



# A Level English Language Preparation for Sixth Form *Summer Study Pack*

## ***Rationale of this study pack***

In preparation for starting A Level English Language in September you are asked to complete the tasks outlined in this booklet. The work which you do in completing this booklet will inform some of the modules you will take at A Level and also test your commitment to the course.

## ***Why English Language?***

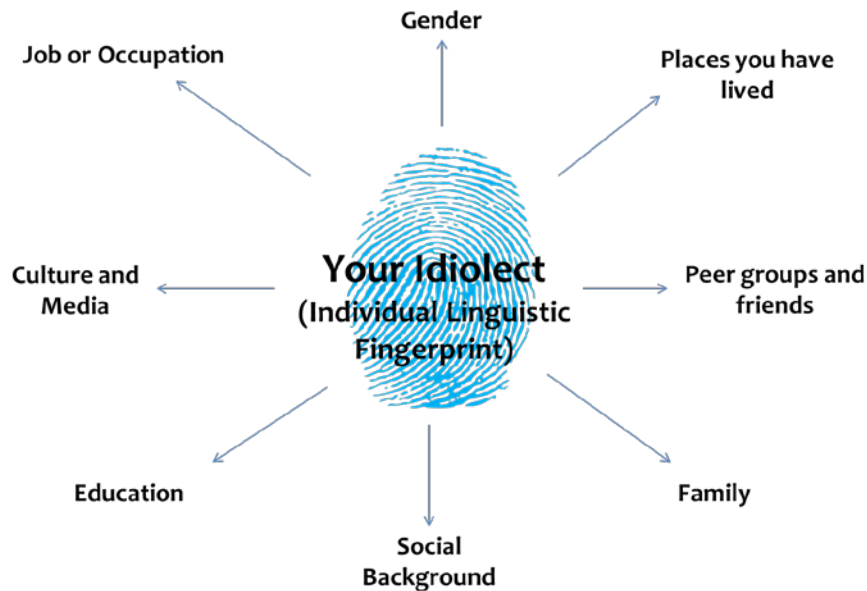
- An interest in the power of the written and spoken word.
- An interest in analysing a variety of texts, both fiction and non-fiction.
- A desire to write creatively in a variety of genres for different audiences.
- An opportunity to research language development and changes throughout different periods of history and your life.

**Bring this completed booklet to your first A Level English Language lesson in September and hand to your teacher.**



**Task 1- You and your language: idiolect**

In your daily life, as you read magazines, texts and websites or listen to the people around you talking, you rapidly become aware that we all have our own distinctive style of using language. So what has influenced and shaped this idiolect, this individual linguistic fingerprint which each of us reveals as soon as we open our mouths or put pen to paper?



**Create your own idiolect diagram**

For each of the possible sources of influence shown above, draw your own idiolect diagram and try to suggest the specific ways in which they have affected your personal language development. As you consider each one, think about how it might have influenced:

- Your accent.
- Your choice of words, phrases and slang.
- Your ideas about what is acceptable or "good" English.

**KEY SKILL TO REMEMBER**

Link all the texts that you read in the course to their context. Consider where it is, who is talking and why this could have an impact on their language use.

**Task 2– *Analysing different accents and dialects***

During the A Level course you will be required to understand how various contextual factors impact on our spoken and written language. One of these factors is our geographical location, and as a result, our regional accent and dialect.

Can you identify some different British regional accents and give an example of a celebrity who is famous for that particular accent? *i.e Geordie Accent (Newcastle) – Cheryl Cole*

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Which regional accents have more prestige (higher status) ? Which have less prestige?

*Give reasons for your choices.*

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What would you call these? Can you research all of the different regional dialect variation terms for these?

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### Task 3 – Analysing Language and Power

Below is the beginning of the inauguration speech given by Barack Obama on the day he was sworn in as President of the USA. Read the speech very closely and answer the questions which follow. It might help you to watch the speech in full – this is available on Youtube.

“My fellow citizens: I stand here today humbled by the task before us, grateful for the trust you have bestowed, mindful of the sacrifices borne by our ancestors. I thank President Bush for his service to our nation, as well as the generosity and co-operation he has shown throughout this transition.

Forty-four Americans have now taken the presidential oath. The words have been spoken during rising tides of prosperity and the still waters of peace. Yet, every so often the oath is taken amidst gathering clouds and raging storms.

At these moments, America has carried on not simply because of the skill or vision of those in high office, but because we, the people, have remained faithful to the ideals of our forbears, and true to our founding documents.

So it has been. So it must be with this generation of Americans. That we are in the midst of crisis is now well understood. Our nation is at war, against a far-reaching network of violence and hatred. Our economy is badly weakened, a consequence of greed and irresponsibility on the part of some, but also our collective failure to make hard choices and prepare the nation for a new age. Homes have been lost; jobs shed; businesses shuttered. Our healthcare is too costly; our schools fail too many; and each day brings further evidence that the ways we use energy strengthen our adversaries and threaten our planet.

These are the indicators of crisis, subject to data and statistics. Less measurable but no less profound is a sapping of confidence across our land - a nagging fear that America's decline is inevitable, that the next generation must lower its sights.

Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real. They are serious and they are many. They will not be met easily or in a short span of time. But know this, America - they will be met.

On this day, we gather because we have chosen hope over fear, unity of purpose over conflict and discord. On this day, we come to proclaim an end to the petty grievances and false promises, the recriminations and worn-out dogmas, that for far too long have strangled our politics.”



**Task 4 – Analysing a transcript**

**During the A Level course you will be expected to analyse transcripts of spoken conversation. Below is a conversation between two females. Read the transcript carefully and then answer the question that follows.**

Gina: did you see that (.) film on telly (1.0) was it (1.0) last night erm yeah that was it (1.0) Return of the Living Dead

Kate: yeah it was disgusting (2.0)

Amy: oh (.) I didn't see it (1.0) I watched this comedy programme it was so funny (1.0) Harry Enfield

Kate: I saw it last week (.) I think Kevin the teenager is best though (1.0)

Amy: oh yeah (1.0) [imitating voice of actor] bloody hell mum [laughter 4.0]

Kate: he reminds me of this lad that used to go to school

Gina: oh (.) what was his name (.) in Biology (.) you know (1.0)

Kate: oh Peter somebody (1.0)

Amy: I didn't really know him (.) I wasn't in your group (1.0)

Kate: which group were you in then

Amy: you know

Gina: top group of course (1.0) you were more clever than me and Kate [Gina and Amy laugh] I was in all the thikko groups (1.0) mind you I was a bit bloody crap

Kate: [laughter] don't be stupid you were well clever at (.) maths

Gina: I wouldn't say well clever

Amy: oh why are we talking about school (1.0)

Gina: are you going out on Friday

Kate: yeah

Amy: probably

Kate: I don't know where to go mind

Gina: what about The Vic

Kate: the trouble with going there is you have to dress (.) fairly smart (1.0) which means I don't know what to wear

Gina: anything as long as it's not

Kate: I might wear my stripy dress actually

Gina: fine don't listen to me then

Kate: sorry I didn't hear you (1.0) sorry Gina

Gina: doesn't matter (.) it wasn't important (2.0)

Amy: there was this lad at The Vic last time (.) and he came up to me and he goes (.) aren't your legs aching (.) and I go no why (.) and he goes because you've been running through my mind [laughter 7.0]

Gina: that is such a crap chat up line (1.0) I can't believe he said it (.) what did you say

Amy: I go (.) oh really and then just laugh (.) it was so funny I had to walk off

Kate: I hate it when lads say stuff like that (.) it's just so corny (.)

Gina: it's well funny though





**Task 5- Research**

As part of the assessment criteria at A Level you will be expected to link the texts that you will analyse to linguistic theorists.

For the following people research their main studies and ideas about language. Bring your notes with you in September.

○ **Robin Lakoff**

○ **David Crystal**

○ **Bill Bryson**

○ **Jennifer Coates**

○ **Brown and Levinson**

○ **Paul Grice**