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**PiXL Gateway: Progression**

* **English Language**

**Contents:**

1. Introduction
2. English Language
3. General Reading List
4. Essay Writing
5. Summer Tasks

**Introduction**

Congratulations on choosing to study English Language at A Level.

You have chosen to study a course that will not only build on the skills you already have but also encourage you to think critically and prepare you for whatever your next steps happen to be.

Prepare to think a little differently about the world!

**English Language**

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.

All of the exam boards offer glossaries of key terms to support you. You will be studying AQA but regardless of which exam board you are studying, each of the glossaries have useful content so you might want to have a look at all of them:

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| AQA | <http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/english/AQA-7701-7702-GLOSSARY.PDF> |
| Edexcel | <https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/A%20Level/English%20Language/2015/teaching-and-learning-materials/GCE_A%20Level_EngLang_frameworks_and_levels_v1.pdf> |
| Eduqas | <http://www.eduqas.co.uk/qualifications/english-language/as-a-level/Eduqas-A-level-English-Language-gft-from-2015.pdf?language_id=1> **from page 118 – page 134** |
| OCR | <http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/308613-glossary-of-terms-and-main-language-theories.pdf> |

Don’t be put off by the amount of terminology in these documents – by the end of the course, you will be able to use everything confidently.

English Language covers a wide range of topics and you may find a generic revision guide such as Revision Express useful as a starting point: https://www.amazon.co.uk/Revision-Express-English-Language-Secondary/dp/1408206536/ref=sr\_1\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1528662184&sr=8-1&keywords=revision+express+as+and+a2+english+language

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.

You should also check out this playlist on Ted Talks: https://www.ted.com/playlists/228/how\_language\_changes\_over\_time

For each of the talks, think about the following questions and then choose one of the following topics to investigate:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 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?** |
| 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.** |
| 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?** |
| 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?** |
| 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?** |
| 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.** |
| 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 interesting?** |

**Recommended Reading List**

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

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*

There are also some really useful blogs to have a look at:

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.

**Language Scrapbook**

The joy about studying English Language is that it is everywhere.

As part of your summer work, start a ‘scrapbook’ where you collect different examples of language. Annotate the examples looking at how they use language to meet the demands of the different audiences, forms and functions of the text.

For example:

Jargon – language unique to this type of text. Demonstrates the cost of the ticket and implies that it is cheaper than other types.



Implied legal language showing the authority of the ticket. Hints at the power behind the people who issue and check tickets.

Colours are typical of this text type and are the same regardless of the train company.

Abbreviations due to limited size of text

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