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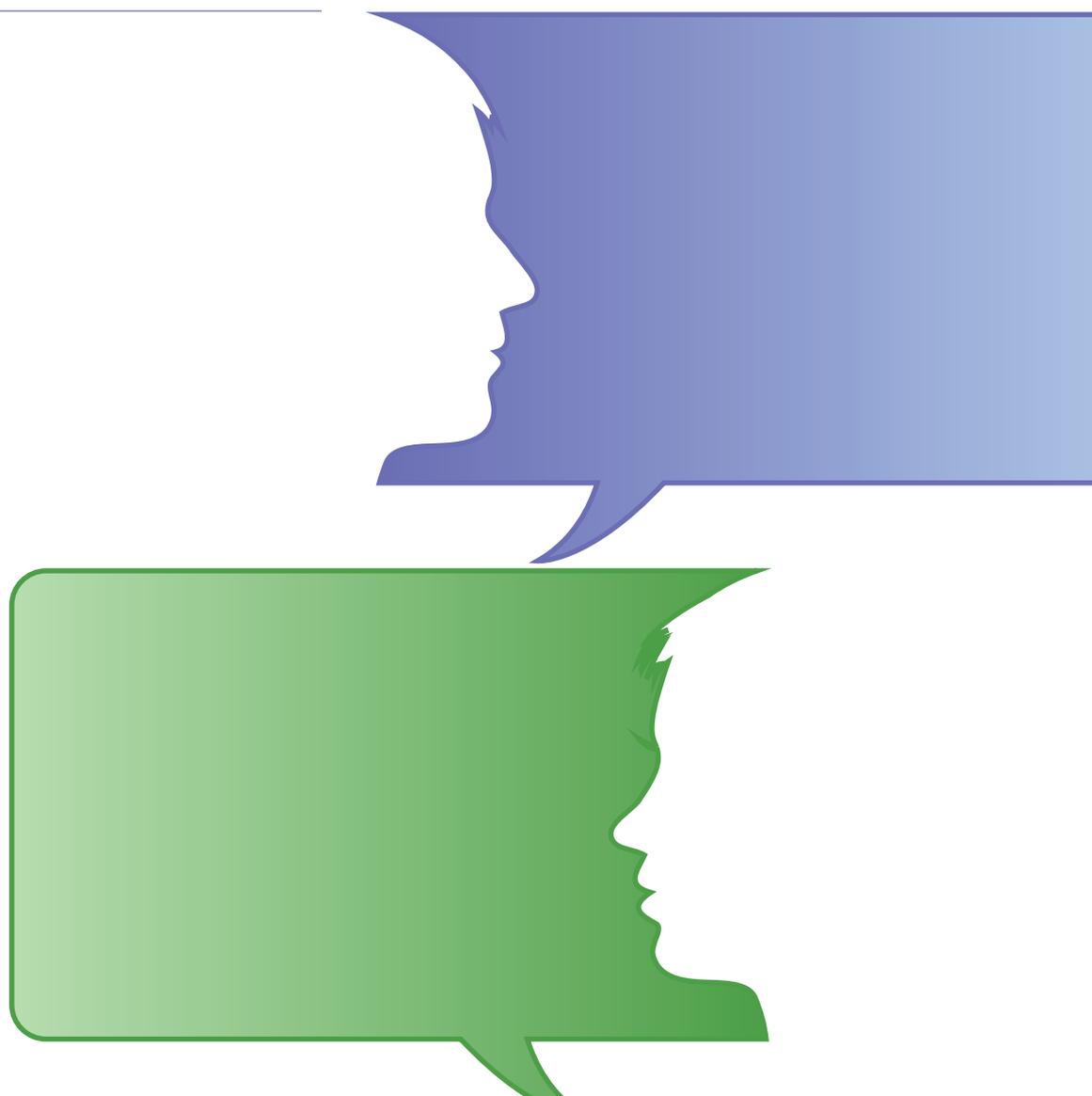
AS AND A-LEVEL
ENGLISH LANGUAGE

AS (7701)
A-level (7702)

Specifications

For teaching from September 2015 onwards
For AS exams in May/June 2016 onwards
For A-level exams in May/June 2017 onwards

Version 1.2 14 October 2021

Contents

Are you using the latest version of this specification?

- You will always find the most up-to-date version of this specification on our website at
- We will write to you if there are significant changes to the specification.

1 Introduction

1.1 Why choose AQA for AS and A-level English Language

Specifications designed for you and your students

We have worked closely with teachers and universities to develop relevant, engaging and up-to-date content that reflects contemporary language study.

With exciting text- and data-based sources of language, the specifications introduce the study of English in its various forms and contexts, with the concepts and methods appropriate for the analysis of language underpinning all elements of the course.

Offering clear skills progression from GCSE, these courses allow students to build on the skills already gained and prepare for their next steps.

The variety of assessment styles used, such as data analysis, discursive essays, directed writing, original writing and research-based investigative writing, allows students to develop a wide range of skills. These include critical reading, data analysis, evaluation, the ability to develop and sustain arguments and a number of different writing skills which are invaluable for both further study and future employment.

Teach AS and A-level together

Both AS and A-level courses provide strong stand-alone qualifications that are fully co-teachable so that you can choose the approach that best suits your, and your students', needs.

Independent learning

The A-level non-exam assessment component provides opportunities for students to pursue their own areas of interest and develop personal and independent learning skills.

We support you every step of the way

To support teaching and learning we provide a comprehensive range of resources, including a digital resource bank and access to the largest network of English teachers facilitated through our national Subject advocate network.

Learn more about our English qualifications at aqa.org.uk/english

1.2 Support and resources to help you teach

We know that support and resources are vital for your teaching and that you have limited time to find or develop good quality materials. So we've worked with experienced teachers to provide you with a range of resources that will help you confidently plan, teach and prepare for exams.

Teaching resources

We have a comprehensive range of English Language resources. Visit aqa.org.uk/7702 to see them all. They include:

- a digital resource bank, which will include a wide range of free, interactive resources to support the teaching of English Language, English Literature and English Language and Literature
- marked and annotated student responses to the questions on our specimen papers, with senior examiner commentaries
- Subject advocates, who will support you in the transition to the new specification and facilitate local and regional network and update meetings
- student textbooks and digital resources that have been checked and endorsed by AQA
- training courses to help you deliver AQA qualifications
- subject expertise courses for all teachers, from newly qualified teachers who are just getting started to experienced teachers looking for fresh inspiration.

Preparing for exams

Visit aqa.org.uk/7702 for everything you need to prepare for our exams, including:

- past papers, mark schemes and examiners' reports
- sample papers and mark schemes for new courses
- example student answers with examiner commentaries.

Analyse your students' results with Enhanced Results Analysis (ERA)

Find out which questions were the most challenging, how the results compare to previous years and where your students need to improve. ERA, our free online results analysis tool, will help you see where to focus your teaching. Register at aqa.org.uk/era

For information about results, including maintaining standards over time, grade boundaries and our post-results services, visit aqa.org.uk/results

Keep your skills up to date with professional development

Wherever you are in your career, there's always something new to learn. As well as subject-specific training, we offer a range of courses to help boost your skills.

- Improve your teaching skills in areas including differentiation, teaching literacy and meeting Ofsted requirements.
- Prepare for a new role with our leadership and management courses.

You can attend a course at venues around the country, in your school or online – whatever suits your needs and availability. Find out more at coursesandevents.aqa.org.uk

Get help and support

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at aqa.org.uk/7702

You can talk directly to the English Language subject team:

E: english-gce@aqa.org.uk

T: 01483 556 115

2 Specification at a glance

These qualifications are linear. Linear means that students will sit all the AS exams at the end of their AS course and all the A-level exams at the end of their A-level course.

AS

Subject content

3.1.1 Textual variations and representations (page 13)
3.2.1 Language diversity (page 15)
3.2.3 Writing skills (page 15)

Methods of language analysis underpin each component:

Component 1 – 3.1.2 Methods of language analysis (page 14)
Component 2 – 3.2.2 Methods of language analysis (page 15)

Assessments

Paper 1: Language and the Individual
What's assessed • Textual variations and representations • Methods of language analysis are integrated into the activities
Assessed • written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes • 70 marks • 50% of AS
Questions **Textual Variations and Representations** Two texts, linked by topic or theme. • A question requiring analysis of one text (25 marks) • A question requiring analysis of a second text (25 marks) • A question requiring comparison of the two texts (20 marks)

✚

Paper 2: Language Varieties
What's assessed • Language diversity • Writing skills • Methods of language analysis are integrated into the activities
Assessed • written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes • 70 marks • 50% of AS
Questions **Section A - Language Diversity** A discursive essay on language diversity, with a choice of two questions (30 marks) **Section B - Language Discourses** A directed writing task on attitudes to language (40 marks)

A-level

Subject content

4.1.1 Textual variations and representations (page 18)
4.1.3 Children's language development (page 19)
4.2.1 Language diversity and change (page 19)
4.2.3 Language discourses (page 20)
4.2.4 Writing skills (page 20)
4.3.1 Language Investigation (page 21)
4.3.2 Original writing (page 23)

Methods of language analysis underpin each component:

Component 1 – 4.1.2 Methods of language analysis (page 18)
Component 2 – 4.2.2 Methods of language analysis (page 20)
Component 3 – 4.3.3 Methods of language analysis (page 23)

Assessments

Paper 1: Language, the Individual and Society

What's assessed

- Textual variations and representations
- Children's language development (0-11 years)
- Methods of language analysis are integrated into the activities

Assessed

- written exam: 2 hours 30 minutes
- 100 marks
- 40% of A-level

Questions

Section A - Textual Variations and Representations

Two texts (one contemporary and one older text) linked by topic or theme.

- A question requiring analysis of one text (25 marks)
- A question requiring analysis of a second text (25 marks)
- A question requiring comparison of the two texts (20 marks)

Section B - Children's Language Development

A discursive essay on children's language development, with a choice of two questions where the data provided will focus on spoken, written or multimodal language (30 marks)

Paper 2: Language Diversity and Change

What's assessed

- Language diversity and change
- Language discourses
- Writing skills
- Methods of language analysis are integrated into the activities

Assessed

- written exam: 2 hours 30 minutes
- 100 marks
- 40% of A-level

Questions

Section A - Diversity and Change

One question from a choice of two:

Either: an evaluative essay on language diversity (30 marks)

Or: an evaluative essay on language change (30 marks)

Section B - Language Discourses

Two texts about a topic linked to the study of diversity and change.

- A question requiring analysis of how the texts use language to present ideas, attitudes and opinions (40 marks)
- A directed writing task linked to the same topic and the ideas in the texts (30 marks)

Non-exam assessment: Language in Action
What's assessed • Language Investigation • Original Writing • Methods of language analysis are integrated into the activities
Assessed • Word count: 3,500 • 100 marks • 20% of A-level • Assessed by teachers • Moderated by AQA
Tasks Students produce: • a language investigation (2,000 words excluding data) • a piece of original writing and commentary (1,500 words total)

3 Subject content – AS

Our AS English Language specification offers opportunities for students to develop their subject expertise by exploring key language concepts and engaging with a range of texts and discourses. The specification explores the study of English Language both as a medium of communication and as a topic in its own right, with an emphasis on the ability of students to pursue lines of enquiry, analyse texts produced by others and debate different views.

The methods of analysis appropriate to the fields of English language/linguistics underpin all the elements of the specification, and these are applied to distinctive topic areas. This means that, for teaching purposes, there is a common core that all teachers and students need to understand but also discrete areas so that you can teach to your own specialisms and interests.

The topics and titles of the subject content reflect a possible trajectory through the course, with 'Language and the Individual' focussing on individual contexts for language, and with 'Language Varieties' working outwards to consider larger-scale public discourses about variety. However, it would be just as viable to start with the bigger questions about language use in 'Language Varieties' and end closer to home in 'Language and the Individual'. Both of these represent valid teaching methods, and the chosen route will depend on teacher or student preferences and abilities.

This specification draws academic insights from a range of fields within the study of English language/linguistics, including sociolinguistics and discourse analysis. In creating the specification, particular note has been taken of a range of associated factors. These are: the subject criteria for English Language GCSE; subject criteria for GCE English Language; benchmarks used at higher education level. In this way the specification is designed to fit within a continuum of study from GCSE to degree level.

In summary, our AS English Language specification offers a common core of analytical methods, topics and skills which have proven value, set within a flexible programme that allows schools and colleges to shape learning and teaching in ways appropriate to their particular contexts and constituencies. It has the additional benefit of being co-teachable with our A-level in English Language, thus widening options for you and your students and ensuring that you are able to deliver a programme of study that is coherent and manageable.

3.1 Language and the individual

The aim of this part of the subject content is to introduce students to language study, exploring textual variety.

This area of study introduces students to methods of language analysis to explore concepts of audience, purpose, genre, mode and representation.

3.1.1 Textual variations and representations

Students should study a range of texts:

- about various subjects
- from various writers and speakers
- for various audiences
- for various purposes

- in a variety of genres
- using a variety of modes (written, spoken, electronic).

When analysing texts, students should explore how language is:

- shaped according to audience, purpose, genre and mode
- shaped according to context
- used to construct meanings and representations
- used to enact relationships between writers, speakers and audiences or between participants within a text.

This exploration will include:

- methods of language analysis
- how identity is constructed
- how audiences are addressed and positioned
- the functions of the texts
- the structure and organisation of the texts
- how representations are produced.

3.1.2 Methods of language analysis

Students will be required to identify and describe features of language in the texts using methods of language analysis. In order to study textual variations and representations, students will be required to identify and describe salient features of language in the texts.

The following list is a guide to the areas of language students are expected to examine:

- phonetics, phonology and prosodics: how speech sounds and effects are articulated and analysed
- graphology: the visual aspects of textual design and appearance
- lexis and semantics: the vocabulary of English, including social and historical variation
- grammar, including morphology: the structural patterns and shapes of English at sentence, clause, phrase and word level
- pragmatics: the contextual aspects of language use
- discourse: extended stretches of communication occurring in different genres, modes and contexts.

3.2 Language varieties

The aim of this area of study is to allow students to explore language variety.

Students will study the key concepts of audience, purpose, genre and mode and will explore language in its wider social and geographical contexts. Students will study varieties of English within the British Isles. This part of the subject content also requires students to study social attitudes to, and debates about, language diversity.

3.2.1 Language diversity

Students should study a range of examples of language in use and research data to inform their study of diversity:

- texts using different sociolects (to include social and occupational groups, and gender)
- texts using different dialects (to include regional and national varieties of English within the British Isles)
- texts that use language to represent the different groups above
- written, spoken and electronic texts about a range of subjects, for various audiences and purposes in a variety of genres
- items from collections of language data (eg dictionaries, online resources, language corpora)
- research findings (eg tables, graphs, statistics).

When analysing texts and data, students should explore:

- how language varies because of personal, social and geographical contexts
- why language varies, developing critical knowledge and understanding of different views and explanations
- how identity is constructed
- how language is used to enact relationships
- attitudes to language diversity.

3.2.2 Methods of language analysis

Students will be required to use methods of language analysis to:

- identify and describe features of language diversity
- research diversity.

The following list is a guide to the areas of language students are expected to examine:

- phonetics, phonology and prosodics: how speech sounds and effects are articulated and analysed
- graphology: the visual aspects of textual design and appearance
- lexis and semantics: the vocabulary of English, including social and historical variation
- grammar, including morphology: the structural patterns and shapes of English at sentence, clause, phrase and word level
- pragmatics: the contextual aspects of language use
- discourse: extended stretches of communication occurring in different genres, modes and contexts.

3.2.3 Writing skills

Students will develop skills in:

- writing discursively about language issues in an academic essay
- writing about language issues in a variety of forms to communicate their ideas to a non-specialist audience.

4 Subject content – A-level

Our A-level English Language specification offers opportunities for students to develop their subject expertise by engaging creatively and critically with a wide range of texts and discourses. Students will create texts and reflect critically on their own processes of production, while analysing the texts produced by others. The specification explores the study of English Language both as a medium of communication and as a topic in its own right, with an emphasis on the ability of students to pursue lines of enquiry, debate different views, and work independently to research aspects of language in use. Language is seen as a creative tool for expression and social connection, as well as for individual cognition. The study of language as a symbolic system used to assert power in society is also fundamental to the scope of this specification.

The methods of analysis appropriate to the fields of English language/linguistics underpin all the elements of this specification, and these are applied to distinctive topic areas. This means that, for teaching purposes, there is a common core that all teachers and students need to understand but also discrete areas so that you can teach to your own specialisms and interests. There is also scope for students to pursue their own independent lines of enquiry and topics for writing, with support from their teachers, in the non-exam assessment.

The topics and titles of the subject content reflect a possible trajectory through the course, with 'Language, the Individual and Society' focusing on individual and immediate social contexts for language, and 'Language Diversity and Change' working outwards to consider larger-scale public discourses about change and variety, drawing on regional, ethnic, national and global Englishes. However, it would be just as viable to start with the bigger questions about language use in 'Language Diversity and Change' and end closer to home in 'Language, the Individual and Society'. Both of these represent valid teaching methods, and the chosen route will depend on teacher or student preferences and abilities.

While the specification aims to maximise flexibility, so that the different components can be sequenced in any way appropriate to the pedagogic context in question, 'Language in Action', is by its very nature, synoptic, as it requires an ability to make connections across the course as a whole. Exposure to many different texts and discourses and a focus on aspects of textual variation will feed into the writing element of this component; and study of all the different areas of language variation, change and acquisition, as well as attitudes to language, enables students to choose a topic for the investigation.

This specification draws academic insights from a range of fields within the study of English language/linguistics, including sociolinguistics and discourse analysis. In creating the specification, particular note has been taken of a range of associated factors. These are: the subject criteria for English Language GCSE; subject criteria for GCE English Language; benchmarks used at higher education level. In this way the specification is designed to fit within a continuum of study from GCSE to degree level.

In summary, our A-level English Language specification offers a common core of analytical methods, topics and skills that have proven value, set within a flexible programme that allows schools and colleges to shape learning and teaching in ways appropriate to their particular contexts and constituencies. It has the additional benefit of being co-teachable with our AS in English Language, thus widening options for you and your students and ensuring that you are able to deliver a programme of study that is coherent and manageable.

4.1 Language, the individual and society

The aim of this part of the subject content is to introduce students to language study, exploring textual variety and children's language development.

This area of study introduces students to methods of language analysis to explore concepts of audience, purpose, genre, mode and representation. It also introduces students to the study of children's language development, exploring how children learn language and how they are able to understand and express themselves through language.

4.1.1 Textual variations and representations

Students should study a range of texts:

- about various subjects
- from various writers and speakers
- for various audiences
- for various purposes
- in a variety of genres
- using a variety of modes (written, spoken, electronic)
- from different times
- from different places (global, national, regional).

When analysing texts, students should explore how language is:

- shaped according to audience, purpose, genre and mode
- shaped according to context
- used to construct meanings and representations
- used to enact relationships between writers, speakers and audiences or between participants within a text.

This exploration will include:

- methods of language analysis
- how identity is constructed
- how audiences are addressed and positioned
- the functions of the texts
- the structure and organisation of the texts
- how representations are produced.

4.1.2 Methods of language analysis

Students will be required to identify and describe features of language in the texts using methods of language analysis. In order to study textual variations and representations, students will be required to identify and describe salient features of language in the texts.

The following list is a guide to the areas of language students are expected to examine:

- phonetics, phonology and prosodics: how speech sounds and effects are articulated and analysed
- graphology: the visual aspects of textual design and appearance
- lexis and semantics: the vocabulary of English, including social and historical variation
- grammar, including morphology: the structural patterns and shapes of English at sentence, clause, phrase and word level

- pragmatics: the contextual aspects of language use
- discourse: extended stretches of communication occurring in different genres, modes and contexts.

4.1.3 Children's language development

Students should explore how children develop their spoken and written skills. To achieve this, students should study:

- the functions of children's language
- phonological, pragmatic, lexical, semantic and grammatical development
- different genres of speech and writing
- different modes of communication (spoken, written, multimodal)
- theories and research about language development.

4.2 Language diversity and change

The aim of this area of study is to allow students to explore language diversity and change over time.

Students will study the key concepts of audience, purpose, genre and mode and will explore language in its wider social, geographical and temporal contexts. They will explore processes of language change. This part of the subject content also requires students to study social attitudes to, and debates about, language diversity and change.

4.2.1 Language diversity and change

Students should study a range of examples of language in use and research data to inform their study of diversity and change:

- texts using different sociolects (to include social and occupational groups, gender and ethnicity)
- texts using different dialects (to include regional, national and international varieties of English)
- texts that use language to represent the different groups above
- texts from different periods, from 1600 to the present day
- written, spoken and electronic texts about a range of subjects, for various audiences and purposes in a variety of genres
- items from collections of language data (eg dictionaries, online resources, language corpora)
- research findings (eg tables, graphs, statistics).

When analysing texts and data, students should explore:

- how language varies because of personal, social, geographical and temporal contexts
- why language varies and changes, developing critical knowledge and understanding of different views and explanations
- attitudes to language variation and change
- the use of language according to audience, purpose, genre and mode
- how language is used to enact relationships.

This exploration will include:

- methods of language analysis
- how identity is constructed

- how audiences are addressed and positioned
- the functions of the texts
- the structure and organisation of the texts
- how representations are produced.

4.2.2 Methods of language analysis

Students will be required to use methods of language analysis to:

- identify and describe features of language diversity and change
- research diversity and change
- analyse how texts present ideas about language.

The following list is a guide to the areas of language students are expected to examine:

- phonetics, phonology and prosodics: how speech sounds and effects are articulated and analysed
- graphology: the visual aspects of textual design and appearance
- lexis and semantics: the vocabulary of English, including social and historical variation
- grammar, including morphology: the structural patterns and shapes of English at sentence, clause, phrase and word level
- pragmatics: the contextual aspects of language use
- discourse: extended stretches of communication occurring in different genres, modes and contexts.

4.2.3 Language discourses

Students will study a range of texts that convey attitudes to language diversity and change. The texts studied will include those written for non-specialist audiences.

Students will explore how texts are produced to convey views and opinions about language issues. They will explore how texts:

- represent language
- construct an identity for the producer
- position the reader and seek to influence them
- are connected to discourses about language.

4.2.4 Writing skills

Students will develop skills in:

- writing discursively about language issues in an academic essay
- writing analytically about texts as parts of discourses about language
- writing about language issues in a variety of forms to communicate their ideas to a non-specialist audience.

4.3 Language in action

The aim of this area of study is to allow students to explore and analyse language data independently and develop and reflect upon their own writing expertise.

It requires students to carry out two different kinds of individual research:

- a language investigation (2,000 words excluding data)
- a piece of original writing and commentary (750 words each).

Students can choose to pursue a study of spoken, written or multimodal data, or a mixture of text types, demonstrating knowledge in areas of individual interest.

In preparation for this, students need to study how to:

- identify an appropriate investigation topic and research questions
- select and apply a methodology for data collection and analysis
- work in greater depth and with greater range
- transcribe spoken data where appropriate
- use language concepts and ideas
- evaluate and draw conclusions on the findings of the investigation
- present findings in an appropriate and accessible way
- reference reading materials correctly
- evaluate the structures and conventions of a variety of genres
- plan, draft and redraft as part of the writing process
- reflect on the writing process using methods of language analysis.

4.3.1 Language Investigation

Students may choose to pursue an area of individual interest. For example, this might include studies of:

- representations of different individuals, social groups or nationalities
- regional dialect
- gendered talk
- the language of new communication technologies
- children's language use
- norms and variations in usages of different kinds
- the language of the media
- code switching and mixing between English and other languages
- the language of different occupations or pastimes
- historical changes in English over time.

Students are not obliged to restrict themselves to those areas that are formally taught, as the basis of the investigation is the value of student-led enquiry supported by open learning. Therefore, any area seen by supervising teachers as yielding interesting questions about language in use may be chosen. Students can ask a number of fruitful questions, which can be generated by questions such as the following:

1. A genre-based investigation: what are the distinctive features of this type of language use?
2. A function/use-based investigation: what is the language used to do?
3. An attitudes-based investigation: how do people feel about this language?
4. A user-based investigation: who uses this type of language?

Students will need to decide what kind of data they collect:

- spoken language
- written language
- multimodal language
- word lists (ie lists of new words etc)

- attitudes to language
- uses of language
- views about language.

Underpinning this piece of research is the challenge that, in consultation with their supervising teacher, students should collect their own data as the basis of their study, as well as select their own approach for analysis.

Investigations need a specific focus, for example:

- the writing of two children aged 8
- features of the Devon dialect, based on a survey
- the language of wedding ceremonies from two different cultures
- the language of teachers' reports
- the language used in three different advertisements for a particular product
- how stories are told in a particular comic
- how travel guides represent a particular community
- the language of sports commentary
- how turntaking works in real-time writing online
- language patterns in the names of shops.

The list above is neither definitive nor prescriptive.

The investigation should contain the following sections:

Introduction

- brief discussion of the reasons for choosing the investigation focus
- what the investigation is trying to find out (aims).

Methodology

- an evaluative account of how the data was collected and organised for analysis
- approaches to analysis.

Analysis

- analysis and interpretation of the findings, responding to the aim of the investigation
- critical consideration of relevant concepts and issues surrounding the topic area
- analysis of the contextual influences upon the data collected.

Conclusion

- interpretation of the findings of the investigation linked to the aim/focus of the investigation.

References

- a list of all sources used (paper and web-based).

Appendices

- clean copies of the collected data
- evidence to support quantitative approaches.

4.3.2 Original writing

Students will produce one piece of original writing based on one of the following three areas:

- The Power of Persuasion
- The Power of Storytelling
- The Power of Information

and one accompanying commentary.

In preparation for the writing, students will study a range of style models before selecting and analysing one style model in detail. Students will select their own style model in consultation with their supervising teacher. Students will then use this research to inform their own piece of original writing.

The commentary will allow the student to consider and evaluate the style model, the writing process and the effectiveness of the final piece of writing.

The folder submitted should contain:

- a piece of original writing
- an annotated style model
- a reflective commentary
- references (paper and web-based).

Examples of pieces of writing students could consider:

The power of persuasion

- a piece of investigative journalism
- a speech delivered on a controversial topic
- a letter to an MP.

The power of storytelling

- a short story
- an extract from a biography
- a dramatic monologue.

The power of information

- a piece of travel journalism
- a blog focusing on social issues
- a piece of local history.

4.3.3 Methods of language analysis

Both the investigation and original writing will have a distinctive approach to analysis that is shaped by the particular needs of the research pathway or theme chosen. However, underlying any analysis will be coverage of some relevant aspects of the language levels, as follows:

- phonetics, phonology and prosodics: how speech sounds and effects are articulated and analysed
- graphology: the visual aspects of textual design and appearance
- lexis and semantics: the vocabulary of English, including social and historical variation
- grammar, including morphology: the structural patterns and shapes of English at sentence, clause, phrase and word level

- pragmatics: the contextual aspects of language use
- discourse: extended stretches of communication occurring in different genres, modes and contexts.

5 Scheme of assessment

Find past papers and mark schemes, and specimen papers for new courses, on our website at
aqa.org.uk/pastpapers

These specifications are designed to be taken over one or two years with all assessments taken at the end of the course.

The AS specification is designed to be taken over one or two years with all assessments taken at the end of the course. The A-level specification is designed to be taken over two years with all assessments taken at the end of the course.

Assessments and certification for the AS specification are available for the first time in May/June 2016 and then every May/June for the life of the specification.

Assessments and certification for the A-level specification are available for the first time in May/June 2017 and then every May/June for the life of the specification.

Our AS and A-level exams in English include questions that allow students to demonstrate their ability to:

  • draw together their knowledge, skills and understanding from across the full course of study
  • provide extended responses.

All AS and A-level components offer only extended response questions.

All materials are available in English only.

5.1 Aims

Courses based on these specifications must encourage students to develop their interest in and enjoyment of English as they:

  • develop and apply their understanding of the concepts and methods appropriate for the analysis and study of language
  • explore data and examples of language in use
  • engage creatively and critically with a varied programme for the study of English
  • develop their skills as producers and interpreters of language.

In addition, A-level specifications must encourage students to develop their interest in and enjoyment of English as they independently investigate language in use.

5.2 Assessment objectives

Assessment objectives (AOs) are set by Ofqual and are the same across all AS and A-level English Language specifications and all exam boards.

The exams and non-exam assessment will measure to what extent students have achieved the following assessment objectives.

  • AO1: Apply appropriate methods of language analysis, using associated terminology and coherent written expression.
  • AO2: Demonstrate critical understanding of concepts and issues relevant to language use.

- AO3: Analyse and evaluate how contextual factors and language features are associated with the construction of meaning.
- AO4: Explore connections across texts, informed by linguistic concepts and methods.
- AO5: Demonstrate expertise and creativity in the use of English to communicate in different ways.

Weighting of assessment objectives for AS English Language

Assessment objectives (AOs)	Component weightings (approx %)		Overall weighting (approx %)
	Paper 1	Paper 2	
AO1	14	7	21
AO2	-	29	29
AO3	22	-	22
AO4	14	-	14
AO5	-	14	14
Overall weighting of components	50	50	100

Weighting of assessment objectives for A-level English Language

Assessment objectives (AOs)	Component weightings (approx %)			Overall weighting (approx %)
	Paper 1	Paper 2	Non-exam assessment	
AO1	14	8	4	26
AO2	6	16	4	26
AO3	12	6	5	23
AO4	8	6	1	15
AO5	-	4	6	10
Overall weighting of components	40	40	20	100

5.3 Assessment weightings

The marks awarded on the papers will be scaled to meet the weighting of the components. Students' final marks will be calculated by adding together the scaled marks for each component. Grade boundaries will be set using this total scaled mark. The scaling and total scaled marks are shown in the table below.

AS

Component	Maximum raw mark	Scaling factor	Maximum scaled mark
Paper 1: Language and the Individual	70	x1	70
Paper 2: Language Varieties	70	x1	70
		Total scaled mark:	140

A-level

Component	Maximum raw mark	Scaling factor	Maximum scaled mark
Paper 1: Language, the Individual and Society	100	x2	200
Paper 2: Language Diversity and Change	100	x2	200
Non-exam assessment: Language in Action	100	x1	100
		Total scaled mark:	500

5.4 Non-exam assessment marking criteria

Language Investigation

Level	AO1: Apply appropriate methods of language analysis, using associated terminology and coherent written expression		AO2: Demonstrate critical understanding of concepts and issues relevant to language use		AO3: Analyse and evaluate how contextual features are associated with the construction of meaning	
	Marks	**Students are likely to:**	**Marks**	**Students are likely to:**	**Marks**	**Students are likely to:**
5	13 – 15	• **apply linguistic methods and terminology identifying patterns and complexities** • select and apply appropriate methods, allowing valid conclusions to be drawn • describe language features in depth, establishing patterns of use and engaing with complexity • **guide the reader** • guide the reader structurally and linguistically, using controlled, accurate expression	13 – 15	• **demonstrate a synthesised, conceptualised and individual overview of issues** • show a conceptualised overview of theories which illuminate the discussion • use data and findings to challenge viewpoints making evaluative comment • evaluate methodology and explore alternative/ additional approaches • provide detailed bibliography	17 – 20	• **evaluate use of language and representations according to context** • **explore analysis within wider social and cultural contexts** • evaluate how language is influenced by different contexts • evaluate meanings and representations • explore data in light of relevant wider social and cultural contexts • present data and findings to support reflective and cautious conclusions

Level	AO1: Apply appropriate methods of language analysis, using associated terminology and coherent written expression		AO2: Demonstrate critical understanding of concepts and issues relevant to language use		AO3: Analyse and evaluate how contextual features are associated with the construction of meaning	
	Marks	Students are likely to:	Marks	Students are likely to:	Marks	Students are likely to:
4	10 - 12	• **apply linguistic methods and terminology with precision and detail** • select and apply appropriate methods, allowing well-focussed analysis • describe language features in depth with very few technical errors • **develop a line of argument** • organise and sequence topics, using controlled, accurate expression	10 - 12	• **identify and comment on different views, approaches and interpretations of linguistic issues** • show knowledge and understanding of different theories and ideas • connect theories, ideas and research with data • formulate well-focussed linguistic aims • consider ethical issues and validity of methodology	13 - 16	• **analyse how language choices create meanings and representations** • **analyse how aspects of context work together to affect language use** • analyse how language is influenced by context • explore how meanings are produced and negotiated • demonstrate an open-minded approach • present examples/evidence to support conclusions

Level	AO1: Apply appropriate methods of language analysis, using associated terminology and coherent written expression		AO2: Demonstrate critical understanding of concepts and issues relevant to language use		AO3: Analyse and evaluate how contextual features are associated with the construction of meaning	
	Marks	Students are likely to:	Marks	Students are likely to:	Marks	Students are likely to:
3	7 - 9	• **apply linguistic methods and terminology consistently and appropriately** • apply methods, allowing for conclusions to be drawn • describe language features with infrequent technical errors • **communicate with clear topics and paragraphs** • use clear sections, with clear introduction and conclusion, using appropriate expression	7 - 9	• **show detailed knowledge of linguistic ideas, concepts and research** • show detailed knowledge and understanding of ideas and research related to the investigation • identify and outline language issues raised by the data • explain methodology applied	9 - 12	• **interpret significance of specific choices of language according to context** • **link specific language choices with an aspect of context** • interpret how meaning is produced/received • link context and language features • identify patterns of language use • draw conclusions

Level	AO1: Apply appropriate methods of language analysis, using associated terminology and coherent written expression		AO2: Demonstrate critical understanding of concepts and issues relevant to language use		AO3: Analyse and evaluate how contextual features are associated with the construction of meaning	
	Marks	Students are likely to:	Marks	Students are likely to:	Marks	Students are likely to:
2	4 - 6	• **use linguistic methods and terminology inappropriately and/or inconsistently** • apply some linguistic methods appropriately • describe language features with occasional technical errors • **express ideas with organisation emerging** • organise using subheadings – not always appropriate for focus chosen	4 - 6	• **show familiarity with linguistic ideas, concepts and research** • show knowledge of and familiarity with theories related to the investigation • identify key language issues connected to the data • use and describe appropriate methodology	5 - 8	• **identify distinctive features of language and significant aspects of context** • identify audience/purposes/field/producer • identify distinctive uses of language at different levels • use examples/evidence
1	1 - 3	• **quote or identify features of language without linguistic description** • engage minimally with the data • **present material with limited organisation** • convey undeveloped points with list-like structure	1 - 3	• **discuss issues anecdotally without specialist linguistic knowledge** • use inappropriate methodology • collect data without discussion	1 - 4	• **paraphrase or describe content of texts** • respond to the content or subject matter • **misunderstand text's content and meaning** • **misunderstand context**

Level	AO1: Apply appropriate methods of language analysis, using associated terminology and coherent written expression		AO2: Demonstrate critical understanding of concepts and issues relevant to language use		AO3: Analyse and evaluate how contextual features are associated with the construction of meaning	
	Marks	Students are likely to:	Marks	Students are likely to:	Marks	Students are likely to:
0	0	• **write nothing** • show no language focus	0	• **write nothing about language concepts or issues** • demonstrate no understanding of language theories or issues	0	• **write nothing about the text or topic** • **offer no examination of data, context or meaning**

Original Writing

AO5: Demonstrate expertise and creativity in the use of English to communicate in different ways		
Level	**Mark**	**Students are likely to:**
5	21 – 25	• **use form creatively and innovatively** • **use register creatively for context** • **write accurately** • provide interesting and engaging content for challenging audiences • use form in original and innovative ways showing ambition • position audience skilfully • show skilful and detailed manipulation of register at all levels • guide reader through a very coherent and cohesive text
4	16 – 20	• **use form convincingly** • **show close attention to register, effective for context** • **show strong control of accuracy** • provide interesting content that is effective for audience • make choices about form in convincing ways, paying close attention to genre • engage with possible audience views and attitudes • show some evidence of deliberate shaping of register • structure content to develop a line of thinking/argument
3	11 – 15	• **use form competently** • **use and sustain effective register for context** • **show firm control of accuracy** • provide sustained appropriate content to engage an audience • handle form competently showing knowledge of genre requirements • address audience appropriately • use an appropriate register consistently • organise writing with effective openings and closing
2	6 – 10	• **use form appropriately** • **use appropriate language for context** • **make occasional errors** • use appropriate content with some ability to engage an audience • use form showing some of the needs of the genre • demonstrate a clear sense of audience • use an appropriate register with occasional lapses in control • organise writing – eg topics, headings, relevant presentational devices
1	1 – 5	• **use form limited to simple elements** • **shape language broadly for context** • **make intrusive errors** • select some relevant content – may not be sustained or developed • show awareness of form used in simple genres, less convincing in ambitious ones • have a broad or oversimplified sense of audience • attempt to use an appropriate register – lapses in control/ineffective at times • use basic devices to organise content, eg paragraphs, sequencing
0	0	• **write nothing**

Commentary

Level	Mark	AOs 1–5
		Students are likely to:
5	21–25	• evaluate the significance of connections found across texts, justifying writing choices by reference to style model and its impact on language choices **AO4** • evaluate use of language and representations according to the two contexts **AO3** • demonstrate understanding of genre as a dynamic process **AO2** • apply different levels of language analysis in an integrated way, recognising how they are connected across both texts **AO1** • write accurately and guide reader with a coherent structure **AO5**
4	16–20	• explore connections between the two texts by linking the language and contexts **AO4** • analyse and explain language choices made for the different contexts **AO3** • explain similarities and differences in genre **AO2** • apply levels of language analysis in depth and detail across both texts with occasional errors **AO1** • show strong control of accuracy and control content – develop a line of thought **AO5**
3	11–15	• make connections across texts by identifying similar or different uses of language/content/context **AO4** • illustrate similarities/differences in choice of language and in audience/purpose **AO3** • illustrate similarities/differences in aspects of genre **AO2** • label relevant features of language in both texts with more accuracy than inaccuracy **AO1** • show firm control of accuracy and organise writing clearly **AO5**
2	6–10	• make connections at a literal level **AO4** • identify similarities/differences in subject/content **AO3** • identify genre of each text **AO2** • use linguistic methods and terminology inappropriately/inconsistently/inaccurately **AO1** • make occasional errors and connect some points in paragraphs **AO5**
1	1–5	• discuss relevant aspects of both texts without explicitly making connections (4 marks max) **AO4** • discuss relevant aspects of one text only (3 marks max) **AO4** • paraphrase/summarise content without reference to context **AO3** • show no awareness of genre **AO2** • quote of identify features of language without linguistic description **AO1** • make intrusive errors and use a list-like structure **AO5**
0	0	• write nothing about the texts

6 Non-exam assessment administration (A-level only)

The non-exam assessment (NEA) for the A-level specification only is 'Language in Action', and consists of an investigation, original writing and a commentary.

Visit aqa.org.uk/7702 for detailed information about all aspects of NEA administration.

The head of the school or college is responsible for making sure that NEA is conducted in line with our instructions and Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) instructions.

6.1 Supervising and authenticating

To meet Ofqual's qualification and subject criteria:

- **students** must sign the Candidate record form to confirm that the work submitted is their own
- all **teachers** who have marked a student's work must sign the declaration of authentication on the Candidate record form. This is to confirm that the work is solely that of the student concerned and was conducted under the conditions laid down by this specification
- teachers must ensure that a Candidate record form is attached to each student's work.

Students must have sufficient direct supervision to ensure that the work submitted can be confidently authenticated as their own. This means that you must review the progress of the work during research, planning and throughout its production to see how it evolves.

You may provide guidance and support to students so that they are clear about the requirements of the task they need to undertake and the marking criteria on which the work will be judged. You may also provide guidance to students on the suitability of their proposed task, particularly if it means they will not meet the requirements of the marking criteria.

When checking drafts of a student's work, you must not comment or provide suggestions on how they could improve it. However, you can ask questions about the way they are approaching their work and you can highlight the requirements of the marking criteria.

If a student receives any additional assistance which is acceptable within the further guidance that is provided for this specification, you should award a mark that represents the student's unaided achievement. Please make a note of the support the student received on the Candidate record form. This will allow the moderator to see whether the student has been awarded an appropriate mark. Please note that you should sign the authentication statement on the Candidate record form. If the statement is not signed, we cannot accept the student's work for assessment.

Once a student submits work for marking and it has been marked, you cannot return it to the student for improvement, even if they have not received any feedback or are unaware of the marks awarded.

Further guidance on setting, supervising, authenticating and marking work is available on the subject pages of our website and through teacher standardisation.

6.2 Avoiding malpractice

Please inform your students of the AQA regulations concerning malpractice. They must not:

- submit work that is not their own
- lend work to other students
- allow other students access to, or use of, their own independently-sourced source material
- include work copied directly from books, the Internet or other sources without acknowledgement
- submit work that is word-processed by a third person without acknowledgement
- include inappropriate, offensive or obscene material.

These actions constitute malpractice and a penalty will be given (for example, disqualification).

If you identify malpractice **before** the student signs the declaration of authentication, you don't need to report it to us. Please deal with it in accordance with your school or college's internal procedures. We expect schools and colleges to treat such cases very seriously.

If you identify malpractice **after** the student has signed the declaration of authentication, the head of your school or college must submit full details of the case to us at the earliest opportunity. Please complete the form JCQ/M1, available from the JCQ website at jcq.org.uk

You must record details of any work which is not the student's own on the Candidate record form or other appropriate place.

You should consult your exams officer about these procedures.

6.3 Teacher standardisation

We will provide support for using the marking criteria and developing appropriate tasks through teacher standardisation.

For further information about teacher standardisation visit our website at aqa.org.uk/7702

In the following situations teacher standardisation is essential. We will send you an invitation to complete teacher standardisation if:

- moderation from the previous year indicates a serious misinterpretation of the requirements
- a significant adjustment was made to the marks in the previous year
- your school or college is new to this specification.

For further support and advice please speak to your adviser. Email your subject team at english-gce@aqa.org.uk for details of your adviser.

6.4 Internal standardisation

You must ensure that you have consistent marking standards for all students. One person must manage this process and they must sign the Centre declaration sheet to confirm that internal standardisation has taken place.

Internal standardisation may involve:

- all teachers marking some sample pieces of work to identify differences in marking standards
- discussing any differences in marking at a training meeting for all teachers involved
- referring to reference and archive material, such as previous work or examples from our teacher standardisation.

6.5 Annotation

To meet Ofqual's qualification and subject criteria, you must show clearly how marks have been awarded against the marking criteria in this specification.

Your annotation will help the moderator see, as precisely as possible, where you think the students have met the marking criteria.

Work can be annotated using either or both of the following methods:

- flagging evidence in the margins or in the text
- summative comments, referencing precise sections in the work.

6.6 Submitting marks

You should check that the correct marks for each of the marking criteria are written on the Candidate record form and that the total mark is correct.

The deadline for submitting the total mark for each student is given at aqa.org.uk/keydates

6.7 Factors affecting individual students

For advice and guidance about arrangements for any of your students, please email us as early as possible at eos@aqa.org.uk

Occasional absence: you should be able to accept the occasional absence of students by making sure they have the chance to make up what they have missed. You may organise an alternative supervised session for students who were absent at the time you originally arranged.

Lost work: if work is lost you must tell us how and when it was lost and who was responsible, using our special consideration online service at aqa.org.uk/eaqa

Special help: where students need special help which goes beyond normal learning support, please use the Candidate record form to tell us so that this help can be taken into account during moderation.

Students who move schools: students who move from one school or college to another during the course sometimes need additional help to meet the requirements. How you deal with this depends on when the move takes place. If it happens early in the course, the new school or college should be responsible for the work. If it happens late in the course, it may be possible to arrange for the moderator to assess the work as a student who was 'Educated Elsewhere'.

6.8 Keeping students' work

Students' work must be kept under secure conditions from the time that it is marked, with Candidate record forms attached. After the moderation period and the deadline for Enquiries about Results (or once any enquiry is resolved) you may return the work to students.

6.9 Moderation

You must send all your students' marks to us by the date given at aqa.org.uk/deadlines. You will be asked to send a sample of your students' NEA evidence to your moderator.

You must show clearly how marks have been awarded against the assessment criteria in this specification. Your comments must help the moderator see, as precisely as possible, where you think the students have met the assessment criteria. You must:

• record your comments on the Candidate Record Form (CRF)
• check that the correct marks are written on the CRF and that the total is correct.

The moderator re-marks a sample of the evidence and compares this with the marks you have provided to check whether any changes are needed to bring the marking in line with our agreed standards. Any changes to marks will normally keep your rank order but, where major inconsistencies are found, we reserve the right to change the rank order.

School and college consortia

If you are in a consortium of schools or colleges with joint teaching arrangements (where students from different schools and colleges have been taught together but entered through the school or college at which they are on roll), you must let us know by:

• filling in the *Application for Centre Consortium Arrangements for centre-assessed work*, which is available from the JCQ website jcq.org.uk
• appointing a consortium co-ordinator who can speak to us on behalf of all schools and colleges in the consortium. If there are different co-ordinators for different specifications, a copy of the form must be sent in for each specification.

We will allocate the same moderator to all schools and colleges in the consortium and treat the students as a single group for moderation.

6.10 After moderation

We will return your students' work to you after the exams. You will also receive a report when the results are issued, which will give feedback on the appropriateness of the tasks set, interpretation of the marking criteria and how students performed in general.

We will give you the final marks when the results are issued.

To meet Ofqual requirements, as well as for awarding, archiving or standardisation purposes, we may need to keep some of your students' work. We will let you know if we need to do this.

7 General administration

You can find information about all aspects of administration, as well as all the forms you need, at aqa.org.uk/examsadmin

7.1 Entries and codes

You only need to make one entry for each qualification – this will cover all the question papers, non-exam assessment and certification.

Every specification is given a national discount (classification) code by the Department for Education (DfE), which indicates its subject area.

If a student takes two specifications with the same discount code, Further and Higher Education providers are likely to take the view that they have only achieved one of the two qualifications. Please check this before your students start their course.

Qualification title	AQA entry code	DfE discount code
AQA Advanced Subsidiary GCE in English Language	7701	5030 (post-16) , FK2B (KS4)
AQA Advanced Level GCE in English Language	7702	5030

These specifications comply with Ofqual's:

- *General conditions of recognition* that apply to all regulated qualifications
- GCE qualification level conditions that apply to all GCEs
- GCE subject level conditions that apply to all GCEs in this subject
- all relevant regulatory documents.

Ofqual has accredited these specifications. The qualification accreditation number (QAN) for the AS is 601/4846/9. The QAN for the A-level is 601/4640/0.

7.2 Overlaps with other qualifications

There is overlapping content in the AS and A-level English Language specifications. This helps you teach the AS and A-level together.

7.3 Awarding grades and reporting results

The AS qualification will be graded on a five-point scale: A, B, C, D and E.

The A-level qualification will be graded on a six-point scale: A*, A, B, C, D and E.

Students who fail to reach the minimum standard for grade E will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate.

7.4 Re-sits and shelf life

Students can re-sit the qualifications as many times as they wish, within the shelf life of the qualifications.

7.5 Previous learning and prerequisites

There are no previous learning requirements. Any requirements for entry to a course based on these specifications are at the discretion of schools and colleges.

However, we recommend that students should have the skills and knowledge associated with a GCSE English Language course or equivalent.

7.6 Access to assessment: diversity and inclusion

General qualifications are designed to prepare students for a wide range of occupations and further study. Therefore our qualifications must assess a wide range of competences.

The subject criteria have been assessed to see if any of the skills or knowledge required present any possible difficulty to any students, whatever their ethnic background, religion, sex, age, disability or sexuality. If any difficulties were encountered, the criteria were reviewed again to make sure that tests of specific competences were only included if they were important to the subject.

As members of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) we participate in the production of the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments: General and Vocational qualifications*. We follow these guidelines when assessing the needs of individual students who may require an access arrangement or reasonable adjustment. This document is published on the JCQ website at jcq.org.uk

Students with disabilities and special needs

We can make arrangements for disabled students and students with special needs to help them access the assessments, as long as the competences being tested are not changed. Access arrangements must be agreed **before** the assessment. For example, a Braille paper would be a reasonable adjustment for a Braille reader but not for a student who does not read Braille.

We are required by the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to remove or lessen any disadvantage that affects a disabled student.

If you have students who need access arrangements or reasonable adjustments, you can apply using the Access arrangements online service at aqa.org.uk/eaqa

Special consideration

We can give special consideration to students who have been disadvantaged at the time of the assessment through no fault of their own – for example a temporary illness, injury or serious problem such as the death of a relative. We can only do this **after** the assessment.

Your exams officer should apply online for special consideration at aqa.org.uk/eaqa

For more information and advice about access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration please see aqa.org.uk/access or email accessarrangementsqueries@aqa.org.uk

7.7 Safeguarding

Some of the content within this curriculum may generate discussions or disclosures from students which raise safeguarding concerns. If this happens, please follow your centre's safeguarding policy to arrange support.

7.8 Working with AQA for the first time

If your school or college has not previously offered any AQA specification, you need to register as an AQA centre to offer our specifications to your students. Find out how at aqa.org.uk/becomeacentre

If your school or college is new to these specifications, please let us know by completing an Intention to enter form. The easiest way to do this is via e-AQA at aqa.org.uk/eaqa

7.9 Private candidates

A private candidate is someone who enters for exams through an AQA-approved school or college but is not enrolled as a student there.

If you are a private candidate you may be self-taught, home-schooled or have private tuition, either with a tutor or through a distance learning organisation. You must be based in the UK.

If you have any queries as a private candidate, you can:

- speak to the exams officer at the school or college where you intend to take your exams
- visit our website at aqa.org.uk/examsadmin
- email: privatecandidates@aqa.org.uk

Get help and support

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at

You can talk directly to the English Language subject team:

E: english-gce@aqa.org.uk

T: 01483 556 115

aqa.org.uk