

English Language Year 12 Summer Induction Work

Section One: You and Your Language

These tasks will hopefully get you thinking in a general way about the role language has played, and still plays, in your life. By the end, you will have compiled a dossier of facts and feelings about your own language, which will act as a good starting point to considering how language and identity are connected.

Your Language History

Your language didn't arise out of thin air.

Although humans appear to be born with some readiness to learn language, the type of language we learn is of course influenced by the environment we grow up in. All the people we interact with as we grow influence the language we use, even if we remain in one place all our lives and the language we hear has only very small variations. In other words, your family doesn't have to have moved around the globe to exotic locations in order to have an interesting language history.

Activity 1:

Plotting A Language
History

Find out all you can about the language history of your family. Where were they born? If they've moved around, which areas have they lived in? What accents/dialects do they have? Plot two generations up from you (i.e., as far as your grandparents), and draw a language family tree.

Activity 2: Your linguistic fingerprint

Your language is unique, like your fingerprints.

Your language identifies you by its many characteristics, ranging from accent and voice quality to typical gestures and much-used phrases.

This unit will explore some of the ingredients that make your language your IDIOLECT – your own personal dialect

Try to answer as many of the questions below as you can.

1. Do you have a favourite 'filler' that you use a lot – e.g. 'you know', 'I mean'. 'like', 'well', 'um', 'er'?
2. Do you have particular words for 'good' and 'bad'?
3. Do you have words and phrases that you like, and use a lot?
(What words/phrases would people say were typical of you?)
4. Are there certain words and phrases that you avoid because you dislike them or are offended by them?
5. Are there certain words that you always have trouble pronouncing, or whose meaning you have trouble remembering?
6. Do you have a set way of answering the telephone? What do you say, and what type of accent do you use?
7. Do you have particular habits in conversation/ (e./g., asking others questions; interrupting others when you get enthusiastic; starting to t speak boldly then quickly drying up.)
8. What is your most common body gesture when you are doing the following?
 - a. Listening to someone
 - b. Speaking at some length
 - c. Sitting, deep in thought
9. How would you describe your handwriting? Are there certain characteristics that are distinctive of your writing? (Think about the things a potential forger would have to concentrate on.)
10. How would you describe your voice? (e.g. husky, clear, high, gravelly, whispery, soft, etc.)

Activity 3:**RECOLLECTIONS**

Task: Do a short piece of writing on your own language. First, read Pauline's comments below, taken from My Personal Language History (ILEA), then think back to your own childhood.

'Having been born and brought up in South London, I grew up unaware that I spoke differently to anybody else because everybody where I lived spoke Cockney. As a child I did not know what Cockney was, I thought I spoke English.

It was not till much later in life that I realised that the way you spoke could have class barriers. For instance at an interview the moment you open your mouth people seem to look at you as though to say, "Oh yes she is lower class" because people associate Cockneys with being lower class and unintelligent.

At school I did very well in my English classes because even if I did not speak Standard English I wrote it. My own two children speak Cockney, but it did not hold them back at school as my son went to grammar school.

I think that Cockney is changing. The old style Cockney or as some people call it Rhyming Slang is very rarely heard now except with some of the older Cockneys. My husband for instance would never tell someone I was his trouble and strife he would say I was his wife or Mrs.

I have a brother who speaks perfect Standard English or, as a true Cockney would say, posh, yet he grew up and went to school at the same place I did but because he in later life wanted to better himself he changed the way he spoke. Now when he mixes with upper class friends he sounds the same as them.

As a child I can't say I ever felt different because of the way I spoke. But I have been made aware of this since joining Social Services because most Social Workers are middle class. When they speak to you they seem to talk down to you. I have often wished I could speak nicely, putting my Hs in the right place and not in the wrong place.

My two children laugh at what they call 'mum's posh telephone voice'. There's one example they are always telling people about. It was when I spoke to my doctor on the phone. I was telling her I had just burnt my arm on the 'hoven'. As I said this my children fell about laughing. So now I've given up trying, people will have to take me as they find me.'

When was the first time you realised you had an accent or a dialect? Did you always sound the same as everyone else at school, or have you had an experience where you felt different, perhaps an outsider, because of your language? What do you think of your language now? Has it changed as you have grown older? Do you speak exactly like your parents? Are you happy about the way you sound, or would you like to change your accent in any way? How might people judge you based on how you speak? Do you think this might change if you moved to a different part of the country or a different country? To what extent do you think that our identity is connected to how we speak and how we use language? Do you feel that we can really change this? Do you feel that social class still has the influence on society and language that Pauline experienced or are things changing? What other factors might influence the way we speak and use language? The commentary above was written some time ago, so you might also think about how we construct 'identities' in online communication and social media through the language we use and the way we represent ourselves. Can we ever truly communicate who we are? Can we ever truly know others or trust what they say?

Now use these questions, as well as the notes you have made from activities 1 and 2, to write a similar reflective commentary on your own linguistic identity. Try to include some examples if you can.

Section Two: Getting to Grips with Grammar

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Understanding and commenting on how writers and speakers use grammar is an important part of a Level Language study, but for many of us it is a bit of a mystery because there are so many different rules and unfamiliar terms. This can make it seem quite bewildering. To help improve your confidence with grammar, it is important that you do some research and prior learning before you start the course. Use the British Council website to help you. It is designed primarily for people learning English as a second language, but it useful for A level students too. Find the website at <https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/grammar/english-grammar-reference> where you will find a page which looks like this:

English grammar reference



Pronouns

Pronouns are words that take the place of nouns. We often use them to avoid repeating the nouns that they refer to. Pronouns have different forms for the different ways we use them.

288 comments



Determiners and quantifiers

- ✓ [A1-A2 grammar](#)
- ✓ [B1-B2 grammar](#)
- ✓ [C1 grammar](#)
- ✓ [English grammar reference](#)



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Once you are there, work your way through as many of the activities as you can. For example, if you click on the icon for 'pronouns' you will see some basic information about these, followed by some links to explore these in more detail.

To access the activities on each point of grammar, click on the option on the bottom right of the explanations

Pronouns

Add favourite

Read clear grammar explanations and example sentences to help you understand how pronouns are used. Then, put your grammar knowledge into practice by doing the exercises.

Choose a topic and start improving your English grammar today.

Average



Average: 4 (430 votes)

Resource skill

Grammar

Resource type

Grammar reference

- Personal pronouns
- 'it' and 'there' as dummy subjects
- Possessive pronouns
- Demonstratives
- 'one' and 'ones'
- Pronouns in questions
- Reflexive pronouns
- Reciprocal pronouns
- Indefinite pronouns
- Relative pronouns and relative clauses



English Grammar

Up

Personal pronouns

If you then click on the links, you will find more detailed information, plus some activities to test your knowledge. Once you have read the information, complete the quiz and see whether you have understood the new terminology correctly. Some sections are more useful than others, but use the site to explore and expand your grammar knowledge. We aren't expecting you to do all of them (there are more than 40!) but you should aim to spend between 2 to 3 hours on this (depending on how much time you spend on sections 1 and 3) so do a little each day- 10 minutes a day will soon add up to

a lot of knowledge! Once you have had a good go at a range of activities, complete the short quiz below- you will need to bring your answers to your first lesson in September:

KS5

Give an example of the following key terms:

1. A demonstrative determiner
2. A possessive determiner
3. An adverbial of manner
4. An adverbial of time
5. A verb phrase
6. A past participle
7. A modal verb
8. A verb in the continuous aspect
9. An object pronoun
10. An intensifier or a mitigator

Section Three: Optional Extras – not compulsory, but a really good way of getting ahead- especially if you are aiming high!

Something to read:

Pick up one of these from the 6th Form library to read over the summer:

- David Crystal - 'The Stories of English'
- Melvyn Bragg - 'The Adventure of English'
- David Crystal – 'How Language Works'

Something to watch/ listen to:

- Susie Dent- 'the Battle for English' – iplayer/ BBC sounds: [The Battle for English - BBC Sounds](#)

Something to research:

- Phonics and how this is taught in primary schools
- Research how language has changed over time- from the 600s to now. You could use one of the following websites to explore ideas about language. <https://aggslanguage.wordpress.com/>:
<https://www.thehistoryofenglish.com/>
- Language and gender- what are some of the ideas and stereotypes about the connections between language and gender?

Something to write:

(answer either as an essay or an article for a language magazine):

- Is there really such a thing as 'bad grammar' or 'bad English'?