are confined to the first half of the course.

Grading

The AS qualification will be graded on a five-point scale: A, B, C, D and E.

The full A-level qualification will be graded on a six-point scale: A*, A, B, C, D and E.

For AS and A-level, candidates who fail to reach the minimum standard for grade E will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate. Individual assessment unit results will be certificated.

The AQA 7701 and 7702 Specifications

This information is correct at the time of publication but may be subject to change. Prior to the examination, students should contact the exam board for the latest information.

This course is designed to match the requirements of the AQA 7701 (AS) and 7702 (A-level) specifications.

Assessment Structure: AS Course (AQA AS 7701)

Paper 1: Language and the individual

Textual variations and representations

- written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes
- 70 marks
- 50% of AS

Two texts, linked by topic or theme.

- A question requiring analysis of one text (25 marks)
- A question requiring analysis of a second text (25 marks)
- A question requiring comparison of the two texts (20 marks)

Paper 2: Language varieties

Language diversity; Writing skills

- written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes
- 70 marks
- 50% of AS

Section A – Language diversity

A discursive essay on language diversity, with a choice of two questions (30 marks)

Section B – Language discourses

A directed writing task on attitudes to language (40 marks)

There is no coursework.

A-level Course (AQA 7702)

Paper 1: Language, the individual and society

- written exam: 2 hours 30 minutes
- 100 marks
- 40% of A-level

Section A – Textual variations and representations

Two texts (one contemporary and one older text) linked by topic or theme.

- A question requiring analysis of one 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 (0-11 years)

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

Language diversity and change

Language discourses

Writing skills

- written exam: 2 hours 30 minutes
- 100 marks
- 40% of A-level

Section A – Diversity and change

One question from a choice of two:

either: an evaluative essay on language diversity (30 marks)

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)

(Unit 3) Coursework: Language in action

Language investigation

Original writing

- word count: 3,500
- 100 marks
- 20% of A-level
- assessed by teachers (except for private candidates)
- moderated by AQA

Students produce:

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

Assessment Objectives

In planning your studies, it is helpful to be clear on the assessment objectives which are assessed in each paper and piece of coursework. Five objectives are given in the specification for the A-level as a whole:

- AO1:** Apply appropriate methods of language analysis, using associated terminology and coherent written expression.
- AO2:** Demonstrate critical understanding of concepts and issues relevant to language use.
- AO3:** Analyse and evaluate how contextual factors and language features are associated with the construction of meaning.
- AO4:** Explore connections across texts, informed by linguistic concepts and methods.

AO5: Demonstrate expertise and creativity in the use of English to communicate in different ways.

Weighting of assessment objectives for AS level English

Assessment Objectives (AOs)	Component weightings (approx. %)		Overall weighting (approx. %)
	Component 1	Component 2	
AO1	14	7	21
AO2	-	29	29
AO3	22	-	22
AO4	-	14	14
AO5	14	-	14
Overall	50	50	100

Weighting of assessment objectives for A-level English

Assessment Objectives (AOs)	Component weightings (approx. %)			Overall weighting (approx. %)
	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	
AO1	14	8	4	26
AO2	6	16	4	26
AO3	12	6	5	23
AO4	8	6	1	15
AO5	-	4	6	10
Overall weighting of components	40	40	20	100

More Detailed A-level Specification

Below are details copied from the **A-level** spec. Please see the 7701 specification for comparable details for the AS (Section 3).

4.1 Language, the individual and society

The aim of this part of the subject content is to introduce students to language study, exploring textual variety and children's language development.

This area of study introduces students to methods of language analysis to explore concepts of audience, purpose, genre, mode and representation. It also introduces students to the study of children's language development, exploring how children learn language and

how they are able to understand and express themselves through language.

4.1.1 Textual variations and representations

Students should study a range of texts:

- about various subjects
- from various writers and speakers
- for various audiences
- for various purposes
- in a variety of genres
- using a variety of modes (written, spoken, electronic)
- from different times
- from different places (global, national, regional).

When analysing texts, students should explore how language is:

- shaped according to audience, purpose, genre and mode
- shaped according to context
- used to construct meanings and representations
- used to enact relationships between writers, speakers and audiences or between participants within a text.

This exploration will include:

- methods of language analysis
- how identity is constructed
- how audiences are addressed and positioned
- the functions of the texts
- the structure and organisation of the texts
- how representations are produced.

4.1.2 Methods of language analysis

Students will be required to identify and describe features of language in the texts using methods of language analysis. In order to study textual variations and representations, students will be required to identify and describe salient features of language in the texts.

The following list is a guide to the areas of language students are expected to examine:

- phonetics, phonology and prosodics: how speech sounds and effects are articulated and analysed graphology: the visual aspects of textual design and appearance
- lexis and semantics: the vocabulary of English, including social and historical variation

- grammar, including morphology: the structural patterns and shapes of English at sentence, clause, phrase and word level
- pragmatics: the contextual aspects of language use
- discourse: extended stretches of communication occurring in different genres, modes and contexts.

4.1.3 Children's language development

Students should explore how children develop their spoken and written skills. To achieve this, students should study:

- the functions of children's language
- phonological, pragmatic, lexical, semantic and grammatical development
- different genres of speech and writing
- different modes of communication (spoken, written, multimodal)
- theories and research about language development.

4.2 Language diversity and change

The aim of this area of study is to allow students to explore language diversity and change over time.

Students will study the key concepts of audience, purpose, genre and mode and will explore language in its wider social, geographical and temporal contexts. They will explore processes of language change. This part of the subject content also requires students to study social attitudes to, and debates about, language diversity and change.

4.2.1 Language diversity and change

Students should study a range of examples of language in use and research data to inform their study of diversity and change:

- texts using different sociolects (to include social and occupational groups, gender and ethnicity)
- texts using different dialects (to include regional, national and international varieties of English)
- texts that use language to represent the different groups above
- texts from different periods, from 1600 to the present day
- written, spoken and electronic texts about a range of subjects, for various audiences and purposes in a variety of genres
- items from collections of language data (e.g. dictionaries, online resources, language corpora)
- research findings (e.g. tables, graphs, statistics).

When analysing texts and data, students should explore:

- how language varies because of personal, social, geographical and temporal contexts
- why language varies and changes, developing critical knowledge and understanding of different views and explanations
- attitudes to language variation and change
- the use of language according to audience, purpose, genre and mode
- how language is used to enact relationships.

This exploration will include:

- methods of language analysis
- how identity is constructed
- how audiences are addressed and positioned
- the functions of the texts
- the structure and organisation of the texts
- how representations are produced.

4.2.2 Methods of language analysis

Students will be required to use methods of language analysis to:

- identify and describe features of language diversity and change
- research diversity and change
- analyse how texts present ideas about language.

The following list is a guide to the areas of language students are expected to examine:

- phonetics, phonology and prosodics: how speech sounds and effects are articulated and analysed
- graphology: the visual aspects of textual design and appearance
- lexis and semantics: the vocabulary of English, including social and historical variation
- grammar, including morphology: the structural patterns and shapes of English at sentence, clause,
- phrase and word level
- pragmatics: the contextual aspects of language use
- discourse: extended stretches of communication occurring in different genres, modes and contexts.

4.2.3 Language discourses

Students will study a range of texts that convey attitudes to language diversity and change. The texts studied will include those written for non-specialist audiences.

Students will explore how texts are produced to convey views and opinions about language issues. They will explore how texts:

- represent language
- construct an identity for the producer
- position the reader and seek to influence them
- are connected to discourses about language.

4.2.4 Writing skills

Students will develop skills in:

- writing discursively about language issues in an academic essay
- writing analytically about texts as parts of discourses about language
- writing about language issues in a variety of forms to communicate their ideas to a non-specialist audience.

4.3 Language in action

The aim of this area of study is to allow students to explore and analyse language data independently and develop and reflect upon their own writing expertise.

It requires students to carry out two different kinds of individual research:

- a language investigation (2,000 words excluding data)
- a piece of original writing and commentary (750 words each).

Students can choose to pursue a study of spoken, written or multimodal data, or a mixture of text types, demonstrating knowledge in areas of individual interest.

In preparation for this, students need to study how to:

- identify an appropriate investigation topic and research questions
- select and apply a methodology for data collection and analysis
- work in greater depth and with greater range
- transcribe spoken data where appropriate
- use language concepts and ideas

- evaluate and draw conclusions on the findings of the investigation
- present findings in an appropriate and accessible way
- reference reading materials correctly
- evaluate the structures and conventions of a variety of genres
- plan, draft and redraft as part of the writing process
- reflect on the writing process using methods of language analysis.

4.3.1 Language investigation

Students may choose to pursue an area of individual interest. For example, this might include studies of:

- representations of different individuals, social groups or nationalities
- regional dialect
- gendered talk
- the language of new communication technologies
- children's language use
- norms and variations in usages of different kinds
- the language of the media
- code switching and mixing between English and other languages
- the language of different occupations or pastimes
- historical changes in English over time.

Students are not obliged to restrict themselves to those areas that are formally taught, as the basis of the investigation is the value of student-led enquiry supported by open learning. Therefore, any area seen by supervising teachers as yielding interesting questions about language in use may be chosen. Students can ask a number of fruitful questions, which can be generated by questions such as the following:

1. A genre-based investigation: what are the distinctive features of this type of language use?
2. A function/use-based investigation: what is the language used to do?
3. An attitudes-based investigation: how do people feel about this language?
4. A user-based investigation: who uses this type of language?

Students will need to decide what kind of data they collect:

- spoken language
- written language
- multimodal language
- word lists (i.e. lists of new words, etc)
- attitudes to language
- uses of language

- views about language.

Underpinning this piece of research is the challenge that, in consultation with their supervising teacher, students should collect their own data as the basis of their study, as well as select their own approach for analysis.

Investigations need a specific focus, for example:

- the writing of two children aged 8
- features of the Devon dialect, based on a survey
- the language of wedding ceremonies from two different cultures
- the language of teachers' reports
- the language used in three different advertisements for a particular product
- how stories are told in a particular comic
- how travel guides represent a particular community
- the language of sports commentary
- how turntaking works in real-time writing online
- language patterns in the names of shops.

The list above is neither definitive nor prescriptive.

The investigation should contain the following sections.

- Introduction
- Brief discussion of the reasons for choosing the investigation focus.
- What the investigation is trying to find out (aims).
- Methodology
- An evaluative account of how the data was collected and organised for analysis.
- Approaches to analysis.
- Analysis
- Analysis and interpretation of the findings, responding to the aim of the investigation.
- Critical consideration of relevant concepts and issues surrounding the topic area.
- Analysis of the contextual influences upon the data collected.
- Conclusion
- Interpretation of the findings of the investigation linked to the aim/focus of the investigation.
- References
- A list of all sources used (paper and web-based).
- Appendices
- Clean copies of the collected data.
- Evidence to support quantitative approaches.

4.3.2 Original writing

Students will produce one piece of original writing based on one of the following three areas:

- the power of persuasion
- the power of storytelling
- the power of information
- and one accompanying commentary.

In preparation for the writing, students will study a range of style models before selecting and analysing one style model in detail. Students will select their own style model in consultation with their supervising teacher. Students will then use this research to inform their own piece of original writing.

The commentary will allow the student to consider and evaluate the style model, the writing process and the effectiveness of the final piece of writing.

The folder submitted should contain:

- a piece of original writing
- an annotated style model
- a reflective commentary
- references (paper and web-based).

Examples of pieces of writing students could consider:

- The power of persuasion.
- A piece of investigative journalism.
- A speech delivered on a controversial topic.
- A letter to an MP.
- The power of storytelling.
- A short story.
- An extract from a biography.
- A dramatic monologue.
- The power of information.
- A piece of travel journalism.
- A blog focusing on social issues.
- A piece of local history.

4.3.3 Methods of language analysis

Both the investigation and original writing will have a distinctive approach to analysis that is shaped by the particular needs of the research pathway or theme chosen. However, underlying any analysis will be coverage of some relevant aspects of the language levels, as follows:

- phonetics, phonology and prosodies: how speech sounds and effects are articulated and analysed
- graphology: the visual aspects of textual design and appearance
- lexis and semantics: the vocabulary of English, including social and historical variation
- grammar, including morphology: the structural patterns and shapes of English at sentence, clause, phrase and word level
- pragmatics: the contextual aspects of language use
- discourse: extended stretches of communication occurring in different genres, modes and contexts.

Objectives and Syllabus

Your course has been designed to help you prepare for the AS/A-level examinations in English Language based on:

AQA Specification 7700 (AS 7701/ A-level 7702)

If you have not already done so, you should contact AQA to obtain a copy of the syllabus/specification, and also information for Private Candidates, which contains important details, such as dates for applying to sit examinations.

You can contact their Publications Department:

AQA Publications
Unit 2, Wheel Forge Way,
Trafford Park
Manchester
M17 1EH (tel: 0870-410-1036)
publications@qa.org.uk

It is also possible to download the syllabus from the AQA website at:
www.aqa.org.uk

General Aims

AQA say that AS and A-level courses based on this specification should encourage candidates to deepen their interest and enjoyment in the use of English as they:

- develop and apply their understanding of the concepts and methods appropriate for the analysis and study of language
- undertake independent investigative work related to language in use

- engage creatively and independently with a varied programme for the study of English from the past to the present day
- develop their skills as producers and interpreters of language.

Other Approaches

Your success in following the course will be all the more likely if you have an active interest in written and spoken language. Awareness of language-related issues in society is important. The sort of things you may ask yourself could be, for instance:

- Why do television and radio newsreaders speak in ‘standard English’ rather than in local dialect?
- Why do tabloid newspapers have such short, snappy headlines?
- Why should there be such obvious regional differences in the way people speak?
- Where do place names originate from?
- How and why does language change over time? If we were suddenly transported back into medieval Britain, would we be able to understand what was being said?
- How have the rules of grammar as we know them developed?
- How do we acquire language anyway?

These types of questions are likely to be answered by this course but they are the sort of questions you should be puzzling over already. A keen ear for conversation, an interest in the written word and the variety of uses to which it is put, curiosity about your own language, and those of other social, ethnic and professional groups, are all prerequisites for success in English Language ‘A’ level.

Written Work

You will find that there are normally two tutor-marked assignments (TMAs) in each of the modules. Your answers should generally be submitted to your tutor for marking. When the marked script is returned, you should receive a set of Suggested Answers. These “answers” generally take the form of an indication of the content and depth of analysis required to achieve marks in different “bands”. This should help to explain not only the mark that you have gained on your assignment but also what your tutor (or examiner) would be looking for and expecting to reward.

Probably the single most important thing about English A-level is that *you should form your own judgments* on what you study. It is no use regurgitating somebody else's opinion, even if you have found it in these lessons! It is difficult to argue a point well unless you have thought of it for yourself and *believe* in it. Have the courage to form your own opinions.

In addition, there are many activities throughout the course, located within the lessons. These are smaller pieces of work, usually requiring brief written answers. You will see that there is a space immediately beneath the activity for you to write in the answer. The size of the space is a clue to how much you might write, but do not be afraid to continue on a separate piece of paper.

Suggested answers are usually given at the end of the lesson but many activities are open-ended and you may well have produced very different answers. The important thing is that you actively engage with the text. The work you do in the boxes is evidence of your active study and it will also help when you come to revise your work for the examination, taking you back to your train of thought at an earlier date and organising your notes for you.

You can see that there is plenty of work to be done before you will be in a position to take the examination. See how many months are available to you and how much you have to manage in that time. Divide the time available into smaller segments and work out what ground you are going to cover and which assignments you will submit each month. It is only by sticking to a disciplined plan that you can hope to succeed.

Assignments and Coursework

Some of the tutor-marked assignments (TMAs) in this course are designed to assist in your preparation for the written exam papers and some match the layout and objectives of typical coursework assignments or investigations – indeed some fall into both categories.

You are advised to plan your coursework portfolio carefully and, if possible, discuss this with a tutor. You must make sure your coursework is linked to the relevant assessment objectives and be aware of the relative weightings.

If you are an external candidate, this means that your coursework will be marked not by your tutor but by AQA. Your tutor is required only to vouch for the fact that you (alone) have produced it.

Using the Internet

All students would benefit from access to the Internet. You will find a wealth of information on all the topics in your course. As well as the AQA website (www.aqa.org.uk), you should get into the habit of checking the Oxford Open Learning site (www.ool.co.uk) where you may find news, additional resources and interactive features as time goes by.

Good luck!

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