

Summer Preparatory Work

AS LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Central
Saint Michael's
Sixth Form

A UNIVERSITY STYLE SIXTH FORM

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Becoming an A Level English Language Student

Summer Activities



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Welcome to AS Level English Language at Central St Michael's where you've chosen to study this September. This is your summer activities pack which will introduce you to some core concepts and issues within English Language to aid your understanding ready for sixth form. Included is an activity designed to give you a flavour of what studying English Language at A Level is all about.

The pack is in two sections. Section one provides some general information on the course content and an article to read about what to expect and how to make the most of the course.

Section two is an independent research project focusing on language and identity, which you will cover in great detail in both years one and two.

You can complete the tasks in this booklet in the spaces provided or type them up separately. Please bring your completed work along with you when you start sixth form in September.

If you have any questions then please contact me at laura.maney@sandwell.ac.uk

I look forward to meeting you in September!



Section One

AS English Language: Course Outline

You will find that A Level English Language has a very different content to what you have already studied at GCSE. At A Level, English Language incorporates a set of key themes, including; Spoken English, Phonetics, Identity, Language and Gender, Early Child Acquisition, Language and Diversity, Reading and Writing, as well as many others.

The study of English Language at A Level will encourage you to discover language, the way in which we use it, the way in which it has changed over time and the variations and manipulations that have emerged due to cultural development. As such, you will observe how language has evolved over the centuries and where different dialects and accents became prominent across the regions that make up this country.

In the first year, the components of the course include:

Component 1: Analysis of Texts in Context

Written examination: 2 hours **50% of qualification**

Section A: Spoken language of the media

One question based on the reading of unseen transcriptions

Section B: Written language

One question based on the reading of unseen texts

Component 2: Using Language

Written examination: 2 hours **50% of qualification**

Section A: Investigating data

One question presented in several parts based on the reading of a corpus of data

Section B: Critical and creative writing

One original writing task from a choice of two and commentary on own writing task



English Language will suit students who:

- Have an interest in the different ways people speak and the words they use, such as slang, accent and dialect.
- Would like to find out how the English language was developed and how it has evolved over time.
- Want to know how we acquire language and the different stages of language acquisition.
- Are interested in how the use of language is linked to identity and culture.
- Enjoy reading different types of texts and have a flair for writing creatively and critically.

The skills you will develop studying English Language:

- Applying appropriate methods of language analysis, using associated terminology and coherent written expression
- Demonstrating critical understanding of concepts and issues relevant to language use
- Be able to analyse and evaluate how contextual factors and language features are associated with the construction of meaning
- Be able to explore connections across texts, informed by linguistic concepts and methods
- Demonstrate expertise and creativity in the use of English to communicate in different ways



The following article is taken from an English Language emagazine and is written by Dr Marcello Giovanelli, a Lecturer in English in Education at the University of Nottingham. It has been included to give you an idea how A Level English Language is different to GCSE and what to expect when you start the course. Please have a read through!

Becoming an A Level Language Student – a Quick Guide

Examiner and university lecturer Dr Marcello Giovanelli tells students embarking on an A Level language course what to expect and how to make the most of the course.

If you're reading this, then you may well have just started your A Level studies in English Language. Congratulations on choosing an exciting, modern and engaging A Level course! However, the transition from GCSE to A Level can be a demanding one, and so in this article, I'll share some key principles of A Level language study with you that will help you to bridge the gap and get the most from your studies. Together, these form a 'quick guide' to becoming an A Level English Language student.

1. Learning a Metalanguage and Avoiding Impressionism

Given that you may not have had to do much explicit language work at KS4, you will find that you need to acquire a new terminology to deal with the kinds of analyses that you will undertake at A Level. We call this type of language about language a metalanguage. For English Language, most of this revolves around what we term levels of language (discourse, grammar, semantics, lexis, phonology), or what are currently known as linguistic methods or frameworks in examination board specifications. As a beginning linguist, it's important to start using these terms confidently and accurately to ensure that all descriptive linguistic work (any analysis that identifies and explores language features) that you do is as precise and clear as is possible, and avoids merely making

impressionistic and speculative claims that are not rooted in language analysis.

2. The Importance of Context

At A Level, engaging with context means moving beyond simple GCSE notions of audience and purpose. Now what's really important to remember is that by context we are referring to a range of factors both within and outside of the text, paying close attention to situations where a text is both written or spoken (the context of production), and where it is read or listened to (the context of reception). The relationship between context and language features is both a complex and incredibly important one. Writers and speakers make language choices that are influenced by contextual factors, and readers and listeners interpret what they read and hear within the specific situations in which they find themselves. Second, the richness of contextual detail and its importance in the process of making meaning means that it's often better to think of any data you engage with in your studies not as a 'text' but as part of a larger communicative act called a discourse event that has real participants with intentions, beliefs and emotions engaging in an act of communication. All of these influence what gets written or said, and how that gets interpreted.

3. Ideas about Language

Another key skill that you will develop as you progress through your studies will be your ability to read and engage with ideas about language study. This will move you beyond seeing yourself as someone who analyses language to someone who actively explores ideas and concepts that researchers and academics have grappled with. Whichever specification you are following for your own studies, being able to understand the various debates surrounding language topics, and integrating these into your own analyses of data is an important skill that you will need to master.

4. Read Around the Subject

Of course, one of the best ways to explore issues and ideas in language is to read as widely as you can around the subject. emag is a great place to start for language articles that have been written specifically for A Level students, and your teacher will be able to guide you towards suitable ones. There is a wealth of material. As a start, you might try David Crystal's *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of the English Language* (Cambridge University Press) for a good reference book and overall guide to language topics, Louise Mullany and Peter Stockwell's *Introducing English Language* (Routledge) for an excellent, albeit quite advanced, guide to the study of language and linguistics.

Language: A Student Handbook on Key Topics and Theories (ed. Dan Clayton, English and Media Centre) offers an excellent collection of essays by leading academics on A Level language topics. It's also a good idea to use the internet to keep up to date with news stories and the latest debates involving language. Whether it's schools banning students from using non-standard English, how the latest innovations in technology are affecting the ways that we use language, or what the latest research in child language learning is, there's always something to interest the language student. Regularly visiting the online pages of tabloid newspapers will lead to no end of stories to read and

discuss in class. To make things easier for yourself, you could subscribe to a blog which collects the latest news for you such as Dan Clayton's peerless EngLangBlog <http://englishlangsfx.blogspot.co.uk>

5. Become a Data Collector

Another important part of becoming a student of language is learning how to become a researcher of language. In fact, your career as a collector of language data begins the moment you start your course. The wonderful thing about language data, of course, is that it's everywhere: in the conversations we have with friends, the TV we watch, the books, magazines, social media pages, and tweets we read, the websites we browse, the computer games we play and so on. Make a point of collecting interesting examples of language you see, either in hard copy form or using the camera facility or a scanning app on your smartphone. Record conversations of both real (do ask for permission!) and represented (on the TV and radio) speech, practise transcriptions, start a scrapbook, and share ideas with your fellow students via a blog or your school or college's VLE. Get used to working with data and start applying learning in class to your own examples that you collect. You've got an exciting two years of study ahead of you!

Article Written By: Dr Marcello Giovanelli is a Lecturer in English in Education at the University of Nottingham.

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Section Two

Am I Bovered? – Investigating Idiolect and Youth Sociolect

The following task is an independent project for you to look at issues of language and identity. Before you can complete the work there are some key words that you need to know. Use the internet (e.g. Wikipedia, YouTube and other sources) to research and understand what the following key terms mean and create a short definition or explanation for each in your own words.

Key Term	Definition
Idiolect	
Sociolect	
Slang	
Covert Prestige	
Inclusion/exclusion	
Standard English	
Non-Standard English	
Pronunciation	
Dialect	

Often when we speak we don't use Standard English grammar and vocabulary or standard pronunciation. In this lesson we will look at some examples and consider why we may not speak in a very standard way.

We all have our own **idiolect** or unique way of using spoken language (our written usage is described as 'style'). This idiolect reflects physical characteristics such as voice quality, pitch and tone, as well as inherited vocal features, like a tendency to lisp, or sensitivity to high or low frequency sound. Many external influences affect our idiolect including our family, schooling, peer group and the world at large. A **sociolect** is the language spoken by a social group, social class or subculture. It is a term combining the words 'social' and 'dialect'.

The accompanying transcription has been taken from a comedy sketch programme called 'The Catherine Tate Show' featuring a teenage character called Lauren. Read the transcription to help you identify particular lexical, and grammatical features.

Using the grid below, try to identify aspects of the characters' sociolect.

Features	Questions to ask
Words and phrases	Are there any words or phrases used repeatedly by the characters? Do they use words not normally considered Standard English? Can you put these into any kind of 'category'? (Think about areas of influence.)
Grammar	Are there any features of grammar that are not Standard English?

Accent	Are there any features of pronunciation that are non-standard?
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Transcript 1 – Lauren and Beyonce

Lauren	Did you see Beyonce last night on the television?
Ryan	Yeh man. She is well fit
Lauren	That's a well nice song
Ryan	Yeh, she's fit as well
Lisa	She's better now she's left Destiny's, don't you fink
Ryan	Much better (.) but the other two were fit, man
Lisa	Yeh, I love that tune
Lauren	Yeh, right. She's well bing bing
Ryan	What?
Lauren	I said Beyonce is well bing bing
Lisa	What is she, mate?
Lauren	She is bing bing
Ryan	It's bling bling, mate. Bling bling
Lauren	What?
Lisa	Bling bling
Ryan	Bing bing. That is bad
Lauren	Am I bovered
Ryan	That is funny man
Lauren	Am I bovered though?
Ryan	Take the shame, man
Lauren	No, cos I ain't bovered
Ryan	You better show yourself out there though, innit
Lauren	No I ain't, cos I ain't bovered
Ryan	But that is funny though, innit
Lauren	No it ain't actually
Ryan	Well look just relax alright
Lauren	Don't tell me what to do
Ryan	Come on relax about it
Lauren	Are you telling me what to do?
Ryan	No I'm just saying don't worry about it
Lauren	Are you disrespecting me?
Ryan	No I'm not

Lauren	Are you disrespecting me though?
Ryan	No I'm not disrespecting you
Lauren	Your disrespecting me
Ryan	No, wait a minute
Lauren	No because you're disrespecting me
Ryan	I'm not disrespecting you, just chill out, man (pause)
Lisa	It was funny though
Lauren	Are you stupid?
Lisa	No I'm just saying
Lauren	Are you stupid though?
Lisa	No I'm just laughin' ain't I
Lauren	Are you stupid of somefink?
Lisa	No I'm just laughin'
Lauren	What don't you just shut up though?
Lisa	I'm not laughin' at you or nuffink
Lauren	Why don't you just shut up though?
Lisa	Cos it's just funny, ain't it
Lauren	Did I aks you to shut up?
Lisa	Yeh I know, but
Lauren	Well shut up then
Lisa	Well yeh, but
Lauren	But I don't care though
Ryan	Come on, man
Lauren	But do I care though?
Ryan	Yeh but you can't...
Lauren	But I don't care
Ryan	But I'm not sayin'
Lauren	I don't care
Ryan	But
Lauren	I'm not bovered
Ryan	But wait
Lauren	Am I bovered
Ryan	Come on
Lauren	I don't care
Ryan	But
Lauren	I don't care mate
Ryan	It's just
Lauren	Mate (.) I ain't bovered (phone rings)
Ryan	I fink I can hear your phone bingin' mate

Transcript 2 – Party

Lauren	Aright (.) What you doin' all dressed up for?
Lisa	Goin' to that party, in'l
Lauren	You ain't got no business wearin' that (.) What party?
Lisa	Darren's party, innit. 'S gonna be mushup
Lauren	I don't know nuffin' about no party
Lisa	You do, you fick or something, he told us about it last week, didn't he?
	Party tonight, Saturday, innit?
Ryan	Aright
Lisa/Lauren	Aright
Ryan	You ready, Lis?
Lisa	Yeah, eh listen right, she didn't know there was a party at all
Ryan	I know
Lisa	What d'you mean you know?
Ryan	She ain't invited
Lisa	What?
Lauren	Am I bovered?
Lisa	Ah don't worry about it. You know just come along, they won't mind
Ryan	Na, he will mind, he don't like you. You're not invited mate
Lauren	Am I bovered though
Lisa	But what are you gonna do?
Lauren	Nuffin' cos I ain't bovered
Lisa	Well yeh but you could just
Lauren	Do I look like I'm bovered
Lisa	No I know but why don't you
Lauren	Do I look like I'm bovered though
Lisa	Alright but I don't think it's
Lauren	No but does my face look bovered though
Lisa	Why don't
Lauren	Is this face bovered
Lisa	Well yeh but
Lauren	Is this face bovered
Lisa	Why don't you just
Lauren	Cos I ain't even bovered
Lisa	Do you want me to ring
Lauren	No cos I'm not even bovered
Lisa	But
Lauren	Aks me if I'm bovered
Lisa	Well
Lauren	Aks me if I'm bovered
Lisa	Can't
Lauren	Aks me if I'm bovered
Lisa	Why
Lauren	Aks me if I'm bovered

Lisa	That's
Lauren	Aks me if I'm bovered
Lisa	Are you bothered
Lauren	No (.) who told you I was bovered
Ryan	She don't care, just leave it
Lisa	She does though
Ryan	Look we gotta chit, mate
Lisa	Yeh but I want her to come though
Ryan	She can't pitch up lookin' like that anyways, isn't it?
Lauren	Are you callin' me a pikey
Ryan	What
Lauren	Are you callin' me a pikey though
Ryan	No I'm just sayin'
Lauren	Are you disrespectin' me
Ryan	No I'm just saying
Lauren	Are you disrespectin' my family
Ryan	Look I just that
Lauren	Are you callin' my mum poor
Ryan	Ah listen right
Lauren	Are you callin' my dad a wino
Ryan	Just calm down
Lauren	No because my dad's not even a wino
Ryan	It's cool right
Lauren	He ain't even a wino though (pause)
Lisa	That was well out of order I ain't goin' now
Ryan	What
Lisa	You're disrespectin' people. I don't need it
Lauren	Innit though
Ryan	But I didn't mean
Lisa	I don't need it mate
Ryan	But I didn't mean nuffin' by it
Lauren	She don't need it
Ryan	Look I just
Lauren	She don't need it mate
Ryan	No, wait a minute
Lauren	She ain't goin' though
Ryan	But the fing is
Lauren	You're on your jack though
Ryan	But can I
Lauren	You're on your jack mate
Ryan	Right I'll go without you then. I'm bustin' it
Lauren	She ain't bovered (pause)
Ryan	I fink your dad's come to pick you up, innit

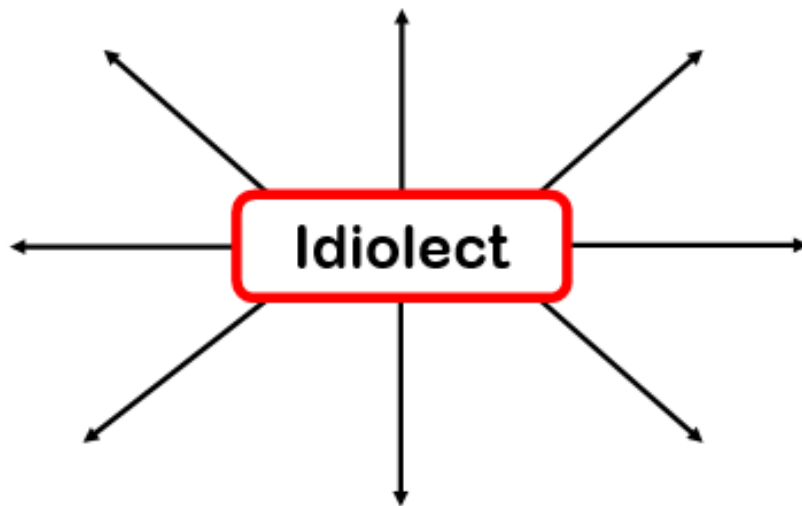
List three features that sum up each character's idiolect.

Lauren	
Ryan	
Lisa	

Why are the characters using language in this way? Why not just speak in Standard English?

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Our language is influenced by many factors. You may have heard people using language this way yourself. Can you suggest what may influence an individual's language? Write some suggestions below.



Your Own Linguistic Fingerprint

In the box below, use the suggestions from this pack to write your own linguistic fingerprint.
Try to...

- include the areas that influence your own language
- give examples of your language use
- Do you ever use forms of non-standard English or slang? If so, in what context do you use them and why?

