



A-Level English Language (AQA)

The study of English Language at A-Level helps to prepare you for further study and future employment by developing a wide range of skills which include critical reading, data analysis, evaluation, the ability to develop and sustain arguments and a number of different writing skills.

English Language is a highly respected A-Level and could lead to studying for a University degree in subjects such as Linguistics, History, Sociology, Psychology, MFL and Law. In addition, the combination of reading and writing assessment makes students of this subject very employable, and could equip you for a future career in areas such as Publishing, Editing, the Media, Law, Teaching (including teaching English as a Foreign Language), Journalism, Marketing, Public Relations and Research.

Qualities and qualifications needed

You will need to be a skilful communicator, able to pursue lines of enquiry, analyse texts produced by others and debate different views. You will have an interest in, and an aptitude for, producing pieces of original and creative writing.

A minimum of grade 6 in GCSE English Language is required.

How will the course be assessed?



80% written examination

across two separate examinations
(two x 2.5 hours)



20% non-examination assessment

(independent language investigation
and original writing)



Course content

Paper 1: Language, the individual and society

- Introduction to language study.
- Introduction to methods of language analysis.
- Exploring concepts of audience, purpose, genre, mode and representation.
- Study of children's language development – how children learn language and how they understand and express themselves through language.

Paper 2: Language diversity and change

- Studying language diversity and change over time.
- Exploring language in its wider social, geographical and temporal contexts.
- Exploring the processes of language change.
- Study of social attitudes to, and debates about, language diversity and change.

Non-examination assessment: Language in action

- Includes a language investigation, a piece of original writing and a commentary.
- Students choose an area of individual interest, exploring and analysing language data independently and developing and reflecting upon their own writing expertise.
- Total word count – 3,500 words.
- Assessed by teachers.
- Moderated by AQA.



Examinations



Paper 1: Language, the individual and society (2.5 hours)

40% of A-Level (100 marks).

Section A – Textual Variations and Representations

- Two texts (one contemporary and one older text) linked by topic or theme. Three questions: 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

- 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 (2.5 hours)

40% of A-Level (100 marks).

Section A – Diversity and Change

- A choice of two questions. 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. Two questions: 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).

Methods of teaching and learning

Lessons involve reading and discussing a wide variety of texts, responding to them with written answers, exploring aspects of texts including their context of production and reception, and exploring how genre and mode influence writers' and speakers' choices. We develop a secure knowledge of the theories which underpin language study, and apply these to texts written in different modes and from different places and time periods. Students are given the opportunity to pursue areas of personal interest in their completion of the NEA: a student – led enquiry supported by open learning. Students may sometimes be asked to prepare material or research theories independently, or in small groups, to feed back to the class.
