

English
Language
AS level

Introduction

Welcome to your 'A' level English Language course. This Introduction should provide you with all the information you need to make a successful start to your studies.

The Specification (or Syllabus)

This course has been designed to give you a full and thorough preparation for the AS level or A-level English Language 2700 specification, set by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA).

The **Subject Code** for entry to the AS only award is **1701**.

The **Subject Code** for entry to the A2 (A level) award is **2701**.

NB There is also a 'B' specification (2705) for which this course is not appropriate. Be sure to enter for the right one!

Please be aware that the A level examination includes **coursework**. Although the coursework is supervised by Oxford Open Learning and marked by AQA, you **must** ensure that your exam centre makes the appropriate **examination entry** for your coursework unit(s) in addition to the written paper entries. Without this you will not be graded.

Private Candidates

The AQA specification is open to private candidates. Private candidates should contact AQA for a copy of '*Information for Private Candidates*'.



Oxford Open Learning

Arrangement of Lessons

AS Course

Module One: Discovering Language

Lesson Title	2nd ed Gardiner reading refs
1 An Introduction to English Grammar	pp. 9-19
2 Words and Meaning - Part One: Semantics	pp. 20-23, 26-27
3 Words and Meaning - Part Two: Figurative Language and Phonology	pp. 24-25
4 Language Use in Context - Some Key Ideas	pp. 42-45
Tutor-marked Assignment A	
5 Introduction to Spoken English	pp. 35-41
6 Non-Verbal Aspects of Speech and Non-Verbal Communication	-
7 Conversation Structures	pp. 47-57
8 Types of Spoken Interaction	(pp. 42-45)
9 Conversation Theories	pp. 58-61
10 Spoken Language Transcription	pp. 28-31; 64-69
Tutor-marked Assignment B	
11 The Acquisition of Language	pp. 123-148
Tutor-marked Assignment C	

Module Two: Language and Representation

12 Representation and Language	pp. 112-115
Tutor-marked Assignment D	
13 Styles of Writing: The Language of the Media	pp. 73-83
14 Styles of Writing: Literary and Informational Language	pp. 84-85; 116-117
15 Coursework Piece 1: Investigation	-
Tutor-marked Assignment E	
16 Coursework Piece 2: Production	-
17 How to Write the Commentary	-
Tutor-marked Assignment F	
Glossary for AS course	p. 192

A2 Course

Module Three: Language Explorations

Lesson Title	Gardiner reading references
18 The Idea of the 'Standard'	(pp. 40-41); pp. 93-95
19 Interaction, Class and Gender	pp. 62-63; 114-119; 102-103
20 Regional Variation	pp. 93-97
21 Social Variation and Societal Attitudes to Variation	pp. 98-101
Tutor-marked Assignment G	
22 The English Language: Development and Use	pp. 149-157
23 Contemporary Language Change: The Last Fifty Years	pp. 158-165; 170-71
24 Texts from Different Times	pp. 166-169
Tutor-marked Assignment H	
25 Language in the News (1): the Aberrant Apostrophe	pp. 177-191
26 Language in the News (2): Uptalk	-
Tutor-marked Assignment I	
27 Language in the News (3): Texting	pp. 86-89
Tutor-marked Assignment J	

Module Four: Language Investigations and Interventions

28 Language Investigation Preparation	-
Tutor-marked Assignment K	
29 Language Variation	pp. 106-111; 114-119; 60-61
30 Working with Data	-
Tutor-marked Assignment L	
31 The Language Intervention	-
Glossary for A2 Course	pp. 192-195

Are Additional Textbooks Needed?

Although the course provides most of the information you will require, it is also important to get hold of the following textbook to augment topic coverage and to provide the necessary variety of perspectives and approaches:

Gardiner, Alan. *Revision Express English Language*, Pearson, (2nd ed, 2008). ISBN: 978-1408206539 (Approx. £13.99).

There are references to suitable sections in Gardiner for supplementary reading throughout the course.

Although detailed references are not given in the course, it is also recommended (but not compulsory) that you acquire the following texts:

Daniel Clayton & Beth Kemp: *AQA English Language A AS: Student's Book (AQA Language for AS)*, (Nelson Thornes, 2008) ISBN: 978-0748798483

Sara Thorne: *Mastering Advanced English Language* (Palgrave Master) (ISBN: 978-1403994837)

With any A-level subject, it is vital that you gain as many different perspectives as possible if you want to do well. Look out for other new books that will help your studies.

As you work your way through this course, you will encounter a number of technical terms which are used in the study of English Language. Some of these may already be familiar to you; others you will find explained as you go along. You will, however, need to look up the meaning of some of the terms yourself – this will help you to acquire the habit of checking meanings and roots of unfamiliar words.

The **glossaries** at the back of some of the modules will help but you will need a good dictionary. We would recommend *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 11th edition (2006) (ISBN: 978-0199296347). It would also be helpful for you to be able to refer to *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (2 volumes) or the complete *Oxford English Dictionary* from time to time. One easy way of acquiring accompanying textbooks is through the Oxford Open Learning website (www.ool.co.uk).

Other Suggested Reading

We would strongly encourage you to do as much background reading as you can, in order to deepen your knowledge and understanding. But with so many books available, where do you begin? This list will hopefully be helpful in giving you a starting point and narrowing down the field a little. It is not intended that you buy every, or even any, book on this list! Most will be readily available in libraries so you can refer to them when you need to.

You'll probably find that these books vary considerably in depth and difficulty but they're well worth looking at. You might want to 'dip into' them or use them as a reference source rather than reading them from cover to cover. Those marked with an * are those we would particularly recommend.

- Carey, J [ed.] *The Faber Book of Reportage* (Faber and Faber, 1987, ISBN: 978-0571141630).
- Cheshire, J, Graddol, D and Swann, J *Describing Language* (Open University, 1987, ISBN: 978-0335193158).
- *Crystal, D *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of English Language* (CUP, 1997, ISBN: 978-0521596558).
- *Crystal, D *The English Language* (Penguin, 1998, ISBN: 978-0141003962).
- McArthur, T [ed.] *The Oxford Companion to the English Language* (OUP, ISBN: 978-0192806376).

Student-based Texts

The books in this section are usually more easily digestible. At the same time they'll provide you with a closer look at specific aspects of the course.

- Rain, F and Rain, R *The Grammar Book* (National Association for the Teaching of English, 1996).
- Crystal, D *Discover Grammar* (Longman, 1998).
- Freeborn, D *Varieties of English* (Second edition, Macmillan, 1993).
- Goddard, A et al *English Language 'A' level: The Starter Pack* (Framework Press, 1991).
- Hudson, R *Language Workbooks* (Routledge, 1994).
- Jago, M *Language and Style* (Hodder and Stoughton).
- Keith and Shuttleworth, *Living Language* (Hodder and Stoughton).
- Salkie, R *Text and Discourse Analysis: Language Workbooks* (Routledge, 1995).
- Stilwell Peccei, J *Child Language: Language Workbooks* (Routledge, 2003).
- Thorne S *Mastering Advanced English* (Macmillan, 1997).

Trudgill, P *Dialects: Language Workbooks* (Routledge, 1994).

Wainwright, J & Hutton, J *Your Own Words* (Nelson, 1992).

Websites

You might find the following websites helpful.

List of web-based resources for English A' level support:

www.revisiontime.com/alevel_english.html

Oxford English Dictionary:

www.askoxford.com

BBC English AS Guru:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/asguru/english/language.shtml>

'A' Level Qualifications

The Advanced Subsidiary (AS) Level

Advanced Subsidiary (AS) courses may be used in one of two ways:

- As a final qualification, allowing candidates to broaden their studies and to defer questions about specialism;
- As the first half (50%) of an Advanced Level qualification, which must be completed before an Advanced Level award can be made.

Advanced Subsidiary is designed to provide an appropriate assessment of knowledge, understanding and skills expected of candidates who have completed the first half of a full Advanced Level Qualification.

The Advanced Level (AS + A2)

The Advanced Level examination is in two parts:

Advanced Subsidiary (AS) - 50% of the total award;

A second examination, called A2 - 50% of the total award

'A' levels allow for considerable flexibility in the taking of exams. The two most popular options are:

- AS is completed at the end of one year and A2 at the end of the second year;
- AS and A2 are completed at the end of the same year.

Grading and Shelf-Life

The AS qualification will be **graded** on a five-point scale: A, B, C, D and E. The full A Level qualification will be graded on a six-point scale: A*, A, B, C, D and E. To be awarded an A* candidates will need to achieve a grade A on the full A Level qualification and an A* on the aggregate of the A2 units.

For AS and A Level, candidates who fail to reach the minimum standard for grade E will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate. Individual assessment unit results will be certificated.

Unit results remain available to count towards certification, whether or not they have already been used, as long as the specification is still valid. Candidates may re-sit a unit any number of times within the **shelf-life** of the specification.

The AQA Syllabus

This information is correct at the time of publication but may be subject to change. Prior to the examination, students should contact the exam board for the latest information.

This course is designed to match the requirements of the AQA 1701 (AS) and 2701 ('A' level A2) specifications. The exam consists of two units at each level (four in all). At each level, one unit is assessed by written exam and one by coursework.

Specification: Assessment Structure

AS Course (AQA AS 1701)

Unit 1 - Unit code: ENGA1 Seeing Through Language

60% of AS, 30% of A Level

2 hour written examination

90 marks

Language Analysis task and Language Development essay

Unit 2 - Unit code: ENGA2 Representation and Language

40% of AS, 20% of A Level

Coursework

60 marks

The unit also requires candidates to study a language issue: **Language Development**. Candidates will explore how children learn language and how this is linked with cognition and how they are able to understand and express themselves through language.

The themes of Language and Mode, Linguistic Frameworks and Language and Development are organised as follows:

1. Language and Mode

Candidates should study:

- written, spoken and electronic texts
- planned and spontaneous texts
- texts about a range of subjects, for varying audiences and purposes
- ways of classifying modes (e.g. continuum, typology and dimensions approaches).

When analysing a text, candidates should explore:

- the use of language according to the mode
- the impact of context
- how language is used to realise a text's functions and convey meaning.

This will involve analysing:

- significant features of lexis, grammar, semantics and pragmatics
- how speaker/writer identity is conveyed
- how the listener/reader is positioned
- the functions of the text (interactional and transactional)
- the structure and organisation of texts
- representational issues.

2. Linguistic Frameworks

Candidates will need to be able to describe significant features of texts using Linguistic Frameworks, according to the following categories:

- Phonological:
- Lexical-semantic:
- Grammatical:
- Textual:

3. Language Development

For this topic candidates should study how children go through the initial phases of language acquisition and how they develop writing skills.

Candidates should study:

- the functions of children's language
- the development of phonological and pragmatic competence, lexis, grammar and semantics
- the relationship between children's spoken and written language
- the development of the conventions of writing and multimodal texts
- theories about language development: imitation, innateness, cognition, input, socio-cultural, genre theory.

The format of the question paper

The question paper is divided into two sections:

- **Section A** Language and Mode
- **Section B** Language Development

Candidates will answer two questions in total. They will answer one question from **Section A** and one from **Section B**.

In **Section A** there will be one question. In **Section B** there will be a choice of two questions. One question will be set on initial language acquisition and one will be set on children's development of writing.

The unit allows 30 minutes for the reading and preparation of the data to be analysed in answering Section A and B. It is recommended that candidates then spend 45 minutes writing their Section A answer and 45 minutes writing their Section B answer.

M2 Representation and Language (20%) (coursework)

This coursework unit is designed to develop candidates' ability to write for specific audiences and purposes and to explore the key ideas of representation and ideology. It draws on the key concepts of use-related variation, and develops their ability to use linguistic frameworks to analyse and interpret language in use.

In the unit candidates will produce creative and analytical work linked by the issues of how texts produce representations of people, institutions and events, and help to produce, reproduce or challenge social values and attitudes. Two pieces of coursework are required.

Coursework Piece 1: Investigation

Candidates should analyse between **three** and **five** texts (which may be extracts from longer texts).

There should be a temporal relationship between the texts. An investigation may focus on a number of texts:

- produced at the same time (e.g. surveying newspaper articles published on the same day)
- evolving over times (e.g. a news story spanning a period of time)
- produced at different times (e.g. texts produced in the 1950s, 1970s and the 21st century).

The analysis should be **1000 – 1500 words long**.

Copies of the analysed text should be presented with it.

Coursework Piece 2: Production

Candidates should produce one text of **600 words**.

The text should have a clear genre other than an academic one such as an essay. The intended audience, purpose and place of publication should be specified as much as is appropriate to the genre. Genres may be literary or non-literary.

The text should be written to produce or challenge a particular representation of a social group, individual, event or institution.

The text should be accompanied by a **400 word commentary** justifying the intended representation and explaining how it has been achieved. The whole must have a front sheet that summarises the contents.

A2 level - M3 Language Explorations (synoptic 30%)

The first A2 unit is designed to introduce candidates to the wider study of language in society. After the AS units which focussed on language in its immediate contexts (use-related variation according to subject, purpose, audience, genre and mode), this unit places language in its wider geographical, social and temporal contexts.

The unit is also designed to be **synoptic**. It will test candidates' acquired ability to analyse and evaluate spoken and written language in both their immediate and wider contexts. They will study the nature of language in use but also the ways in which ideas about language are created and constituted.

The unit is divided into two sections:

- **Section A** Language Variation and Change
- **Section B** Language Discourses

Candidates will answer **two** questions in total. They will answer **one** question from **Section A** and **one** from **Section B**.

In **Section A** there will be a choice of two questions; in **Section B** there will be one question.

The unit allows 30 minutes for the reading and preparation of the data to be analysed in answering Sections A and B. It is recommended that candidates then spend 60 minutes writing their Section A answer and 60 minutes writing their Section B answer.

Section A: Language Variation and Change

Section A is designed to elicit candidates' ability to evaluate ideas and issues about language variation and change by using their knowledge and study and two pieces of data.

The task will be an essay cue requiring the evaluation of a particular idea, proposition or approach regarding language variation and change.

The task will present candidates with two pieces of data. These may be spoken or written texts, word lists, graphical or tabular information about language use or a model representing ideas about language.

Section B: Language Discourses

Section B is designed to elicit candidates' ability to evaluate how language and language issues are debated and represented in society. The task will present candidates with two passages about a language topic.

Candidates will be given texts about language aimed at a popular, non-linguistic audience and they may be given texts from different times. The question will ask candidates to:

- analyse and evaluate how the two texts contribute to a discourse about language, constituting social knowledge about the language issue
- assess the validity of the views about language in the texts, drawing on their own knowledge and study of language.

M4 Language Investigations and Interventions (coursework 20%)

This unit is designed to develop candidates' ability to investigate language independently. It enables them to pursue areas of individual interest and to explore methodological issues concerning data collection and analysis.

1. Language Investigation

For this unit candidates must carry out an original piece of language research to answer questions they have posed or to test an hypothesis they have generated. The investigation should focus on **spoken** rather than written language.

For the purposes of the investigation spoken is taken simply to refer to language which is literally intended to be spoken aloud. This definition will therefore include scripted and spontaneous speech.

Candidates are permitted to look at written text if it illuminates a question about spoken language. It would be permissible to study Teletext subtitles as a way of evaluating the access they provide to the spoken dialogue.

A Language Investigation should contain:

1. Introduction
2. Aims
3. Methodology
4. Data
5. Analysis
6. Conclusion
7. Evaluation
8. Bibliography
9. Appendices

The investigation should be between 1750-2500 words (excluding data). The whole must have a front sheet that summarises the contents.

2. Language Intervention

The Language Intervention coursework task is designed to allow candidates to make an informed contribution to social debates about language, communicating their knowledge beyond the confines of their academic discipline.

Candidates must write about a language debate in a particular form for a non-specialist audience.

Candidates should study writing in different forms to inform, argue, instruct and persuade, e.g. articles, editorials, letters to the editor, scripts. They should study how to transform and represent linguistic ideas for a non-specialist audience.

The topic for the intervention should come from the subject matter studied for **Unit 3**. Candidates may use any topical language issues that arise during their course to which they want to respond. Candidates should produce one or two texts totalling 1250 words.

AQA Objectives and Syllabus

Your course has been designed to help you prepare for the AS examination on English Language based on:

AQA Specification 2700 (AS 1701/ A2 2701)

If you have not already done so, you should contact AQA to obtain a copy of the syllabus/specification, and also information for Private Candidates, which contains important details, such as dates for applying to sit examinations.

You can contact their Publications Department:

AQA Publications
Unit 2, Wheel Forge Way,
Trafford Park
Manchester
M17 1EH (tel: 0870-410-1036)

publications@aqa.org.uk

It is also possible to download the syllabus from the AQA website at:
www.aqa.org.uk

Aims

AQA say that AS and A level courses based on this specification should encourage candidates to deepen their interest and enjoyment in the use of English as they:

- develop and apply their understanding of the concepts and methods appropriate for the analysis and study of language
- undertake independent investigative work related to language in use
- engage creatively and independently with a varied programme for the study of English from the past to the present day

- develop their skills as producers and interpreters of language.

Other Approaches

Your success in following the course will be all the more likely if you have an active interest in written and spoken language. Awareness of language-related issues in society is important. The sort of things you may ask yourself could be, for instance:

- Why do television and radio newsreaders speak in 'standard English' rather than in local dialect?
- Why do tabloid newspapers have such short, snappy headlines?
- Why should there be such obvious regional differences in the way people speak?
- Where do place names originate from?
- How and why does language change over time? If we were suddenly transported back into medieval Britain, would we be able to understand what was being said?
- How have the rules of grammar as we know them developed?
- How do we acquire language anyway?

These types of questions are likely to be answered by this course but they are the sort of questions you should be puzzling over already. A keen ear for conversation, an interest in the written word and the variety of uses to which it is put, curiosity about your own language, and those of other social, ethnic and professional groups, are all prerequisites for success in English Language 'A' level.

Written Work

You will find that there are normally three tutor-marked assignments (TMAs) in each of the modules. Your answers should generally be submitted to your tutor for marking. When the marked script is returned, you should receive a set of Suggested Answers.

Probably the single most important thing about English A-level is that *you should form your own judgments* on what you study. It is no use regurgitating somebody else's opinion, even if you have found it in these lessons! It is difficult to argue a point well unless you have thought of it for yourself and *believe* in it. Have the courage to form your own opinions.

In addition, there are many activities throughout the course, located within the lessons. These are smaller pieces of work, usually

requiring brief written answers. You will see that there is a space immediately beneath the activity for you to write in the answer. The size of the space is a clue to how much you might write, but do not be afraid to continue on a separate piece of paper.

Suggested answers are usually given at the end of the lesson but many activities are open-ended and you may well have produced very different answers. The important thing is that you actively engage with the text. The work you do in the boxes is evidence of your active study and it will also help when you come to revise your work for the examination, taking you back to your train of thought at an earlier date and organising your notes for you.

You can see that there is plenty of work to be done before you will be in a position to take the examination. See how many months are available to you and how much you have to manage in that time. Divide the time available into smaller segments and work out what ground you are going to cover and which assignments you will submit each month. It is only by sticking to a disciplined plan that you can hope to succeed.

Assignments and Coursework

Some of the tutor-marked assignments (TMAs) in this course are designed to assist in your preparation for the written exam papers and some match the layout and objectives of typical coursework assignments or investigations – indeed some fall into both categories.

For both AS and A2, you are advised to plan your coursework portfolio carefully and, if possible, discuss this with a tutor.

If you are an external candidate, this means that your coursework will be marked not by your tutor but by AQA. Your tutor is required only to vouch for the fact that you (alone) have produced it.

An Overall Timetable for your Studies

In this course, we have put Unit 1 before Unit 2 and Unit 3 before Unit 4 because that is how they have been arranged by AQA. But there is no law that says you have to study them in this order.

Instead, there are good arguments for prioritising Units 2 and 4 ahead of 1 and 3. This is not because they are “easier” but because there are early deadlines for the submission of coursework and a considerable gap between those deadlines and the Unit 1 and 3 examinations. There are a number of stages to researching, planning and writing your coursework and it is as well to allow as much time as possible in order to give yourself the best chance.

On the other hand, studying Unit 1 gives you a great deal of background knowledge that will help you with your Unit 2 coursework and Unit 3 also provides vital background for your Unit 4 coursework. So AQA have not made it easy for you to plan your studies effectively.

Your tutor should be able to give you suitable advice on what would constitute a sensible schedule to ensure that you give yourself the best chance of doing well on both units.

Using the Internet

All students would benefit from access to the Internet. You will find a wealth of information on all the topics in your course. As well as the AQA website (www.aqa.org.uk), you should get into the habit of checking the Oxford Open Learning site (www.ool.co.uk) where you may find news, additional resources and interactive features as time goes by.

Good luck!

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