



# A Level English Language Bridging Course

**AQA English Language A-Level**  
**Kineton High School**  
**2019-2021**



**Course preparation**

# Welcome to A-Level English Language.

*The purpose of this booklet is for you to prepare yourself for the demands of A-level and familiarise yourself with some key discourses surrounding English Language.*

*Any questions – please ask. We look forward to teaching you.*

**Mrs Harris & Mrs Hardwick**

## **TASK 1**

The AQA A-level specification can be found here:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/as-and-a-level/english-language-7701-7702>

Please read through the specification and print out the 'specification at a glance for A-level (NOT A/S). It should be glued into your exercise book in September.

## **TASK 2**

The most challenging aspect of A Level English Language is getting to grips with the huge amount of terminology that you will be expected to know and use accurately.

Start by creating a working glossary document so that you can collect all the key terms you learn in one place, making it easier to revise in the future. A notebook/cue cards would be useful for this.

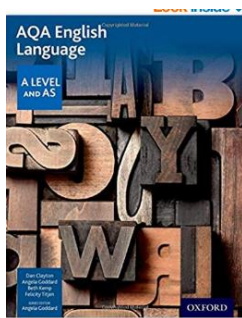
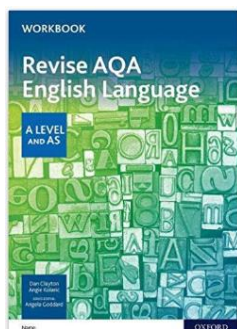
Then go onto the AQA website and print the glossary that they recommend. Colour code individual terms RED/ORANGE/GREEN and bring it to your first lesson in September.

<https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/english/AQA-7701-7702-GLOSSARY.PDF>

**By the end of the course, you will be expected to use all of these terms confidently.**

## **TASK 3 – SUGGESTED PURCHASES**

You will find the following revision guide and textbooks useful for your course. They can be purchased from Amazon:



#### **TASK 4**

The field of English Language is a wide and varied field of study and, as a result, lots of people like discussing it.

Check out Radio 4's 'Word of Mouth' programme on the BBC iPlayer:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qtnz/episodes/player>

In this half hourly programme, Michael Rosen discusses various sorts of language from broad areas, such as the use of slang and language linked to gender identity, to more niche areas such as the naming of diseases and clichés in football commentary.

- **Choose 4 programmes to listen to that interest you. Produce a written summary of what you have discovered.**

#### **TASK 5**

Check out this playlist on Ted Talks:

[https://www.ted.com/playlists/228/how\\_language\\_changes\\_over\\_time](https://www.ted.com/playlists/228/how_language_changes_over_time)

- **Watch each of the talks and make notes on what you find and answer the specified questions below. Then choose one of the investigation topics to further research. Bring your findings to your first lesson in September.**

##### **Talk 1: Txtng is killing language. JK!!!**

- What are your views on the way that texting (and social media in general) has influenced language?
- What are the key differences between the way we use language in speech and the way we use it in language?
- Look at the way the speaker discusses the use of the phrase 'LOL.' How far do you agree with his assertion that the role of 'LOL' has changed?
- Do you still use this technique?

*Investigation: What are the key features of the way you use language in text messages and social media? What affects the way you use language in these situations?*

##### **Talk 2: Go ahead, make up new words!**

- How far do you agree with the idea that we are pre-programmed to apply certain grammatical rules such as plurals?
- According to the talk, what are the different ways of creating new words?
- Look at the new words that have been added to the Oxford English Dictionary (google 'new words list' and they will appear). What methods have been used?

*Investigation: Try to create a new word and see if you can track its usage. Think about the gap you are trying to fill and how you will get the word to spread around different speakers.*

### **Talk 3: How language transformed humanity.**

- How essential is language to social learning?
- Pagel presents an argument for a global language. What are your thoughts about creating a single global language? What are the potential benefits of such a situation? What are the potential downsides to this situation?

*Investigation: Pagel discusses the idea that language is subversive and that there are certain words you cannot say. Discuss the words that are considered 'dangerous' or 'taboo' in modern society. How has this changed over time? Are there words that could be used 50 years ago that are considered inappropriate now? Why has this changed?*

### **Talk 4: What our language habits reveal.**

- What are the different types of verb that Pinker discusses?
- Why might speakers choose to use euphemistic or metaphorical phrases for certain events or ideas?
- Pinker discusses the use of language to create implicature (implying meaning but not saying it directly). In what ways have you used or heard implicature in different settings or situations?

*Investigation: Look at different political speeches and identify how language has been used to convey or reinforce certain ideologies or values. How do politicians use implicature to affect the audience's response? What values do they assume their audiences hold?*

### **Talk 5: Don't kill your language!**

- This talk is in a different language with subtitles. What were your initial responses to this? Did this make you less likely to want to engage with the talk? What do you think that reveals about the way we respond to different languages?
- To what extent do you feel that language is an important part of culture?
- What might make someone give up their native tongue in favour of a different language?

*Investigation: Research a country that has English as a primary language alongside other national languages – e.g. South Africa, Jamaica or Singapore. How does this country use English? How did English arrive in the country? What effects has English had on the native languages?*

### **Talk 6: What makes a word real?**

- In your opinion, when should a word be added to the standard dictionary? What criteria do you think it should fulfil before it is added?
- Do you think any words should be banished? What criteria would a word have to fulfil in order for it to be threatened with 'banishment'?
- Can you write a definition of what makes a word real?

*Investigation: Select three new slang words that you think your English teacher needs to know in order to be able to communicate effectively with your age group. Prepare the dictionary definitions for your words along with examples of them in use.*

*Justify why you have selected these words over any others.*

### **Talk 7: What is a snollygoster?**

- How important is it that the debates in Parliament are available for people to read?
- How important are titles for a profession?
- To what extent do you agree with Forsyth's view that reality shapes words more than words shape reality?

*Investigation: Visit <https://hansard.parliament.uk/> and look at the ways in which language is used in Parliament. Which elements of language use are particularly*

### **TASK 7**

Download the 3 blogs below. Read them and make appropriate notes that you will share in September. Remember that you should be frequently reading blogs focusing on language topics throughout your course:

- <https://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/> - gives some interesting insights into new words and the changing uses of existing words.
- <http://flashfictiononline.com/main/> - useful website for looking at short pieces of creative writing. This will prove useful as you start preparing for coursework.
- <https://www.theguardian.com/media/mind-your-language> - interesting blog that looks at attitudes towards the ways in which language is used.

### **ADDITIONAL READING LIST**

There are a lot of books written about English Language. Some of the most accessible are:

- David Crystal: The Story of English in 100 Words; How Language Works; The English Language: A Guided Tour of the Language (in fact, most books by this author are accessible and interesting. Have a look in your local library for them.)
- Bill Bryson: Mother Tongue