



Leaping into Language!

moving from GCSE to
A Level Language study



EMC

Publications

An English and Media Centre Student Resource

2. Leap into Language – Language Profile

One of the most interesting aspects of studying language is that you learn more about your own language use, so let's make this first task all about you...

- Create a 'language profile' of yourself by answering the following questions and then writing them up as a set of bullet points that highlight what you think are the most interesting and important aspects of the language you use:
 - What's your earliest language memory? Can you remember a nursery rhyme, song or picture book from when you were very little?
 - Have your family or extended family kept any records – video, audio, family memories – of any of your earliest words?
 - Have you kept any old school books from when you were learning to read and write?
 - Where were you born and where in the UK, or the wider world, are your family from? Go back a few generations if you like and think about any other languages that your family members might speak, or other places your family members might have lived.
 - Are there any words or expressions only you or your family use, which others don't really understand?
 - Do you or your friends at school use language in any ways that you notice as being different from other people around you? These could be other people in your year, your teachers, your family, whoever.
 - Do you listen to or watch anyone on TV, online or in films or music videos who uses language in a way that interests or annoys you?
 - Do you ever look at or hear someone else using language in a way that you find is totally new or strange to you?
 - Have your teachers or family ever talked to you about the way you speak?

One of the most useful resources for language on this course is **you**. Language is made up of so much more than the words we see printed on a page, so when you are thinking about language, come back to these ideas here to keep the range wide. We are often told there is a right way and a wrong way to use language, but the more you study about language, the more you'll realise that it's more complicated and interesting than that.

And you'll also start to build up a bigger picture of the different influences on your own language identity as this course goes on – all the factors that influence who you are linguistically and how you can choose to behave with language in different situations.

4. Do We Need New Words?

The English language is always generating new words. New words can be created out of nothing (**neologisms**) or be formed by using other words – or parts of words – together in new combinations (what are called **compounds** and **blends**). Sometimes initials of words in a phrase might be used (**acronyms** and **initialisms**) and you might also see parts of words being added to the front or end of another word to give it a new form (**prefixes** and **suffixes**). Most A Level English Language courses look at how and why new words are formed, but there is also debate about whether we need new words and when (or whether) they should appear in dictionaries.

- Look at the list of some of the new words that have appeared (or suddenly become much more popular) in English over the last few years.
- Have you heard of these words before? Have you used any of them? Tick the relevant columns for each word.
- Choose two words from the list that you think are an important addition to the language. Try to come up with a sentence or two explaining why they are so important.
- Then choose two words from the list that you think are pointless and insignificant. What's the problem with these words and why do you think they shouldn't be included? Again, write a sentence or two explaining your thinking.
- Are there any other new words – or new meanings for older words – that you have heard about? Perhaps you could make a note of new and interesting uses of words over the next few months.
- What are your predictions for the most popular and widely-used words for the next 12 months?
- If you are interested in looking at the history of new words and slang terms that have appeared in the language, follow some of the links on pages 30-36 but in the meantime, [this article by one of the world's most respected slang lexicographers](#) (i.e. people who compile dictionaries of slang), Jonathon Green, is a very good read: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-27405988>

Recent New Words

Word	Definition	Have heard/seen this word being used	Have used this word myself
Floss	A dance in which people twist their hips in one direction while swinging their arms in the opposite direction with the fists closed. Popularised by the game <i>Fortnite</i> .		
VAR	Video Assistant Referee. A system used in football to assist refereeing decisions.		

Word	Definition	Have heard/seen this word being used	Have used this word myself
Gaslight	To manipulate or trick someone by pretending that they cannot trust what they see or hear until they doubt their own sanity.		
Twerking	A way of dancing that involves bending forward and shaking or thrusting your buttocks in a rhythmic motion.		
Dadbod	A term used to describe the typically flabby and unsculpted male physique that most dads have.		
Cancel culture	A way of describing the movement to 'cancel' - to publicly disapprove of and then attempt to ignore - celebrities or organisations because of their perceived immoral or unpopular actions.		
Climate strike	A protest in which people leave work, school or college when they should be attending to take part in a protest about climate change.		
Influencer	A person who uses social media to promote a particular way of life or commercial products to their online followers.		
Nonbinary	A word describing a sexual identity that does not conform to binary categories of male and female.		
Hamsterkaufing	Stockpiling food like a hamster storing food in its cheeks (from German)		
WFH	Working From Home		
Mansplaining	A patronising way of explaining something (by a man to a woman).		

7. Textercise

One of the things you will quickly notice about the study of language at A Level is that you don't just look at serious, weighty books. You might have studied quite a lot of literary fiction on your English courses so far and even when it hasn't been literature, it has probably been what is broadly termed 'literary non-fiction'. On an A Level English Language course, you will analyse all sorts of language. This activity gives you a taste of that and asks you to think a bit more about the language around you all the time.


- On pages 17-19 you will find eight 'texts'. These might not be the kind of texts you've analysed before, but they are all worth analysing because they have been created to communicate in some way.
- Have a quick look at each text and think about the following:
 - What they are about
 - What they might mean – the ideas, messages, opinions, personalities being expressed
 - How they use different methods of communication: design, colour, vocabulary choices, structure, style, interaction.
- Choose three texts and use the questions below to make some quick notes about how they compare in their uses of language.
- Once you've done this, think about gathering your own set of texts from the world around you. Like these texts here, your texts could be written, spoken, online, serious, silly, informative, clever and/or important. Try to find at least five interesting texts and use the same questions to help you think about them.


Questions to ask about your choice of texts

- What is the language in each text designed to achieve? Do you notice any differences between the three you have chosen?
- How have visual elements been used in the texts? Any differences?
- If any of the three were originally spoken, do you notice anything distinctive about them?
- How easy or difficult is it to analyse some of these texts? Does it feel like you can analyse them in the same way as a piece of literature, for example?

While analysing these types of text might be a new experience for you, the ways in which you explore and analyse them will build on things you've done before. Some of that will take you back to the work you might have done at Primary school with grammar (verbs, nouns and phrases, for example) and some will build on the work you've just been doing for GCSE.

The Texts

<p>On tonight's show, we've got Fontaines DC live in the studio, old session tracks from The Chameleons, Ruthless Rap Assassins and Half Lazy plus all the usual mixture of weird, wonderful and just a bit wonky music from all around the world. Join me after nine tonight for the last of this week's Evening Shows.</p>	<p>A radio DJ presenting a trailer for a show.</p>
 <p>6. Serve</p> <p>Serve the spiced Moroccan soup in bowls with the remaining coriander sprinkled over. Dollop on some Greek yoghurt and finish with a sprinkling of dukkah. Add a sprinkle of the remaining chilli, if you want an extra kick.</p> <p>Enjoy!</p>	<p>Part of a recipe for a meal.</p>
<p>What refugees using our services say:</p> <p>“I want to say thank you and I really appreciate the effort you made towards making my life look beautiful, peaceful and secure.” – Resettled refugee</p> <p>“Refugee Action has been amazing with us. They helped us with everything – registering our children in schools, this was a priority for us.” – Dara</p> <p>“They help me a lot – Refugee Action is great. And I feel that they love me.” – Joseph</p> <p>“A lot of people in this country have helped me, including Refugee Action. Now I would like to change my career and help other people.” – Ade</p>	<p>A section of a charity leaflet from Refugee Action.</p>
<p>Play as a band of rebel cats trying to stop fascists from seizing control of the galaxy in this cooperative game!</p> <p>In the year three million, the animals of Earth's past inhabit the galaxy in advanced societies. Now, using fear and force, the regime known as the Rat Pack is sweeping into power across the planets. Together, a small group of cat rebels will try to stop these fascist forces from seizing power – while building a new galaxy where all species are free together.</p>	<p>A description of the boardgame, <i>Space Cats Fight Fascism</i> (TESA Collective games) on the back of the box.</p>

<p>From the first time he was stopped and searched as a child, to the day he realised his mum was white, to his first encounters with racist teachers; race and class have shaped Akala's life and outlook. In <i>Natives</i>, he takes his own experiences – with education, the police, identity and everything in between – and uses them to look at the social, historical and political factors that have left us where we are today.</p> <p>'Gripping . . . trenchant and highly persuasive'</p> <p>METRO (BOOKS OF THE YEAR)</p> <p>'One of the most thoughtful books of the past year'</p> <p>EVENING STANDARD</p> <p>'A potent combination of autobiography and political history'</p> <p>INDEPENDENT</p>	<p>The blurb from the back of a book (<i>Akala's Natives</i>, published by Two Roads).</p>
 <p>EASY OPEN: FLIP, SQUEEZE, RIP AND TIP</p> <p><i>Grain-free, Natural, Complete, Delicious</i></p> <p>(GB) INGREDIENTS/COMPOSITION: FRESH TURKEY (45%), FRESH DUCK (20%), GREEN PEAS (3%), CARROIS (1%), SEAWEED EXTRACT, YUCCA EXTRACT, FRUCTOOLIGOSACCHARIDE PREBIOTICS (0.5G/KG).</p> <p>NUTRITIONAL ADDITIVES: VITAMINS: VITAMIN A: 2500 MG/KG; VITAMIN D3: 200 IU/KG; VITAMIN E: 30 MG/KG. TRACE ELEMENTS: POTASSIUM IODIDE 0.8 MG/KG, CALCIUM SULPHATE PENTAHYDRATE 20 MG/KG, ZINC SULPHATE MONOHYDRATE 139 MG/KG, FERROUS CARBONATE 33 MG/KG.</p> <p>ANALYTICAL CONSTITUENTS: CRUDE PROTEIN 10.25%, CRUDE FAT 10%, CRUDE FIBRE 0.2%, INORGANIC MATTER 4%, MOISTURE 69%.</p> <p>BEST BEFORE/ BATCH NUMBER: SEE BASE</p> <p>FRESH INGREDIENTS LOCALLY SOURCED FAMILY-FARMED TURKEY FAMILY-FARMED DUCK FRESH VEGETABLES SOURCE OF ANTIOXIDANTS</p>	<p>A dog food carton.</p>
<p>And it's controlled beautifully by Jack Harrison who beats his man and whips a ball across the face of goal. It's an inviting ball aaaaand it's Ben White who gets on the end of it to put it past the keeper's outstretched hand. First goal of the season for the central defender and what a great team goal that was.</p>	<p>Part of a radio commentary on a football match.</p>



Rapture
@RaptureWitney

We're all feeling a bit sad that [#RSD2020](#) has been postponed.

We thought it might cheer things up a teeny bit to share some throwback photos from past [#RSD](#) celebrations! 🥰



[@RSDUK](#)



11:27am · 18 Apr 2020 · Twitter for Android

2 Retweets 7 Likes

A tweet from a local record shop on Record Store Day.

9. Explore *emagazine*

emagazine is a magazine and website for A Level students with articles written by academics, critics, writers, teachers and students on texts and topics set for A Level – and on literature and language more generally.

If your school has a subscription and you are able to get the username and password from your teacher, log in and spend some time browsing the site, dipping into articles, then choosing one that interests you. Be aware that some of the articles are for language, others for literature.

For those of you who are not able to get hold of the logins or whose school doesn't have a subscription, we've collected together a small selection of language articles for you to browse and choose from. See the accompanying '*emagazine* Resource Pack – Language':

- Delving into the *emag* Archives: Child Language Acquisition (page 16)
- Language Variation, Accents, Attitudes and More Delving into the *emagazine* Archive (page 21)
- Around the World with *emag* – a Survey of Articles (*emagplus*) (page 26)
- Becoming an A Level Language Student – a Quick Guide (page 29)

If you are able to use the platform recommended and validated by your school to share ideas, then the activity will be most interesting and productive. If you can't, just do it on your own.

- Dip into the openings of several articles and choose the one that most immediately grabs your attention.
- Read the article and pick out three points to share. These could be ideas you find interesting, that you want to question (perhaps because you disagree, perhaps because you want to find out more), or a point you don't understand.
- Take one of the points and add your own ideas to it or write a new point of your own.
- If possible, use the platform recommended and validated by your school to share your ideas on what you noticed about the way the article is written – its organisation and development, the style, the voice and what difference that made both to your enjoyment and understanding.
- At some point before you begin your A Level course, why not have a go at writing an *emagazine* style article yourself? You could join up with a friend and arrange to be editors for each other, adding the title, standfirst (the little overview that introduces the article) and sub-heads. You might, for example, want to expand on the second activity from this pack, 'Leap into Language', and write a detailed account of your own language profile.
- If you are feeling more confident, you could plan an article on one of the following areas: new slang terms that have appeared in your lifetime, your local accent, the language used in social media messages.

19. The Future of English

So, this is the end of the *Leaping Into Language* pack. We hope you have found it a useful introduction to some of the things you could be doing on the A Level English Language course and have had a good chance to see what the course has to offer. Before you go, there are one or two final things for you to do.

- English is ever-changing; it doesn't stay the same for very long, but somehow we still share it as a common language that can unite us (and occasionally divide us). What do you think might happen to English in the future? Below you'll see three predictions for the future of English. Have a think about each one: how likely are they to happen, do you think? Write a sentence or two in response to each and then come back to your predictions once you are well into your course next year, or even at the very end, before your final exams. How have your predictions held up? Remember too that **you** are part of the future of English: it's the speakers and writers of English who shape its use so you will have a part to play in how it develops, and this course might just have a lasting impact on you as well.

Prediction	Your Ideas
Technology will advance so quickly in the next five to ten years that it won't matter which languages we speak because translation apps will allow us to talk to everybody in any language.	
The English language will continue to take over the world, spreading everywhere and leading to it becoming the shared language of nearly everyone. But we will all speak English with American accents.	
The English language will change so quickly and in such different ways that it will break into new separate languages, just like Latin turned into Italian, Spanish and French in centuries gone by.	