

# AS and A LEVEL

*Delivery Guide*

H070/H470

Accredited

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Theme: Language and Power

March 2015



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## CONTENTS

Introduction	Page 4
Curriculum Content	Page 5
Thinking Conceptually	Page 6
Thinking Contextually	Page 7
Learner Resources	Page 14



# Introduction

Delivery guides are designed to represent a body of knowledge about teaching a particular topic and contain:

- Content: A clear outline of the content covered by the delivery guide;
- Thinking Conceptually: Expert guidance on the key concepts involved, common difficulties students may have, approaches to teaching that can help students understand these concepts and how this topic links conceptually to other areas of the subject;
- Thinking Contextually: A range of suggested teaching activities using a variety of themes so that different activities can be selected which best suit particular classes, learning styles or teaching approaches.

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## KEY



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# Curriculum Content

This section has been designed to enable students to practise the skills they will need in order to deal effectively with the second question of Component/Paper2 of the A Level, when they make reference to the topic of power, which is dealt with in the context of examining multi-modal media texts. It will also enable students to prepare for Question 2 of Component/Paper2 of the AS Level where candidates will analyse a multi-modal text for Language and Power only. The sources and activities within the section reflect the fact that these questions are assessed under AO2 and AO3, and that the marks awarded for it are divided equally between these two assessment objectives.

The activities are intended to help develop students' understanding of different linguistic manifestations of power, and lend themselves to the fostering of a critical consideration of this topic. The sources on which the activities are based can be used to promote evaluative and analytical skills, facilitating an exploration of contextual factors and of the construction of meaning with reference to the language levels identified in the specification.



# Thinking Conceptually

## **Approaches to teaching the content**

The fundamental approach in terms of teaching the content is to bring the concept of power alive for the students, by providing a range of sources that makes it possible to see how power and its linguistic expression is topical and relevant to their own experience and lives. Enabling students to understand more about their own relationship to different manifestations of power, for example as potential consumers, is one important aspect of this approach. The activities also underline the fact that power operates on a personal, local, national and global level; again this foregrounds the importance and relevance of the topic in a way that is central to the approach adopted.

Depending on student needs, the sources provided (which can be augmented by texts of the teacher's/students' own choosing) can be used to enhance technical analysis skills or references their understanding of relevant theory, or both.

## **Common misconceptions or difficulties students may have**

Students may find synthesising practical and theoretical layers of analysis challenging; these resources provide plentiful opportunities to practise this synthesis as well as identifying specific areas for development if required. The sources are multi-layered, so that students can start with a more basic understanding and extend it. Specific resources could also be paired, for teaching purposes, with any theoretical concepts that students are finding difficult: so that the teacher could select pairings that were particularly conducive to developing the necessary skills and understanding.

Students may also struggle with connecting concepts with the contexts in which they appear. The sample texts have been chosen to make it possible for students to do this in a very explicit way, and to make the importance of context very visible as they approach the analytical tasks provided.

## **Conceptual links to other areas of the specification – useful ways to approach this topic to set students up for topics later in the course**

Although there is a focus on power, some or most of the texts in this section could also be used as a resource for equivalent tasks on the topic of gender or technology, the other options for Q 2.

There is also plentiful scope for reinforcement of textual analysis and evaluation using the language levels. Furthermore students will be practising synthesising this analysis with theoretical understanding in a way that links, for example, with the skills they will need for the question on Child Language Acquisition, another area of the specification in which the integration of theory and technical analysis is required.

Finally, the materials within this section help to contribute to the module on language change – for example through developing student awareness of the significance of context and also of the nature and possibilities of multi-modal texts as examples of media discourse.



# Thinking Contextually

Reflecting the fact that one of the Assessment Objectives for this question relates specifically to context, the student's awareness of the relationship between context and the topic of power is very much at the heart of what is being fostered.

The contexts and themes of the sources provided are diverse, and it is hoped that teachers as well as students will find them interesting; contexts including health, travel, work, politics, leisure interests and consumer behaviour are all visited, giving students the opportunity to see the operation of power in a variety of different areas (always with an emphasis on multi-modal media texts), and to analyse the wide-ranging linguistic manifestations of it.

Alongside a variety of sources based on themes ranging from the Ebola outbreak to parental discipline to office politics, there is also a mini-unit focusing on the tale of David and Goliath, providing access to various metaphorical re-enactments of this particular power struggle that have occurred within the modern world. It is hoped that students will find the experience of reading about (and analysing) a range of contemporary situations in which the under-dog could be seen to triumph as particularly engaging.

Activities	Resources
<p><b>Introduction to the study of power within multi-modal media texts</b></p> <p>Students should consider the topic of power and revise their previous experiences of studying it. They should be introduced to the specific assessment focus for this unit, ie AO2 and AO3:</p> <p>AO2: Demonstrate critical understanding of concepts and issues relevant to language use</p> <p>AO3: Analyse and evaluate how contextual factors and language features are associated with the construction of meaning.</p> <p>The first lesson should be used to establish what students know/are able to remember about the study of power. This could take the form of paired discussions followed by whole-class feedback. The teacher could, if necessary, offer prompts, leading into the suggested activity. (See Learner Resource 1.1)</p> <p>The activities on the worksheet are designed to alert students to their own experiences of situations involving power and to revisit the ways in which these can be translated into specific linguistic behaviours, giving rise to language features.</p> <p>A plenary session could follow.</p>	



# Thinking Contextually

Activities	Resources
<p><b>Sources of Power</b></p> <p>As a way of developing student awareness of power as a concept and the ways in which it can be represented, a selection of text options has been provided. Teachers could choose any number of these or could supply their own. By looking at these texts and using the questions suggested, students can start to consider the variety of the linguistic representation of power. The sources available are:</p> <p>Discipline from the World's Strictest Parents (See <a href="http://www.parenting.com/article/discipline-tips-from-the-worlds-strictest-parents">http://www.parenting.com/article/discipline-tips-from-the-worlds-strictest-parents</a>)</p> <p>Science/Ebola/Control (See <a href="http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/nov/01/ebola-kaci-hickox-good-science-must-prevail">http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/nov/01/ebola-kaci-hickox-good-science-must-prevail</a>)</p> <p>How Office Politics Work (See <a href="http://money.howstuffworks.com/office-politics.htm">http://money.howstuffworks.com/office-politics.htm</a>)</p> <p>Power in 'Macbeth' (See <a href="http://www.shmoop.com/macbeth/power-theme.html">http://www.shmoop.com/macbeth/power-theme.html</a>)</p> <p>Obedience in Real-Life Settings (See <a href="http://www.psychteacher.co.uk/social-influence/obedience-in-real-life.html">http://www.psychteacher.co.uk/social-influence/obedience-in-real-life.html</a>)</p> <p>Teenage Power (See <a href="http://www.theguardian.com/society/joepublic/2009/apr/15/mark-johnson-inside-out">http://www.theguardian.com/society/joepublic/2009/apr/15/mark-johnson-inside-out</a>)</p> <p><b>Sources of Power continued</b></p> <p>For each text, students could be asked to do/discuss/write about one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the type/s of power involved</li> <li>• What theories might be useful in considering them?</li> <li>• What representations of power are being created?</li> <li>• What language features reveal or illuminate the representations of power within the text?</li> <li>• How does the writer position themselves in relation to the material/topic?</li> <li>• How do they position (or attempt to position) the reader/receiver?</li> <li>• In what ways is the text multi-modal?</li> <li>• How is the text's multi-modality being used to construct meaning?</li> </ul>	





# Thinking Contextually

Activities	Resources
<p><b>Introduction to mini-unit: the story of David and Goliath</b></p> <p>Start by recalling memories of the story of David and Goliath where these exist; discuss what elements of it appealed to students.</p> <p>Recap on the essentials of the story so that all are familiar with it.</p> <p>What stories from other cultures serve as parallels?</p> <p>In groups of pairs, students could consider what it is about the David/Goliath (or equivalent) power dynamic that might appeal to people.</p> <p>Distribute copies of the 'David and Goliath' source for students to read. (See <a href="http://blog.ted.com/2013/09/30/david-goliath-and-the-underdog-a-qa-with-malcolm-gladwell/">http://blog.ted.com/2013/09/30/david-goliath-and-the-underdog-a-qa-with-malcolm-gladwell/</a>)</p> <p>They could consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The different kinds of power being identified</li><li>• The role of the expert within this source</li><li>• The reader's reaction</li><li>• The multi-modal features of the text</li><li>• The text's context and provenance</li></ul> <p>Students could be invited to reflect on how their study of language might inform their reading of this particular text and also a series of parallel contemporary stories that will comprise the rest of the unit.</p>	



# Thinking Contextually

Activities	Resources
<p><b>Finance: Toppling Corporate Giants</b></p> <p>The stimulus for this lesson is the story of an individual who managed to outwit/defraud (depending on the reader's perspective) a major bank in Russia by changing the terms of the contract with which they issued him before he returned it to them to sign. They didn't notice and he was able to sue them for millions.</p> <p>In preparation for the lesson, ask students to look at any examples of financial documents and agreements they can legitimately access. A few examples should also be provided by the teacher.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is organisational power exerted in these documents?</li> <li>• How is it reflected in their language?</li> <li>• What do students see as the balance of power between financial institutions and their customers?</li> </ul> <p>Time and resources permitting, or as a homework task, students could research what rights customers have available to them and what institutions and legislation exist to protect them.</p> <p>Invite students to recap on their findings in the previous session, or for homework.</p> <p>Consider the role of 'small print' as a facet of financial agreements – how ethical do students find it? Encourage paired discussions of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the phrase, or collocation, 'small print' sometimes used as a metaphor for?</li> <li>• What does this reveal about our relationship to it?</li> <li>• How compatible is 'small print' with a society that is inclusive and diverse?</li> <li>• How compatible is it with transparency of practice?</li> </ul> <p>Introduce the stimulus text ('Bank'). (See <a href="http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/read-the-small-print-credit-card-user-sets-his-own-limit--then-sues-bank-for-closing-account-8753602.html">http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/read-the-small-print-credit-card-user-sets-his-own-limit--then-sues-bank-for-closing-account-8753602.html</a>)</p> <p>Students should read it and then discuss it or write about it in the light of its unusual representation of power.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the writer seem to feel about Dmitry Argarkov's actions?</li> <li>• How does the student reader feel?</li> <li>• What language features provide clues to the writer's stance in relation to the material?</li> </ul> <p>Finally, for discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do students ever read the small print?</li> <li>• Will they in future?</li> </ul>	



# Thinking Contextually

Activities	Resources
<p><b>Spotlight on CVs</b></p> <p>Introduce the topic by reminding students that they will soon, perhaps, need to write a CV. Some may have already done so.</p> <p>In class establish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is the typical layout of a CV?</li><li>• What are its traditional components?</li><li>• What is the relationship between a conventional CV and organisational power? (Useful to consider the content and also the context in which it is being produced.)</li><li>• What is the relationship between the writer of a CV and a) the organisations they refer to in it and b) the organisation they might send it to?</li></ul> <p>The teacher should then distribute the source text 'CV' (See <a href="http://www.esquire.com/features/the-world-of-men/british-comedy-stars-0412">http://www.esquire.com/features/the-world-of-men/british-comedy-stars-0412</a>) for students to read and discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How does Benedict Le Gauche subvert the expectations of a traditional CV?</li><li>• What is the writer's attitude towards him?</li><li>• At what levels is the concept of power visible within this text?</li></ul> <p>As a follow-up task students could find/read the CV the article is based on and also research other 'alternative' CVs that have been produced, or writing an 'alternative' CV for themselves.</p>	



# Thinking Contextually

Activities	Resources
<p><b>Breaking Monopolies</b></p> <p>Introduce this lesson by inviting students to turn their linguistic attention to the world of entertainment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the big brands?</li> <li>• Who controls them?</li> <li>• How positive or negative do students feel about these brands and why?</li> </ul> <p>For several years the X Factor television show has been able to secure the number one music slot at Christmas, with a song released by the X Factor winner moving, seemingly inevitably, to the top of the charts.</p> <p>Distribute the source 'X Factor' (See <a href="http://www.theguardian.com/music/2009/dec/20/rage-against-machine-christmas-number-1">http://www.theguardian.com/music/2009/dec/20/rage-against-machine-christmas-number-1</a>) which describes a year when this didn't happen. After reading the article, students should discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In what ways does this story resemble that of David and Goliath?</li> <li>• To what extent is Simon Cowell's status being used to emphasise Joe McElderry's defeat?</li> </ul> <p>Students could use this text as an opportunity for analysis practice, paying attention to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The context in which it was produced</li> <li>• Its multi-modality</li> <li>• Language features used to represent power</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Bring Back the Chocolate!</b></p> <p>The context for the source is of a chocolate bar, Wispa, being withdrawn from sale.</p> <p>Before revealing this, the students should be invited to list/discuss any situations in which people/species of flora or fauna/buildings eg homes, historical interest, archaeological sites, artistic creations etc are under threat of destruction.</p> <p>In light of this, students should be asked to research an example of particular interest to them, eg relating to a species about to possibly become extinct (or sources could be provided by the teacher). They will need at least one specific text which they can study.</p> <p>Distribute the source text, Wispa, (See <a href="http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2007/aug/18/lifeandhealth.foodanddrink">http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2007/aug/18/lifeandhealth.foodanddrink</a>) and read it through. How do students feel about the strength of feeling described?</p> <p>Finally, students should compare the source text with the one relating to a campaign to achieve a different kind of saving/protection. They could then talk or write about how power is being represented in these two texts.</p>	



# Thinking Contextually

Activities	Resources
<p><b>Mass Hysteria about 'Mass Effect'</b></p> <p>This lesson follows on from the previous one in that it looks at the power of consumers, in this case gamers, to influence corporate decisions.</p> <p>Students should have researched a definition of Fairclough's concept of synthetic personalisation.</p> <p>Start by inviting students to explain the premise of the computer game Mass Effect (it's essentially based on a series of choices, tactical and ethical, and the choices made affect the final outcome).</p> <p>Students should find out/outline gamers' reactions when the ending was released and re-released as a way of providing context for the source text.</p> <p>Distribute the source text, 'Mass Effect', (See <a href="http://www.tor.com/blogs/2012/04/mass-effect-who-owns-an-rpg">http://www.tor.com/blogs/2012/04/mass-effect-who-owns-an-rpg</a>) and read it through as it includes the source text. Then discuss and/or take notes on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent is a shared knowledge of context assumed by the writer of this text?</li> <li>• How is this reflected in its language features?</li> <li>• What use is being made of Fairclough's concept of synthetic personalisation?</li> <li>• How is the reader/receiver of the text being constructed?</li> <li>• What does the multi-modal nature of the text contribute?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Bidding Farewell to D and G</b></p> <p>As a way of finishing off this mini-unit, students could revisit all the situations involving power imbalance they have encountered en route. (It would be helpful if they had access to copies of all source texts; access to some at least is necessary.) They should rank order them in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How satisfying they found the victory against the odds</li> <li>• How important the battle was, a) in their eyes and b) from a global perspective</li> <li>• Why might a) and b) be different?</li> </ul> <p>Students should then focus on a consideration of the following (this could be teacher- or student-led depending on the ability and nature of the group. Alternatively, different topics could be assigned to different groups of students):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The role of multi-modality – what multi-modal features have been encountered?</li> <li>• Representations of power - the underdogs</li> <li>• Representation of power - the Goliaths</li> <li>• Charting contexts/relationships between writer/reader/producer/receiver</li> </ul>	



# Learner Resource 1.1

## Revise terms:

Instrumental power  
Influential power

Interview another member of your class to elicit the following info:

### 1. In what circumstances do you have power over others?

### 2. In what circumstances do they have power over you?

### 3. Represent a selection of the relationships/encounters you have been involved in which involve a degree of power as a mind map:



# Learner Resource 1.1

4. Pooling the ideas you came up with, discuss what confers that power, ie is it instrumental, influential or both?
5. Consider specific conversational styles and features that you/others employ within your answers to 1) and 2) and use them to help you fill in the table below (two examples have been provided for you):

Context	Higher levels of power (style/features)	Lower levels of power (style/features)
Medical appointment	Use of jargon by doctor	Request for clarification
Shopping list provided by parent	Items on list = information that is also a series of implied commands	Compliance – acting on commands as a form of agreement





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