Heathcote School and Science College

Sixth Form

Department Transition Guide

English

Including;

- Course Overview and Specification Summary
- Department Vision for A-level and links to career pathways
- Pre-reading
- Task/project for summer

Course Overview

English Language Year 12

Textual variations and representations
Students will study a range of texts examining a multiplicity of subjects, audiences, purposes, genres, modes as well as a variety of writers and speakers. Students will examine the construction of the text, analyse language and examine the ways audiences are addressed and positioned.

Language diversity
Students will study a range of examples of language in use and research date to inform their study of diversity. Topics include sociolect, dialect and representation of groups alongside a consideration of data and research.

Paper 1: Language and the individual
Questions:
Two texts, linked by topic or theme
A question requiring analysis of one text
A question requiring analysis of second text
A question requiring comparison of the two texts

Paper 2: Language varieties
Questions:
Section A: Language Diversity
A discursive essay on language diversity, with a choice of two questions
Section B: Language discourses
A directed writing task on attitudes to language

Essay writing tips

An English Language essay is not the same as a Literature essay; there is less focus on having a central thesis/argument. The main target is for your essay to be **data-led**: select from the data and provide an analysis of it. Here are some tips to help you get started.

Language – fluent and coherent

You do get marks for having a fluent, coherent writing style. You need paragraphs, connectives to link your writing, and embedded quotes. Proofread your work. Keep track of your spelling, punctuation and grammar; if you had problems with these at GCSE, you will need to work on them in your own time – BBC Bitesize has some good activities.

Useful words and phrases:

Additionally/furthermore/moreover

Whereas/alternatively/however

In contrast/similarly

It would seem/it appears/this shows/this implies/we can infer/this could suggest

Terminology

You get marks for using the correct terminology. Use your glossary. You might want to organise your analysis by linguistic methods: lexis, semantics, pragmatics, graphology, morphology, theories about language, etc.

Analysis of data

Your essay should be data led. This means you use whatever text/s you've been given, and analyse them **in detail** for different linguistic methods. If you can, apply theories you've learnt during the course to the language. You should then try to link your analysis to the **context** in which the text was produced and received in order to explain **why** particular choices have been made and how they link to audience and purpose.

Reading List for English Language

Although there are no set texts for the course, reading the following types of texts and answering the questions below will be very helpful when beginning A level Language:

- Newspapers – articles, interviews, columns, advertisements
- Magazine articles, interviews and advertisements
- Novels, biographies, autobiographies, plays and poems

When reading, it is helpful to keep a diary where you can take notes to help your understanding and support your learning in lessons. When taking notes, try answering the following key questions:

- Do I understand what I am reading?
- What kind of text is this?
- Who is the intended audience?
- Why was the text produced?
- Which words affect me as a reader of the text?
- Is the intended meaning of the text clear to me?
- Is there a hidden message in the text?

Further reading that will support your study of English Language:

GCSE English Grammar edited by Richard Parsons – available on Amazon for about £4.28.

Rediscover Grammar by David Crystal – about £19.48 on Amazon

The Pocket Guide to English Language by John O'Connor – about £9.80 on Amazon

The Mother Tongue by Bill Bryson– about £6.89 on Amazon

CGP Revision guides:

AS-Level English Language Exam Board AQA B: Complete Revision & Practice

A2 Level English Language Exam Board AQA B: The Revision Guide

A2 Level English Language Revision Guide by Richard Parsons

English Language AS & A2: A level Study Guide by Alan Gardiner

emagazine - a quarterly subscription magazine with website for A Level students of English subjects – subscribe for the year for just £12 through Heathcote library

Babel, the language magazine: £24.68 for four issues over the course of a year at
http://www.babelzine.com/

English Language
Glossary of Terms

*There are a lot of new terms for English Language at A level. This glossary will help you revise terms or look them up quickly when you need them. Don't panic – you aren't expected to learn **every** term, even by the end of the course!*

Accent – the specific way words are pronounced according to geographical region

Adjacency pair – two utterances by different speakers that have a natural and logical link, and complete an idea together; a simple structure of two turns

Adjectival phrase – a phrase with an adjective as its head, for example 'very big'

Adverbial phrase – a phrase with an adverb as its head, for example 'very quickly'

Agency – the responsibility for, or cause of, an action

Alliteration – a sequence of words beginning with the same sound

Anaphoric referencing – referencing back to an already stated lexical item

Antonym – words with opposite semantic value

Assonance – the repetition of vowel sounds for effect

Auxiliary verb – a verb that supports or 'helps' another; it shows tense or modality

Cataphoric referencing – referencing forwards to an as yet undisclosed lexical item

Catenative verb – a verb that can attach to another to form a 'chain'

Clause – group of lexical items centred round a verb phrase

Cohesion – how well the text first together as a whole

Colloquialism – an established set of informal terms used in everyday language

Comparative – the form for comparing two items; adjectives inflected with –*er* or combined with 'more' are in the comparative form

Complex sentence – sentence containing a main clause with one or more subordinate or dependant clauses, often connected with a subordinating conjunction

Compound sentence – sentence containing two or more main clauses, connected by coordinating conjunctions, or sometimes just separated by punctuation

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

Consonance – the repetition of consonant sounds for effect

Constituent structure – the key components of a phrase

Constraints (in conversation) – ways in which powerful participants may block or control contributions from less powerful participants, e.g. through controlling content or interrupting

Context – the temporal and spatial situations in which a text is produced or received, e.g. where the producer of the text is, what he or she is doing, who he or she is talking to, what has occurred previously

Context of production & context of reception – factors that might influence a text's writing or interpretation

Convention – an agreed or shared feature

Conversation analysis – the analysis of the structure and features of conversation

Cooperative principle – the principle that suggests that all communication is essentially a cooperative act

Coordinating conjunctions – words such as *and, but* and *or* that link clauses to form compound sentences

Covert prestige – a form of high status given to non-standard forms

Cultural model – an organisational structure based on shared and agreed criteria by groups of people within a society

Deixis – lexical items that 'point' towards something and place words in context

Deontic modality – constructions that express degrees of necessity and obligation

Descriptivism – approach to language study that focuses on actual language use

Dialect – the language variety of a geographical region or social background, revealed by a variation in lexical and grammatical terms

Direct object – an object directly affected by a verb process, for example in 'I gave him the pen', 'pen' is directly affected by 'giving' and is the direct object

Discourse – a continuous stretch of language (especially spoken) that is longer than a sentence

Discourse marker – word or phrase that indicates the topic

Ditransitive verb – verb requiring two objects to form a double-object construction

Dynamic verbs – verbs where the situation changes over time, e.g. 'he ate the cake'

Dysphemism – a harsh, 'to-the-point' and perhaps taboo term, sometimes used for a dark, humorous effect

Elision – missing out sounds or parts of words in speech or writing

Ellipsis – missing out a word or words in a sentence

Epistemic modality – constructions that express degrees of possibility, probability or certainty

Euphemism – socially acceptable word or phrase used to avoid talking about something potentially distasteful

Face – a person's self-esteem or emotional needs

Face-threatening act – communicative act that threatens someone's face needs

Field – the general purpose of an act of communication

Gender – differences in behaviour and roles as a result of social expectations

Genre – category or type of a text, such as comedy, tragedy or horror

Graphology – the study of visual elements of a text, both verbal and non-verbal

Hedging – linguistic device used to express uncertainty

Homophone – word that sounds the same as another word or words

Homophonic representation – use of single letters and numbers to represent words based on a similarity in sound

Hyponymy – the hierarchical structure that exists between lexical items

Ideology – set of belief systems, attitudes or world-view held by an individual or groups

Idiolect – individual style of speaking or 'linguistic fingerprint'

Implied reader/writer vs actual reader/writer – a constructed image of the writer or reader vs the actual reader or writer

Influential power – power used to influence or persuade others

Initialism – an abbreviation that uses the first letter of a group of words and is pronounced as individual letters

Initiation-response-feedback – a triadic structure in speech that allows the first speaker to feedback on the response of a second speaker

Instrumental power – power used to maintain and enforce authority

Intransitive verb – verb process such as 'yawned' or 'slept' that has no object

Jargon – specialist terminology that may exclude others

Lexical accommodation – the way speakers mirror each other's lexical choices as a sign of community membership

Lexical field – lexical items that are similar in range of meaning and properties

Lexis – the method that deals with the vocabulary system of a language

Main clause – a clause that can stand independently and make sense on its own

Main verb – the verb that details the main process in a verb phrase

Material process – describing actions or events

Mental processes – describing perception, thoughts or speech

Metalanguage – set of technical terms used to describe how language operates

Mixed-mode features – features expected in printed text combined with those expected in conversation

Modal auxiliary verb – verb that never appears on its own,used to express possibility, probability, certainty, necessity or obligation: will; would; can; could; shall; should; may; might; must

Mode – the medium of communication, e.g. speech or writing

Modifier, pre-modifier, post-modifier – a word, usually an adjective or a noun used attributively, that qualifies the sense of the noun. Adverbs of comment also act as modifiers, e.g. obviously

Morpheme – the smallest unit of grammatical meaning. Morphemes can be words in their own right or combine with other morphemes to form lexical units

Morphology – the area of language study that deals with the formation of words from smaller units called morphemes

Multimodal texts – those that combine word, image and sound to produce meaning

Narrative categories – six key categories developed by Labov which appear in a narrative – generally in a set order

Negating particle – small item used to show negation

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

Noun phrase – group of words centred around a noun

Parallelism - the repetition of a pattern or structure in related words, phrases or clauses

Personification – giving human characteristics to an animal, object or idea

Phatic speech act – turns designed to maintain a sense of cooperation or respect for the other speaker

Political power – power held by those with the backing of the law

Positive and negative politeness strategies – regressive strategies that a speaker might use to mitigate or avoid face-threatening acts

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

Possessive pronoun – a pronoun that demonstrates ownership

Power asymmetry – a marked difference in the power status of individuals involved in discourse

Power behind discourse – the focus on the social and ideological reasons behind the enactment of power

Power in discourse – the ways in which power is manifested in situations through language

Powerful participant – a speaker with a higher status in a given context, who is therefore able to impose a degree of power

Prepositional phrase – a phrase consisting of a preposition and an added noun phrase

Prescriptivism – an approach that concentrates on how language ought to be structured and sees alternative patterns or versions as deviant and inferior

Primary auxiliary – used to denote tense changes

Prosodic features – paralinguistic vocal elements of spoken language used to provide emphasis or other effects

Qualifier – further information to complete the phrase

Register – a variety of language appropriate to a particular purpose and context

Relational processes – describing states of being, identification or attributes

Semantic or lexical field – lexical items that are similar in range of meaning and properties

Semantics – the method that deals with meaning and how that is generated within texts

Sociolect – a defined use of language as a result of membership of a social group

Standard English (SE) – a universally accepted dialect of English that carries a degree of prestige

Stative verb – a verb that describes a state of affairs rather than an action, e.g. 'know'

Stereotyping – assigning a general set of characteristics to a group as a whole, often with negative connotations

Style – the way in which something is expressed

Subject pronoun – a pronoun that usually occurs as the actor in a verbal process

Subordinate clause – a clause that is dependent on another to complete the full meaning of a sentence

Substitution – the replacing of one set of lexical items for another

Superlative – adjectives inflected with –*est* or combined with 'most' are in the superlative form

Synchronous discourse – discourse that takes place in real time

Synthetic personalisation – the way in which advertising and other forms of communication use personalised language such as the second person

Tag question – a group of words that turn a declarative into an interrogative, for example 'It's cold' becomes 'It's cold, isn't it?'

Topic management – the control of the conversation in terms of speaking and topic

Turn-taking – the sharing of speaking roles, usually cooperatively

Utterance – a group of spoken words, roughly equivalent to the sentence in written terms

Variant spelling – deliberately non-standard spelling for effect

Vowel omission – leaving out vowel sounds in textspeak and other electronic communication

Independent study – you will be expected to bring in the following essay when you start college in September:

Read the attached two texts and compare how they use language and presentational devices to appeal to the audiences. Maximum 1,000 words.

You will be marked on the following:
- Your ability to name, explain and analyse language techniques
- Your ability to name, explain and analyse presentational techniques
- Your ability to select appropriate examples for similarities and differences and how the texts appeal to the audiences

Persil
for Coloureds, too!

How's that for gay, crisp coloured cottons! As fresh and bright as new! They've been washed in Persil, that's why.

Millions know that Persil can't be beaten for the white wash. But not everyone realizes it's just as wonderful and safe for coloureds, too! Persil's secret is *cleanness*. Yes, whites, coloureds, woollies, or fine things — Persil gets out every scrap of dirt. And does it so gently!

Gentle, too, for hands and nails

Another blessing of Persil is that it's so very kind to hands and nails — you can *feel* it is!

Persil
washes whiter
— *that means cleaner!*

<u>Here is a model answer of what to include in your essay.</u>

Student response Text A is from Mumsnet and is a forum discussion about school Proms. The purpose of the discussion, initiated by the participant woollyideas, is to seek reassurance from other Mums about her view that school Proms and unnecessary and extreme. The purpose of the website, Mumsnet, is to promote the site and encourage other parents to join. Some affordances of using forums are that an individual can interact with many users, and they are distant from other participants, so they can afford to convey their opinions strongly. However, some constraints of forums are that the absence of face-to-face conversation means that ideas mean that meanings can be misconstrued, mainly due to the fact that participants cannot use paralinguistic features, emphatic stress and intonation. The overall representation of school Proms in text A is that they are ridiculous, extreme and unnecessary and Mumsnet is represented as authoritative, useful but also friendly.

The participant woollyideas uses the stative verb "want" in the interrogative "What sane parent would want to pay an entry fee to go to a "Prom Fair"…?" This represents parents as emotionally involved in and passionate about school Proms which, as it is used within the interrogative, shows that the efforts parents go to for their child's Prom is ridiculous. The expressing of strong opinions like these represents Mumsnet as a place for debate. The mode of text A means that woollyideas is distant from the group of parents whom she is targeting, so she can afford to convey her opinion more strongly without directly offending them. By attacking this group of parents, woollyideas positions herself above them.

Woollyideas goes on to target this group of parents even more later on in the response when she groups them by using the determiner "these" in the interrogative "Who are these parents who think that this sort of expenditure… is ok?". In the post, woollyideas goes from saying "What parent" to "these parents"- in the earlier part of the response; she is being more general and using the singular form, then she later using the plural grouping "these" parents in order to target them more directly, which again puts them in a lower position than herself. It represents such parents as ridiculous and conveys woollyideas' disgust at the amount of money they spend.

The participant MuckyCarpet uses the subordinating conjunction "although" in her response: "Don't be a grump! Although the helicopter is way OTT!" At first, she expresses her strong opinion about Proms but makes this more moderate by using the subordinating conjunction to contrast her view. This allows her to conform with the other participants, perhaps because she wants to avoid starting an argument or causing offence. This shows that whilst Mumsnet is a place for debate, it is still friendly. The use of the subordinating conjunction shows that the participant has a balanced viewpoint.

A number of interrogatives are used in the forum, but for different purposes. woollyideas uses interrogatives such as "Who are these parents that think this sort of expenditure is ok…?" and "AIBU in thinking my DD's school should not be promoting limo hire etc., at its "Prom Fair"?" Here, she is using interrogatives to seek reassurance from other mums. Through targeting "these

Mumsnet is a website for debate, it is also friendly and interactional. Within the first paragraph of the text explaining the rules of the forum, a complex sentence is used: "Please bear in mind that whilst this topic does canvass opinions, it is not a fight club." The conjunction "whilst" is used to introduce the subordinate clause "whilst this topic does canvass opinions". The fact that this clause is subordinate shows that the offering of opinions is not the most important thing about the forum. "It is not a fight club" is the main clause of the sentence, which shows that the most important thing to the creators of the website is that users stay safe and that the debate is friendly. This represents Mumsnet as a safe place for debate that welcomes everyone. A constraint of an online message board is that if arguments occur, there is not a person there to mediate as the interaction is not face-to-face. Therefore, the use of sentence structure here almost acts as this mediator. Furthermore, the positioning of this sentence right at the beginning of the forum makes it clear to participants the conventions of the debate in order to make them think before they post.

Overall, text A represents school Proms as extreme and unnecessary, with the participants, mainly woollyideas, focusing on the extents to which parents go to prepare for their child's Prom. This representation is created by using language features such as the stative verb "want" and the determiner "these" as well as interrogatives. The website Mumsnet is represented as being a safe, friendly and trustworthy website on which users can debate about parenting issues. This representation is created through the use of sentence structure and conjunctions.