



A LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE

What does the course involve?

The Edexcel linear course gives students the opportunity to explore how language is used in the real world, and how the way we use language is influenced by context and purpose. It allows students to develop critical reading, textual analysis and evaluation skills; and the ability to structure and develop convincing arguments and communicate effectively through essays, fiction and non-fiction writing. All of these are invaluable for both further study and future employment.

The A level Language course encourages students to develop their enjoyment of English by learning about its structures and its functions, its development and its variations. Students will study how we use language to represent ourselves and construct identities – through advertising for example, or in online communication. We look at the way that language use is affected by key contextual factors such as gender, occupation, age and social position and consider a range of real-world language questions such as whether men and women communicate differently, or how young people invent and use language. Other units explore how the English language has developed over time, from its very earliest origins to the present day, and how children learn to communicate and use language, from their first words up to the end of primary school.

The course also contains a creative writing element, which forms the coursework (or NEA- non-examined assessment) section of the programme of study. This enables students to develop their skills as producers and interpreters of language by writing some of their own texts- fiction or non-fiction- and exploring how they, as writers, manipulate language to fit different audiences and purposes.

What are the entry qualifications?

Students require at least a level 5 in GCSE English Language but we would recommend that students have a level 6 in order to ensure they can cope with the academic demands of the course.

Why study English Language?

English language at A-level is very different from at GCSE, and will interest any student who is curious about society and social contexts. It goes well with lots of other A-levels, particularly Humanities subjects such as psychology, history, politics and sociology, but is also a good choice for students who want to keep their career options open, who know communication will be a key skill in their career, or who want an interesting 'written' A-level to pair with Arts subjects. Many former students have gone on to study English Language at University, and many more have found the A-level course a valuable preparation for a huge range of other courses.

Ultimately, an A-level in English language is a good foundation for any career that requires good communication skills, as the ability to use language in a reflective, organised and persuasive way is at the heart of what is assessed. There are many careers for which A-level Language would be very beneficial, including: Acting and Dramatic Arts, Advertising, Television, Broadcasting and Media, the Civil Service, Journalism, Publishing, Law, Government, Management and Administration, Personnel Work, Teaching and Social Work, to name but a few. However, most employers are likely to value the skills required to achieve an English Language A-level.

What exams and coursework are involved?

The 2 year A-level course consists of 3 final exam papers and a non-exam assessment, which involves two pieces of original writing and a commentary.

Paper 1: Language Variation

This component involves studying and comparing how language varies according to context, creation of identity and changes over time. Students will analyse and compare two texts for each question, using language knowledge to explain what the texts show about how people use language to construct and project identity and what the texts show us about how the English language has changed over time. Texts for the language change unit could be something from 1500 onwards.

External examination (2 hours 15 minutes) = 35% of total A-level marks

Paper 2: Child Language

This component involves studying how children learn to speak and acquire literacy skills. Students will explore theories and concepts and learn to analyse data. Students might be given a range of texts and use these to explain what they show about how children develop either spoken or written language.

External examination (1 hour 15 minutes) = 20% of total A-level marks.

Paper 3: Investigating Language

This component involves students selecting, researching and investigating a topic of language, preparing for the exam using a pre-released sub-topic. Students have to respond to unseen texts on their topic and then use their own research to respond evaluatively to a question on the same theme or topic. It is an opportunity for students to conduct their own research into an area of language use.

External examination: (1 hour 45 minutes) = 25% of total A-level marks.

Non Exam Assessment (coursework) – Crafting Language

This component involves creating two pieces of original writing in the same genre but with different purposes or audiences, accompanied by a commentary. Genres of writing students can choose from usually include short stories, feature articles, travel writing, dramatic monologues or speeches (Total word count 2500-3000 words.)

Assessed by teachers, moderated by Edexcel = 20% of total A-level marks.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT: MR C LUKER