The key features of Pearson Edexcel AS and A level English Language

We have consulted with those that know most about the subject: teachers, subject associations and our partners in Higher Education, in order to produce specifications that will prepare students for the research and study skills required of them in higher education and the workplace. We have worked with experts such as Professor Urszula Clark at Aston University to produce a Language Transition Unit, which will introduce students to key language terminology and concepts, bridging the gap between GCSE and AS and A level.

Celebrating the diversity of the English Language

Our approach offers students opportunities to engage with the great variety of English in use, and to consider some critical language debates.

- How does language vary according to the place it is used, not only geographically, but also socially and culturally?
- How has language changed over time?
- Does my own language use vary? When does this happen and why?
- What role does language have in making me who I am? Does it reflect or construct my identity?

Provides plenty of opportunity for creativity

English language study should not only introduce students to how language is used, but it should also develop their ability to use and craft language themselves; to cultivate their own distinct creative voice. We have retained the creative writing coursework tasks to give students plenty of creative opportunities.

Develops research and investigative skills

Developing research, investigation and analytical skills is excellent preparation for further study or entering the workplace. Our Investigating Language component introduces students to these skills in a manageable way, appropriate to the demands of A level study.

- A choice of five engaging topic areas.
- Pre-released subtopics every January, to focus on a specific area of research.
- Guidance on primary and secondary data sources, as well as appropriate wider reading.

Nurtures individual specialism

Together, the creative writing and language investigation components give students maximum opportunity to develop their particular language specialism in their second year of study.

- Students interested in journalism might select to write newspaper articles for their coursework, followed by language and journalism for their investigation component.
- Students interested in law might choose to produce speeches for their coursework, followed by language and power for their investigation component.
- Students interested in story writing might choose to produce short stories showcasing a specific accent or dialect for their coursework, followed by regional language variation for their investigation component.

Co-teachable AS and A level

- The AS specification has been designed to be entirely co-teachable with the first year of a two-year A level course.
- All the AS topics appear in the A level specification, so there is no requirement to make decisions around AS and A level routes prior to the start of the course.

Holistic assessment

- Holistic mark schemes allow examiners to mark the students’ work in the same way as it was written - as a single cohesive piece of writing, with the response to each Assessment Objective integrated throughout.
- We want students to be able to focus on giving their best response to their exam question, not on trying to remember how many marks are attributed to each Assessment Objective.
### Component 1: Language Variation
- **Marks:** 60
- **Weighting:** 35%
- **Duration:** 2 hours 15 mins

Students study:
- register and how language varies depending on mode, field, function and audience
- how language choices can create personal identities
- language variation in English from c1550 (the beginnings of Early Modern English) to the present day.

**Section A – Individual Variation (30 marks)**
- One compulsory question on two linked unseen texts/data.

**Section B – Variation Over Time (30 marks)**
- One compulsory question on two thematically linked unseen texts, from two different periods.

### Component 2: Child Language
- **Marks:** 45
- **Weighting:** 20%
- **Duration:** 1 hour

Students study:
- spoken language acquisition and how children learn to write between the ages of 0 and 8
- the relationship between spoken language acquisition and literacy skills that children are taught, including the beginnings of reading
- appropriate theories of children’s language development.

**One compulsory essay question based on a set of unseen data – either spoken or written.**

### Component 3: Investigating Language
- **Marks:** 45
- **Weighting:** 25%
- **Duration:** 1 hour 45 mins

Students will select a research focus from five topic areas:
- Global English
- Language and Gender Identity
- Language and Journalism
- Language and Power
- Regional Language Variation.

A subtopic for each topic area will be pre-released in the January prior to the summer examination.

**Section A (15 marks)**
- One question on an unseen text related to their chosen subtopic.

**Section B (30 marks)**
- One evaluative essay question drawing upon the knowledge acquired from their own investigation.

### Coursework: Crafting Language
- **Marks:** 50
- **Weighting:** 20%

Students will:
- research a selected genre
- demonstrate their skills as writers within their selected genre, crafting texts for different audiences and/or purposes
- reflect on their research and writing in a commentary.

**Assignment 1 (30 marks)**
- Two pieces of original writing from the same genre, differentiated by function and/or audience.

**Assignment 2 (20 marks)**
- One commentary, reflecting on the two pieces they have produced.

Advisory word count is 1500–2000 words for the original writing and 1000 words for the commentary.
AS assessment at a glance

**AS (first assessment: summer 2016)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component 1: Language: Context and Identity</th>
<th>Component 2: Child Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50 marks</td>
<td>50 marks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% weighting</td>
<td>50% weighting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 hour 30 mins</td>
<td>1 hour 30 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Students study:**
- the range of contexts in which language is produced and received
- how the contexts of production and reception affect language choices
- how writers/speakers present themselves to their audience in a variety of modes
- how the language of writers/speakers reflects and constructs their identity or identities.

**Section A – Language and Context (25 marks)**
One compulsory question on a small set of thematically-linked unseen data.

**Section B – Language and Identity (25 marks)**
One compulsory question on unseen 21st century texts.

**Students study:**
- the development of both speech and writing in children between the ages of 0 and 8
- how language development is influenced by the function and context of language used
- appropriate theories of children’s language development
- producing writing for different functions and audiences.

**Question 1 (20 marks)**
Creative response to one short piece of unseen written data.

**Question 2 (30 marks)**
Response to one longer set of unseen spoken data.

### Additional free resources for AS and A level

**Language Transition Unit**
Of all the English A level subjects, the step up from GCSE is perhaps the most challenging in English Language. Our free online transition unit, produced in collaboration with Professor Urszula Clark at Aston University, includes engaging and interesting language topics where students are introduced to some of the key language terminology and concepts.

**Getting Started Teacher Guide**
- Written by a range of experts in the field of English Language, Linguistics and English Studies.
- Provides background information and key concepts for both teachers and students.
- Includes introductions to each of the areas of study within the AS and A level specifications.
- Includes examples of wider reading to support delivery of each topic.

### Approaches to co-teaching Pearson Edexcel AS and A level English Language

Our specifications have been designed so you can co-teach AS and A level students in the same class, with the same teaching topics. All AS topics appear in the A level specification, so there is no requirement to make decisions around AS and A level routes prior to the start of the course.

#### Example of content for the delivery of a co-taught AS and A level cohort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language in Context</td>
<td>Historical Variation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language and Identity</td>
<td>Research and investigation skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Language Acquisition</td>
<td>Crafting Language coursework</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers may wish to begin preparation for the coursework with A level two-year students towards the end of year one, whilst the AS students prepare for their AS examinations.

#### Only teaching A level classes?

Whilst the specifications are co-teachable, if you decide not to enter your A level students for the AS exams you can approach the course content in any order, as best suits your students.

#### How are they assessed?

AS and A level content will be assessed to a different standard, appropriate to the level of study. Students who sit the AS exams and then continue to the full A level will be assessed on their AS content again, at the end of their course of study, to the A level standard.
A level Sample Assessment Materials

Paper 1: Sample Question A

Section A: Individual Variation

Read Texts A and B on pages 3–4 of the source booklet before answering Question 1 in the space provided.

1 Analyse and compare the ways that both writers use language to convey personal and social identity.

You should refer to any relevant language frameworks and levels, as well as social, cultural and other contextual factors.

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Section B: Variation over Time

Read Texts C and D on pages 6–9 of the source booklet before answering Question 2 in the space provided.

2 Evaluate the ways that both texts demonstrate how language has changed over time.

You should refer to any relevant language frameworks and levels, as well as social, cultural and other contextual factors.

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Source Booklet

Students will respond to one question, based on two pieces of thematically linked data from different times.
A level Sample Assessment Materials

Paper 2: Child Language

Read Text A in the source booklet before answering Question 1 in the space provided.

1 Analyse how Thomas and his parents use language to interact with each other and the role this could have in shaping language development.

In your response you should consider any relevant language frameworks, levels and theories as appropriate.

Source Booklet

Paper 3: Investigating Language

Section A

Topic: Language and Journalism
Subtopic: Opinion Articles

Read the data provided on pages 8–9 of the source booklet.

To what extent is Text C representative of the ways in which language is used in current opinion articles?

Source Booklet

Text C

Language and Journalism

This text is written by the author and broadcaster, Charlie Brooker, and was published on The Guardian website. He is writing about concerns over processed food in England.

We worry too much about food in this country. Quite crudely, we are too worried about the beef disc you are chewing consists of sinewy globules and bloody tumours sluiced off their slaughtering robots to pick out any visible toenails and mince the eyelids so means while many are disgusted, few can be entirely surprised. As a consumer, you

Subtopic: Legal Language

A big lump of horse ran into your burger?

Don’t wave it around or everyone’ll want one

Students will respond to one question based upon EITHER written OR spoken data.

Section B

Topic: Language and Journalism
Subtopic: Opinion Articles

Discuss this statement with reference to your own research.

‘Journalism today is becoming too opinionated and offensive.’

You should consider:

• relevant language frameworks
• any relevant social, historical and cultural factors.
SECTION A: Language and Context

Read Texts A–C on pages 3–5 of the source booklet before answering Question 1 in the space provided.

1 Texts A–C are all forms of birthday greetings drawn from different contexts. Analyse and compare how contextual factors affect language choices in these texts.

You should refer to any relevant language frameworks and levels to support your answer and consider:

- mode
- field
- function
- audience.

Students will respond to one set of thematically linked data.
Question 1

• focus on language frameworks and levels as appropriate.
• introduce relevant theories and research

In your answer you should:
• use an appropriate writing style
• write with accuracy and control
• write to engage your audience
• introduce relevant theories and research
• focus on language frameworks and levels as appropriate.

Students will respond to one question, crafting their response appropriately for the given audience, form and/or purpose.

Source Booklet

This question will always be based on a small example of written data.

This question will always be based on spoken data.

Question 2

Read Texts B to D on pages 6−7 of the source booklet before answering Question 2 in the space provided below.

2 Analyse the way Eleanor’s spoken language has developed between the ages of 22 months and 3 years 6 months in Texts B to D. You should refer to the following language frameworks and levels as appropriate:

• phonology
• morphology
• lexis
• syntax
• discourse.

Students will respond to one question analysing children’s spoken language development.