

A Level English Language

What the course covers

When studying English language at A Level, students will be looking into the acquisition and diversity of the English language and researching many different aspects. Students will need to have a passion for research and an inquisitive nature to investigate the many aspects of the subject. Studying English language at A Level requires you to study more independently than you will have done at GCSE. To be successful you will need to be organised so that you can manage your independent research investigation which will require you to identify a topic, design your own question, apply a methodology, collect data, draw conclusions and present your findings in an appropriate way. On top of this, you will need to engage with a range of theorists critically and cite them appropriately in your writing.

The language, the individual and society element of the course will require you to compare the use of language between an unseen contemporary and older text while the second part will require you to focus on children's language development. In the exam, you will have to write a discursive essay on the topic which will involve you discussing issues such as:

- how babies and young children learn to understand spoken language and begin the process of learning speech, from 'babbling' to making coherent sentences
- the importance of social interaction and communication skills
- some of the main approaches of theorists and researchers
- some of the wider issues of literacy and the ways in which reading and writing are mastered by children

The Language diversity and change exam will require you to write an evaluative essay and for you to respond to unseen texts on the topic of language diversity and change. You will use a range of language analysis methods to explore:

- how language varies because of personal, social and geographical contexts
- how identity is constructed
- how language is used to enact relationships
- attitudes to language diversity

For the language in action unit, you will be required to put together a portfolio of your individual research. This will consist of a language investigation (2,000 words) and a piece of original writing with a commentary (1,500 words). You will have to identify a specific area that you would like to focus on and then conduct your own research.

The complete specification can be viewed at www.aqa.org.uk

What students can do with this course

English language is widely accepted by all universities as an entrance qualification for those wishing to read English related as well as other courses and indeed the focus on independent research prepares you well for university level study across a range of different subjects. An English language A Level can be used as a way into the following sectors, such as law, education, finance, management, research, publishing, advertising, marketing and the media.

How this course is assessed

Paper 1 examination: Language, the individual and society 2 hours (40% of the A Level mark)

Paper 2 examination: Language diversity and change 2 hours (40% of the A Level mark)

Non-exam assessment: Language in action (20% of the A Level mark)

Entry requirements

All our course entry requirements are detailed in the Entry Requirements document located in the admissions section of our website.