

Royal Wootton Bassett Academy Sixth Form

English Language A-Level Handbook 2023/24



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Course outline with key assessment dates

For the A Level qualification, you will study for two more exams and two non-exam assessments:

Paper 1 (Language, the Individual and Society): 2 hours 30 **40% of A level**

- **Section A: Textual Variations and Representations** - two questions on unseen texts (one contemporary and one older) and one question comparing the two texts.
- **Section B: Children's Language Development** - a discursive essay on children's language development, based on a given data set and wider knowledge of connected theories and research

Paper 2 (Language Diversity and Change): 2 hours 30 **40% of A level**

- **Section A: Diversity and Change** – choice of two evaluative essays on either language diversity (gender, occupation, regional variation etc) or language change.
- **Section B: Language Discourses** – two texts linked to diversity/change topic, one analysis question and one directed writing task linked to the same topic.

Non-Exam Assessment – a language investigation and a piece of original writing with a commentary totalling 3500 words.
20% of A level

Both NEA submitted and terminal exams taken in Summer 2022.

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/as-and-a-level/english-language-7701-7702/specification-at-a-glance>

Access details to VLE, blogs, resources areas

<http://www.bl.uk/>

<http://englishlangsfx.blogspot.co.uk/>

<http://englishandmedia.co.uk/> username: Wootton password: bassett

<http://modern-english.co.uk/>

How the course is delivered

At A level, students are taught through paired teaching: one teacher will cover one exam and the other will cover the second exam.

Independent study will consist of students collecting and analysing their own data in the form of transcripts of speech, non-fiction texts like leaflets, recipes, newspaper articles etc.

Departmental expectations English Language offers you an accessible and stimulating course in which you will engage with a variety of spoken and written texts. It is essential that you engage with all aspects of your study to maximise your understanding and progress.

Any absences will require you to obtain work missed and be fully prepared for the following lessons. Homework must be completed on time, as many lessons will require this as a prerequisite to contributing during the next lesson.

Study requires an independent approach to analysing and commenting on texts, thus providing a firm foundation for study in Higher Education. It requires you to respond creatively to texts, both in coursework and examined units, whilst in addition, expecting a high level of commitment to work and to reading beyond the classroom, and an ability to meet strict deadlines.

Your success on this course will depend upon your willingness to engage in group discussions, to be involved in debates and to be enthusiastic about fulfilling your potential. You will need to be prepared to undertake presentations to your student group and to be willing to contribute significantly to the learning environment.

The A level learning environment is very different to the one you have experienced at GCSE, and as such, your own approaches will need to be different. Achieving well at an advanced level involves taking responsibility for your own learning, working independently and meeting all deadlines.

Subject Leaders

You will have the opportunity to apply for a subject leader position for the subjects within the English Faculty. Subject Leaders promote their subject throughout the school and in the wider community, for example our feeder primary schools, and act as an ambassador for the subject and the school.

Initial recommended reading

It is recommended that you buy the Cambridge AQA English Language Student Book to support your study.

A/AS Level English Language for AQA Student Book (A Level (AS) English Language AQA) Paperback (2015)

by Marcello Giovanelli (Author, Editor), Gary Ives (Author), John Keen (Author), Raj Rana (Author), Rachel Rudman (Author)

ISBN-13: 978-1107465626

Other books that will provide a really good foundation for the study of Language:

- Mother Tongue, by Bill Bryson
- Listen to your Child, by David Crystal
- The Etymologicon, by Mark Forsyth
- Discover Grammar by David Crystal will prove to be essential.

Progress Record		
Why did you choose to study English Language?	What are your expectations of the course?	What do you hope to do after A-Level study?
GCSE grade:	Summer task band:	Target grade:
What are your strengths in English Language?		
What do you regard as your weaknesses?		

What actions can you take to work effectively towards your target grade?

Summer holiday key skills tasks

Aim – to promote a commitment to working at an advanced level through independent study of English Language.

Task 1

Research the History of English Language from the 1600s to the present day. What are the significant influences on our language over time, how has it changed and why?

Create a timeline that illustrates the findings from your research.

Task 2

- Read the following texts
- For each one, work out and write down the following information

Genre – what type of text is it? Does it follow any typical genre patterns?

Context – Where is it from? Who wrote it?

Audience – Who has it been written for?

Purpose – Why was it written? What response does the writer want from the audience?

- Annotate both texts carefully. Find interesting language features that they use to create meanings and achieve their intended purpose.
- Write a comparison of the two texts, no more than 1 side of A4: Compare and contrast the two texts, showing ways they are similar and different in how they use language to create representations.

Text A: Rapper Killer Mike gave a powerful speech on the night of 29th May 2020, encouraging protestors to protect Atlanta and stay calm. This an extract from the beginning of the speech.

Killer Mike: [\(01:31\)](#)

So, I'm duty bound to be here to simply say that it is your duty not to burn your own house down for anger with an enemy. It is your duty to fortify your own house so that you may be a house of refuge in times of organization. Now is the time to plot, plan, strategize, organize, and mobilize. It is time to beat up prosecutors you don't like at the voting booth. It is time to hold mayoral offices accountable, chiefs and deputy chiefs. Atlanta is not perfect, we're a lot better than we ever were, and we're a lot better than cities are.

Killer Mike: [\(02:15\)](#)

I'm mad as hell. I woke up wanting to see the world burn down yesterday because I'm tired of seeing black men die. He casually put his knee on a human being's neck for nine minutes as he died like a zebra in the clutch of a lion's jaw. That's why children are burning to the ground. They don't know what else to do.

Killer Mike: [\(02:49\)](#)

It is the responsibility of us to make this better right now. We don't want to see one officer charged. We want to see four officers prosecuted and sentenced. We don't want to see Targets burning. We want to see the system that sets up for systemic racism burnt to the ground.

Killer Mike: [\(03:13\)](#)

As I sit here in Georgia, home of Stephens, Georgia, former vice president of the Confederacy ... White man said that fundamental law stated that whites were naturally the superior race, and the Confederacy was built on a Cornerstone. It's called a Cornerstone Speech. Look it up. The Cornerstone Speech that blacks would be always be subordinate ... That officer believed that speech because he killed that man like an animal.

Text B: This is an extract from the 'Introduction' section of *How to Argue with a Racist* by Adam Rutherford (2020)

It is often easier to make a claim than to refute it, but as racism is being expressed in public more openly today, it is our duty to contest it with facts and nuance, especially if bigotry claims science as its ally. Some scientists are not comfortable with expressing opinions derived from their research where it relates to questions of race. Nevertheless, if you study human genetics – the ocean from which human variation is drawn – you have little choice but to speak of race.

The visible differences that are the roots of racism are encoded in our DNA. Therefore, science and racism are inherently entwined. Racism is an expression of prejudice, whereas science, in principle, is free from subjectivity and judgement. Reluctance by scientists to express views concerning the politics that might emerge from human genetics is a position perhaps worth reconsidering, as people who misuse science for ideological ends have no such compunction and embrace modern technology to spread their messages far and wide.

But science is a powerful ally, and knowledge of science and of history arms us against preconceptions and prejudice. We have profoundly limited senses and short lives. We crave meaning and belonging, and identity. Those aspects of the human condition are a rich soil in which prejudice can take root. The tool that grants us the clearest view of how people actually are, rather than how we judge them to be, is science.

Suggested Reading List

Blogs:

<http://englishlangsfx.blogspot.co.uk>

<http://dialectblog.com>

<http://david-crystal.blogspot.co.uk>

<http://linguistics-research-digest.blogspot.co.uk>

<http://geoffbarton.co.uk/student-resources.php>

Accessible texts to develop your knowledge:

Bill Bryson: *Mother Tongue*

“A delightful survey - though with its good humour, wealth of anecdote, and boyish enthusiasm, "romp" would be a better word.” (David Crystal)

David Marsh: *For Who the Bell Tolls*

“an entertaining compendium of usage notes and essays. Most satisfying is an angry chapter on so-called "political correctness", which demolishes the pretensions of those who think they have a God-given right to abuse those less fortunate than themselves.” (Steven Poole *Guardian*)

David Crystal: *The Fight for English*

“elegant, accessible, illuminating” (Times Education Supplement)

Robert Lane Greene: *You are what you Speak*

"An insightful, accessible examination of the way in which day-to-day speech is tangled in a complicated web of history, politics, race, economics and power."

Deborah Cameron: *The Myth of Mars and Venus*

“In this vigorously argued book, [Cameron] also combats the cliché by example, writing in an enjoyable mode of pugnacious sarcasm” (Steven Poole, *The Guardian*)

Deborah Tannen: *You Just don't Understand*

Tannen combines a novelist's ear for the way people speak with a rare power of original analysis ... fascinating (*OLIVER SACKS*)

Julie Coleman: ***The Life of Slang***

“Completely fascinating ... immensely enjoyable ... Coleman's thinking lifts this book above the usual semi-disposable level of writing about rude words.” (*James McConnachie, The Sunday Times*)

Lynne Truss: ***Eats, Shoots and Leaves***

'I laughed, I howled, and I immediately wanted to join the militant wing of the Apostrophe Society. This is great stuff: genuine, heartfelt and rousing.' Jenny Colgan

Henry Hitchens: ***The Language Wars: A History of Proper English***

'It is a breath of fresh air (if that is the right cliché) to wander the byways of language without always being nudged to laugh at prescriptivists' foolish nostrums.' (*Daily Telegraph*)

Twitter Handles:

- [@EngLangBlog](#)
- [@JennyLewinJones](#)
- [@CLVEngLang](#)
- [@MisterSlang](#)
- [@tonythorne007](#)
- [@JillLavs](#)
- [@GHEngLang](#)
- [@WhitbyA2English](#)
- [@StanCarey](#)
- [@HSFCEngLang](#)
- [@MurrayLeeA](#)
- [@LanguageDebates](#)
- [@backwellengdept](#)
- [@HillsEnglish1](#)
- [@robdrummond](#)
- [@nickking6](#)
- [@TarporleyLang](#)
- [@QEEnglish](#)
- [@SSFCEnglishLang](#)
- [@ENSFCEnglish](#)