

Year 11 into 12 bridging activities for A-level English Language

The tasks below are designed to prepare you for studying A-level English Language. **Please choose two or three of the tasks to complete** and bring your work to your first lesson in September.

Task 1 – Passionate about Language!

Your job is to research an area of language that you are particularly passionate about – you could be passionate about language used in political speeches, characters in Disney movies, reality TV shows such as *Love Island*/*I'm a Celebrity*/*Geordie Shore*/*The Only Way Is Essex*/*Made in Chelsea*, language specific to your city (e.g. Geordie dialect), lyrics in Bob Dylan songs, famous figures from history, music/game/sports magazines, the town/place you were born, football players/managers, the plays of William Shakespeare, the poems of Christina Rossetti or the novels of Charles Dickens, for example. You then need to create a presentation to deliver to the rest of the group explaining why you are passionate about the language in your chosen topic. You should include copies of the texts/extracts, speeches and examples you refer to in your presentation. You can either do this electronically (on PowerPoint, for example) or by hand (e.g. posters and visual aids).

Task 2 – The Power of Language

The study of A-level English Language will demonstrate that language is very powerful and is used to influence people into behaving in a certain way or believing particular things. Your task is to find ten texts from a range of genres which demonstrate how language is powerful. These texts can be fiction and/or non-fiction and could include political speeches or election campaign materials, extracts from religious books, extracts from novels, rule books, instruction manuals, etc. Once you have selected your ten texts, you then need to read, analyse and annotate them by commenting on which words or phrases are powerful/influential (and explain why), identify any methods used by the writers to make the texts powerful, identify which word class your chosen words/phrases belong to (i.e. nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, determiners, pronouns and conjunctions). Finally, write a summary of each text, explaining how it is powerful.

Task 3 – Personal Language History:

This is an introductory exercise to get you thinking about your own experiences with language and to hear about the experiences of others. Write answers to the questions below, which we will use to structure a discussion in our first lesson back:

Babyhood

1. What do you know about how you learned to talk? What was your first word and how old were you when you said it? Did you go on to have favourite phrases that you repeated again and again?
2. If you are bilingual, which language did you learn to speak first? Did you mix up the two languages? Who spoke English to you and who spoke your other language?
3. Can you remember being taught nursery rhymes or being told stories? Which were your favourites?

Early Childhood

4. Do you remember learning to read? Think back to primary school. Did your coat peg have a name or picture on it? Did you have name tags on your clothes? Could you read your name?

5. Did you work through reading schemes like 'Peter and Jane'? Did you learn to read letter by letter or did you learn whole words? What did you find easy or difficult about reading? How did you feel about reading aloud?
6. Think back to learning to write. Were you taught to use a particular style of handwriting? Were you right or left-handed? What type of comments did the teacher write on your work?

Secondary School

7. How would you rate your oracy (verbal) skills during secondary school? Did you participate in class discussion or were you held back by, for example, shyness? What type of verbal work did you do at GCSE?
8. What sort of accent did you have at school? Did your parents or teachers ever challenge or try to change the way you spoke? Did you ever move schools? If so, did you find that you spoke differently from the other students? How did they, and you, react?
9. If you are bilingual, what was happening to your command of two languages at this time? Was English beginning to dominate? Did you speak different languages to different people? Did you see being bilingual as an advantage?
10. How did your language skills progress through secondary school? Can you remember any turning points? E.g. your GCSE Speaking and Listening assessment; earning a particularly good grade for an essay.

Now

11. How do you rate your language skills at present? How would you describe your accent? Do you feel you are judged by the way you speak? Do you ever change the way you speak according to where you are and who you are speaking to? If you are bilingual, what factors influence your choice of language?
12. Why have you chosen to study A-level English Language? What do you expect to gain from the course?

Task 4 – Language Scrapbook

Create a scrap book of a variety of different spoken and written texts such as film scripts, transcripts, magazine adverts, newspaper articles, letters, pages from a website, extracts from different novels, text messages, lyrics, cartoons, postcards, flyers, posters, tickets, books, signs, packaging or instructions etc. Collect ten to fifteen texts, more than this would be fantastic. Consider texts that are important in your day to day life.

For each of the texts you will need to write down the genre, audience, and purpose.

Genre/text type – Is it a letter, advert or script?

Audience – Who has the text been created for?

Purpose – Why has the text been created? What is it trying to do?

Task 5 – Key Terms Research

Research what the following key terms mean and see if you can use your findings to help you make further notes/comments on the texts in your scrap book.

Lexis

Grammar

Semantics

Pragmatics

Graphology

Discourse

Phonology

Register

Task 6 – Why study English Language?

Write around 300 words explaining why you are interested studying English Language. Consider what interests you in the subject and which elements of language you hope to explore.

Task 7 – Attitudes to British Accents

Using the “English Like a Native” YouTube channel, watch video clips on the following ten British regional accents:

- Geordie (Newcastle)
- Mancunian (Manchester)
- Scouse (Liverpool)
- Glaswegian accent (Glasgow)
- Cockney (East London)
- Yorkshire accent
- Northern Irish
- Grimsby
- West Country (places in the south-western England, including Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, and Somerset)
- Received Pronunciation (“the Queen’s English”)

Make notes on the key features of each accent – then rank them in order of what you think sounds the most:

- educated
- friendly
- fun
- aggressive

Write at least one paragraph for each of the above, justifying why you have ranked the accents in this way.

Task 8 – Original Writing

Your coursework will require you to create your own piece of original writing – so if you have enjoyed the “Writing” section of the GCSE English Language papers (Section B), you will love this unit! To prepare for writing your coursework, choose one of the following tasks:

- Power of Storytelling: write a 500-word biography, short story or dramatic monologue on any topic/genre of your choice!
- Power of Information: write a 500-word text on one of the following: a leaflet focusing on a health issues; a piece of travel journalism; a step-by-step fitness regime; a blog focusing on social issues; a piece of local history; a press release from a football club; an extract from an instruction manual for a topic/activity of your choice; news coverage of an important sporting or musical event.
- Power of Persuasion: write a 500-word text on one of the following: a film, music event or restaurant review; a letter to a headteacher about uniform issues; a piece of motivational speaking; a political speech; a speech delivered by a captain or manager of a sports team; a piece of investigative journalism; a speech delivered on a controversial topic; a letter to an MP.