

# A LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE

This Checkpoint Task should be used in conjunction with the KS5–HE English Language Transition Guide – Historical varieties of English.

## KS5–HE Transition Guide

### Checkpoint Task

### *Instructions and answers for teachers*

*These instructions should accompany the OCR resource ‘KS5–HE Transition Guide Checkpoint Task’ activity which supports OCR A Level English Language.*



#### Associated materials:

'KS5–HE Transition Guide Checkpoint Task' learner activity sheet.



# A LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE

This exercise is designed to help learners think about some of the ways English has changed between the eighteenth century and the present day. As learners to read the following two texts, then complete the four tasks below.

## Text 1

1735 *The art of dancing explained by reading and figures; whereby the manner of performing the steps is made easy by a new and familiar method: being the original work, first design'd in the year 1724, and now published by Kellom Tomlinson, dancing-master. This is an edited extract from Chapter XIV: Of the Spring or Leap.*

As to the Agreement of this Step with the Notes of the Tune, it is uncertain; for to a Tune of three it sometimes takes up a Measure, and at others not: For Example, if you spring upright in this Step, the Fall marks what we call the Time or Cadence upon the first Note, whilst the other two are counted during the Time you rest; and in the like Manner, when it is performed circularly upon the same Place. Upright and circularly are the two Ways in which this Step is performed, when it singly answers to a Bar, as it frequently happens on the ending of a Strain or other remarkable Part of the Tune; and when it does not, as it rarely, if ever, does in the other Ways of performing it, we often meet, instead thereof, two Leaps and a plain straight Step in a Measure, which together with the two Springs agree with the Notes of the Music; and many Times we find a third Spring added, instead of the plain straight Step; which three Springs agree with the Notes, as before, tho' they are seldom used except in Comic Dancing and Tunes of common Time, that is to say, of four in the Bar, as in Gavots, Marches, Rigadoons, &c. in which this Spring or Leap on both Feet is the same, in its answering with the Notes of the Tune, except that, instead of two Springs and the plain straight Step to a Measure, or the three Springs, as in triple Time, in these of common there is but one Close and the straight Step as was just observed, which Step, if continued, is a sort of an harmonious Leaping to Music either forwards or backwards, &c. It is to be likewise noted, that the upright Spring or Close affords the Dancer the like Opportunity of changing the Foot, during the Time of resting as in the foregoing Close, the Difference being only in its beginning and ending on both Feet; and, if performed on the Ground, it is intirely in the same Manner, as we have already described it in the Jump or Close from one Foot.



# A LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE

## Text 2

[2012 Anonymous *How to Top Rock*]

How to top rock is the first breakdance tutorial of the beginners section. We're going to start with the basics of breakdancing, first we're going to start out with top rock. This might not seem too difficult when you see it, but remember you have to keep up with the rhythm. That's where the difficulty comes in to play. Make sure you stand on your toes to be able to bounce and keep up with the beat. Get up on your tippy toes and move one leg to the other side. Right leg, over the left. Jump back in to the resting position, left leg over right, hop back into resting position. Keep repeating this, practice it. Make sure it's with a rhythm, if it's not, then it won't look good at all. Don't dance to the rhythm of your own drum, follow the beat. Of course it won't be just that. It'll look way more different, the beat determines how much you move. Just remember back and forth, then resting position.

Rinse and repeat. Always try to find the rhythm to a baseline or snare line. Every song has a beat and you can top rock to it. You can even incorporate hopping into the top rocking. If you feel like you've gotten enough practice, then you can incorporate hands.

Let your hands swing with your body a bit; don't be afraid to loosen up. However don't let them flail either. Practice in the mirror will show you if you're swinging your arms too much. Just make sure to remember your following your feet.



# A LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE

## Task 1

Describe some of the ways in which the eighteenth century text differs from the contemporary text in terms of orthography. In particular, pay attention to capitalization and to punctuation:

- Is the capitalization in the earlier text random, or is there a system to it?
  - Do you think the punctuation in the later text conforms to standard English?
  - What evidence do you have to support your answer?
- Students should review the typical practices for capitalization in formal written prose which operate in present-day English. You could introduce the idea of variability in present-day English. For instance, should you capitalize the first letter of a word following a colon? There is some debate about this (see the discussion here - [http://www.bristol.ac.uk/arts/exercises/grammar/grammar\\_tutorial/page\\_04.htm](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/arts/exercises/grammar/grammar_tutorial/page_04.htm)). Also, what about when we use capitals to refer to tables, figures or texts we are discussing, for example in *as we can see in Figure 7*?
  - Students should then look at the text to see where capitalization patterns vary from the present-day, particularly with regard to the capitalization of common nouns. Comparisons could be made with present-day practices in written German (where common nouns are conventionally capitalized).
  - Other things you might consider in the older text are the use of the semi-colon to separate clauses in a particularly long, complex sentence (somewhat different to today) and the use of the apostrophe to mark missing letters (somewhat like today).
  - For the more recent text, the punctuation is almost entirely standard, but there are a number of contractions marked by an apostrophe (eg *it's*, *won't*, *don't*) which give the text a more informal feel. The comma after *breakdancing* in the second sentence is an instance of a so-called comma splice, where two independent clauses are separated by means of a comma instead of a semi-colon or full stop (either of which would be standard). There are actually two more instances of a comma splice. Once the first one has been discussed, students could be invited to identify the other two. They are: *Make sure it's with a rhythm, if it's not...* and *It'll look way more different, the beat determines...*



# A LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE

## Task 2

What grammatical differences are there between the two texts?

Pay attention to the types of clauses used (eg declaratives vs. imperatives), and the complexity of the clauses (eg whether there is a lot of subordination).

How do the grammatical choices relate to the varying level of formality associated with each text?

- The older text is considerably more complex than the more recent one. You could begin by looking at how many graphic sentences there are in each text (i.e. how many full stops), and subsequently, how many subordinate clauses there are. A key feature of the earlier text is that there are multiple embeddings, that is subordinate clauses within already subordinate clauses – look at the clause beginning *which three Springs agree with the Notes*, for example. By contrast, the clauses in the modern text are much shorter, and much less complex in terms of embedding.
- The older text, although it involves instruction, and therefore might be expected to have a lot of imperatives, actually consists of declarative clauses. By contrast, the modern text has many more imperative clauses.
- The older text also contains several passive constructions, such as *the other two are counted and when it is performed*
- You might also look at the use of pronouns (*we* and *you* in particular). For instance, to whom does *we* refer in *as we have already described it in the Jump or Close from one Foot* (Text 1) and *We're going to start with the basics of breakdancing, first we're going to start out with top rock* (Text 2)? Typically *we* is used for a set of two or more that includes the speaker, but here – certainly in Text 1 and probably in Text 2 – *we* (!) have a use of authorial *we*, used to involve the reader/addressee in some way.



# A LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE

## Task 3

Identify some idiomatic expressions used in Text 2. Do you find similar uses of idiomatic language in Text 1?

Teachers may wish to consider that the term *idiom* is understood in different ways by different people, including linguists and literary scholars. For some, an idiom is an expression with a figurative meaning (eg *That rings a bell*). Others define idioms more broadly, including different kinds of expressions which are somehow fixed and/or have meanings that are not immediately obvious.

Some examples of idiomatic language in Text 2 include:

- phrasal verbs like *start out with* and *keep up with*
- verb phrase idioms like *come in to play* or *dance to the rhythm of your own drum*
- grammatical idioms like *at all* and *of course*
- other expressions like *back and forth*, *rinse and repeat*

Some of the idioms may be considered less standard than others (e.g. the use of *way* followed by an adjective phrase, typically marked for comparative grade, as in *way more different* in the text, or *way harder*, *way less expensive*)

Text 1 appears to have fewer clear instances of idiomatic expressions, though it is sometimes difficult to know what is idiomatic and what is not for older texts. Nevertheless, students may suggest conventional expressions such as *for Example*; *instead thereof*; *rarely, if ever*; *that is to say*; *afford s.o. an opportunity*; *in the same Manner*.



# A LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE

## Task 4

Both of these texts are instructional texts – they are each giving advice on how to carry out a dance move.

What features of the discourse mark these texts out as being instructional?

Do the discourse properties of both texts appear to be the same, or are they different in some ways?

You might wish to discuss with students:

- use of imperatives in Text 2 vs. declaratives in Text 1.
- directly addressing the reader (use of *you*) in both texts. (More able groups might like to consider whether this use of *you* is similar to or different from the use of *you* in expressions like *You couldn't hear yourself think in that club.*)
- the use of specific vocabulary (*top rock* in Text 2, *the Time or Cadence* in Text 1) to establish that this text is a discourse on a particular topic of instruction.
- the use of passives in Text 1, and the absence of passives in Text 2. [If students are having difficulty with this, it might be useful to try a rewrite exercise, taking an active sentence from Text 2 and passivizing it. For example, *the beat determines how much you move* > *how much you move is determined by the beat*. You will find that there are few examples of sentences which can be passivized in Text 2, which is an interesting fact in itself.]



# A LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE



We'd like to know your view on the resources we produce. By clicking on the 'Like' or 'Dislike' button you can help us to ensure that our resources work for you. When the email template pops up please add additional comments if you wish and then just click 'Send'. Thank you.

If you do not currently offer this OCR qualification but would like to do so, please complete the Expression of Interest Form which can be found here: [www.ocr.org.uk/expression-of-interest](http://www.ocr.org.uk/expression-of-interest)

## **OCR Resources: *the small print***

OCR's resources are provided to support the teaching of OCR specifications, but in no way constitute an endorsed teaching method that is required by the Board, and the decision to use them lies with the individual teacher. Whilst every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the content, OCR cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions within these resources. We update our resources on a regular basis, so please check the OCR website to ensure you have the most up to date version.

© OCR 2015 - This resource may be freely copied and distributed, as long as the OCR logo and this message remain intact and OCR is acknowledged as the originator of this work.

OCR acknowledges the use of the following content: Thumbs up and down icons: alexwhite/Shutterstock.com, English icon: AirOne/Shutterstock.com, Page 3 'How to Top Rock' from Breakdancetutorials.org - We have been unable to contact the copyright holder for this work. If you are the owner of any third-party material contained within this document, and you wish to question its use, please contact The Resources Team at OCR through [resourcesfeedback@ocr.org.uk](mailto:resourcesfeedback@ocr.org.uk)

Please get in touch if you want to discuss the accessibility of resources we offer to support delivery of our qualifications: [resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk](mailto:resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk)

April 2015

