A LEVEL
Delivery Guide

H470

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Theme: Topical Issues

August 2015

Accredited

OCR
Oxford Cambridge and RSA

CONTENTS

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 that best suit particular classes, learning styles or teaching approaches.

If you have any feedback on this Delivery Guide or suggestions for other resources you would like OCR to develop, please email resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk.

KEY

Click to view associated resources within this document.

Click here   Click to view external resources

Curriculum Content

This delivery guide focuses on an issue or concept related to language in use.

The relevant exam questions are Question 2, Component 1 of the A Level and Question 1, Component 2 of the AS exam.

The thinking behind this delivery guide is that engaging with a variety of texts and contexts will help to prepare students to emulate any styles featured in those texts in the exam.

In the exam, at either AS or A level, students are asked to:

• show critical understanding of issues and concepts relevant to language use
• critically evaluate attitudes towards language and its users
• demonstrate how texts and discourses are shaped in different genres, modes and contexts
• apply critical and creative skills in the production of texts and discourses.

These skills and understanding spring directly from the Assessment Objectives that are relevant to this question, namely:

AO2   Demonstrate critical understanding of concepts and issues relevant to language use.

AO5   Demonstrate expertise and creativity in the use of English to communicate in different ways.

Thinking Conceptually

There are three key aspects to thinking conceptually or, more correctly, to preparing students for conceptual thinking about topical issues in language:
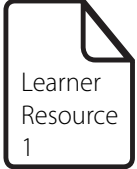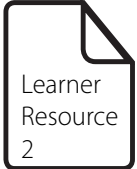
- Writing in an appropriate and engaging style which meets the needs of GAP.

- Understanding and responding to the issue itself whilst taking a partisan perspective.

- Wider understanding/knowledge of expert or noted writers on the subject including recent developments (for this reason, Q2 resources would need to be refreshed fairly regularly).

This delivery guide is focussed on looking at a variety of linguistic issues and providing some creative writing tasks that arise from these issues. This delivery guide can be used either as the basis of a discrete unit that suggest approaches to the exam question(s) or as a series of individual lessons that might be integrated into another unit, for example, Language and Power.

It is important to note that any writing concerned with this topic will always be of the persuasive and partisan type – in the exam the writing is not expected to be a discursive essay but more of an attempt to persuade.
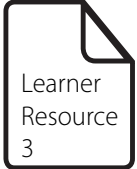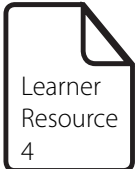
Thinking Contextually

Activities	Resources
1. Technology is ruining the language Students need to get used to taking a partisan approach to topics which is both considered and engaging. As this (sample exam) topic is quite broad it would seem a good opportunity to get students thinking about unusual 'angles' from which to approach a topic. The obvious starting point is to think about social media, especially Twitter and Facebook, but students could develop ideas focused on older forms of technology. Depending on class size, students could work in small groups to consider four different types of technology (see Learner Resource 1 which lists the types in order of challenge) and to identify potential ways in which they may have influenced language. At this stage, it is not important that the students take a more general position on the use of technology. Learner Resource 2 could be used to help students prepare their notes. It may also be useful to have example texts for each method of communication but this isn't essential. Groups then feed back their findings to the class. Note: smaller classes could complete this individually; larger classes could have two groups working on the same technology and then pooling resources before feedback. Further possible development activity: • Students, in pairs or in groups, prepare a brief presentation to be given to the fictional *Royal Association of Doom-Mongers* at the time of their invention's release to the wider public. In this presentation they lay out a nightmare scenario caused by their invention's release. This should be rhetorically powerful but should also be humorous given the invented audience. • A more straightforward approach would be using these ideas to write a response to the statement in exam style. • Students could select (or be provided with) famous texts which they could then transpose into the features they have identified. This could then be used to parody the premise.	Learner Resource 1 Learner Resource 2

Activities	Resources
2. Newspeak: The English Language is too complicated and needs to be simplified This lesson activity is designed to get students thinking about morphology and language construction in a detailed and creative way before applying this understanding of Newspeak to the final statement. This gives them an opportunity to practice their nascent understanding of language levels as well as giving them concrete examples of language simplification to use in their response. Students work through examples of Newspeak (Learner Resource 3) and attempt to identify its rules (as well as decoding the meaning of the phrases written). They should then attempt to compose a few lines describing the lesson so far in Newspeak. Learner Resource 4 supplies some extra information and gives the rules for the language of Newspeak. Further possible development activity: • Students should write a letter to the education secretary in which they argue for the adoption of Newspeak on the grounds that it will improve literacy rates because of its simplicity. • Another possible option is to consider the flaws of Newspeak. How could it be improved to make it a more viable language? Students could attempt to further simplify its rules. • This could be used as a lead-in to considering linguistic determinism/relativism which is considered later on this delivery guide (Activity 4) and would obviously fit well with reading Orwell's language and politics (Activity 9).	Learner Resource 3 Learner Resource 4

Thinking Contextually

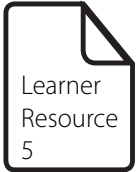| Activities	Resources
3. Writing in the right voice Students are required to respond creatively and imaginatively in the correct form. This may well require students to write in a manner to which they are unaccustomed and activities like this are a good way to introduce the style required. Whilst the question will specify the genre and audience, the basic features of this style of writing will be fairly stable. The aim of the task is straightforward in that students are to identify features of a text at various language levels. Students could use any newspaper article for this task but there is a good one to use at http://www.theguardian.com/media/mind-your-language/2015/jan/30/is-it-time-we-agreed-on-a-gender-neutral-singular-pronoun (specifically the opening three paragraphs that follow the image). Ask students to annotate this article; you could start by asking them to write notes on the following three aspects (which could be found in a lot of newspaper articles) and then discussing these aspects with the class: • The use of a pun and/or idiom in the title • The use of the first person plural inclusive pronoun • The use of a metalanguage (albeit straightforward metalanguage in the link provided) which could be used to model how to complete the task. Students should annotate the remainder of the excerpt for other linguistic features. Development activity: • Once the annotation is complete, students could write a list of key features which make up this style of writing and use the excerpt as a style model in writing a response. • Another option would be to attempt to continue the article and finish the writer's argument. This could be completed in small groups who might attempt to predict the key areas of language and society the writer will consider. • Students could, rather straightforwardly, use the text to answer a C1 Q1 style question. • As pointed out above, this activity can be repeated with almost any text from an appropriate publication. It could be interesting to have different groups working on different publications before looking for patterns in the language use across them all.	▶ Click here

Thinking Contextually

Activities	Resources
4. Something Whorfian! In approaching this activity, students may well feel comforted and better prepared if they understand the key ideas associated with significant theoretical work. They will also be able to create a stronger voice if they can 'name-drop' appropriately. Moreover, any exposure to academic and university-style texts will be beneficial to them (provided the texts aren't too frightening). A useful text to start with can be found here: http://www.colorado.edu/ling/courses/LAM3430/Whorflecture.pdf This is the text of a lecture given at Colorado University introducing the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis. It is academic and detailed but is also accessible. Students should complete a précis task which requires them to select the key elements of the hypothesis as well as the most relevant examples to back up their summary. Development activity: • This could be used as the starting point for an ABC debate (as in Activity 8) or other suitable structure for a class debate. But there are other, potentially more interesting, ways to use this material. • More interesting might be to challenge students to summarise, in an engaging way, the key parts of the hypothesis for a Radio 4 programme. This would duplicate the educated but non-specialist audience for this piece in the exam whilst also allowing them to consider planned, spoken delivery. Technology allowing, their summaries could even be recorded for revision purposes. • Later revisions of Sapir-Whorf and critical perspectives on the hypothesis would provide fertile ground for wider research which could be done prior to the earlier two tasks or as a stand-alone extension of this activity.	▶ Click here

Activities	Resources
5. Guided writing: technology is ruining the English language Writing creatively, pooling knowledge from a range of studies, and doing all this in timed conditions will seem quite daunting to a number of students. At earlier key stages, guided writing is an excellent means of doing the 'thinking' for the students to allow them to focus on learning the structure and craft of constructing ideas into the correct form. There is no reason why this shouldn't also be true of an A Level task as well. Learner Resource 5 is a guide to answering a question on the issue above. It provides students with content and language tips for each paragraph of the response. This would be best displayed on a PowerPoint with a timer included on the slide (of course you could always use your watch!). Students must keep pace with the timings for each section and produce a full response. They may be surprised by how much they can write. Underlined sections can be changed to suit the students' take on the task. Alternatively, if using this early in the course, you could provide a printed version in advance for students to add to. Development activity: • Using the planning notes as a template, students could create a similar guide for a different topical issue. This could then be delivered to the class in a future lesson so that students can test their planning. • Once completed, the students have access to each other's writing on the same subject. This could be used to identify interesting differences in style before redrafting in small groups to create a model response. • There is an opportunity to research further. Simply web-searching for this topic will return more articles than students can shake a stick at (including some guy called David Crystal).	Learner Resource 5

Thinking Contextually

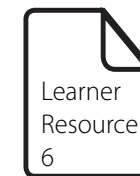| Activities	Resources
6. Unpicking headlinese This activity asks students to figure out a language issue they could discuss from the examples provided. It is inspired by Andy Bodle's *Mind Your Language* article for *The Guardian* (http://www.theguardian.com/media/mind-your-language/2014/dec/04/sub-ire-as-hacks-slash-word-length-getting-the-skinny-on-thinnernyms) which would be an excellent follow-up to this task as a style model (see development activities for more detail). Students should be given a selection of typical headlines (Learner Resource 6 may be useful but any trawl through the news stand should provide enough examples to be getting on with). They are then tasked with uncovering the linguistic patterns behind 'headlinese'. The aim here is for them to, initially, be descriptivists (could be a good idea to ask students whether they are aware of this term and other possible terms for approaches to language) and to simply unpick the language use in front of them. Once completed, students should use this to form their own contentious statement about language. Can the students find what is the issue embodied in the different newspaper texts? Development activity: • The obvious starting point, once again, is to write a Q2 response. • The better option might be to follow up this activity by reading the article named above. An 'angry' response in defence of The Great British Headline could allow for more fun. • A creative challenge would be to re-write a well-known fairy story using the *thinnernyms* and *headlinese* named in Bodle's article (as well as extending the glossary further). This would force students to adopt an engaging non-fiction style which, whilst not in the right voice for the Q2 piece, would still provide valuable writing practice.	▶ Click here Learner Resource 6

Activities	Resources
7. Lindsay Johns and Ghetto Grammar There is almost no chance that listening to Lindsay Johns on *Four Thought*, which is available on the BBC website: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03brt2x – at the time of writing, will not inspire a strong and vehement response from students. One way or another, they will have a reaction (Note: If the caprice and whimsy of the Internet/BBC/life in general conspires to prevent you listening to the audio, Johns is similarly incendiary in his *Daily Mail* blog). This article focuses on the need for young people in London (who Johns mentors) to speak 'proper English' and not their own dialects. Students should listen to (either in lessons or as pre-lesson prep) the audio and list the key points Johns makes along with any examples he offers to 'prove' his point of view. They could/should also identify the features of a radio speech that Johns uses. This can then be used to prepare a riposte to Johns. This activity should give a sense of the continuing controversies of English language as well as giving them a handy name (and associated ideas) to 'drop' in the exam should they need it. Development activity: • A web search for Johns and the key words 'Ghetto Grammar' will uncover a wealth of well-considered responses to this and they could be used to self-assess the thoroughness of the students' own ripostes. • This text is an ideal opportunity to introduce prescriptivism as a concept and to consider attitudes to accented speech. A number of concepts could be linked to such as: overt/covert prestige; accommodation theory; language decay; etc. • A study of Bishop Lowth could lend itself to an interesting parody piece of Johns set in 18th century Britain and bemoaning the loss of Standard English.	▶ Click here

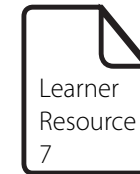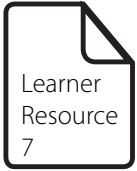| Activities	Resources
8. ABC Debating: English is a sexist language in need of egalitarian engineering This is less of a 'Topical Issues' idea and more of a handy way to get students to structure their group talk. It's simple and can be used with any issue, any class and any topic. The idea is that oracy precedes literacy and the more often students discuss in a formal manner, the better they will get at writing in that way. The issue that is given as part of the title for this activity is perhaps the most easily accessible to students but some preparation covering basic notions like *lexical asymmetry, semantic derogation, generic 'he'* and other ideas may be useful. To prepare, copy Learner Resource 7 once for each student in the group and ask students to cut them up. (These could be cut up and/or enlarged and then laminated for easier repeat use.) Students follow the structure from Learner Resource 7 by using each card once during the discussion. This requires them to introduce their point in a considered way with examples, agree, build and challenge other speakers. Development activity: • This can be adapted by 'loading the deck' and only giving certain types of card to certain students. You may also choose to limit who has to introduce or even do the introductory part yourself. • The cards can be distributed, along with a topic for discussion, in advance and students can use them to inform their planning for the discussion. • Depending on the confidence of the students, these group discussions could be recorded (or watched by other students) and the influence of the cards over the shape of the discourse could be evaluated. Who challenges the structure and how? At what point, if any, do students abandon the structure? Is there a gender disparity to students' use of the structure?	Learner Resource 7

Activities	Resources
9. Synthesising information from multiple sources Teaching of this unit needs to provide students with opportunities to engage with language issues in a more detailed way than they may previously have been used to. Whilst preparation for other parts of the exams will add to background understanding of issues, it is useful to use this unit to spread beyond the bounds of the traditional socio-linguistic contexts covered on the paper. Language and power, and political power are useful but oft-used topic areas, so requiring students to form a coherent argument whilst drawing from unfamiliar sources will broaden their knowledge as well as improving their ability to respond to this exam question. Students should be given the following statement from George Orwell: *"Political language... is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind."* Their task is to write a speech aimed at 6th form students who are/have become disengaged with politics as a result of this notion. They should focus their argument on the skill with which politicians craft language in order to help the people really understand. This may be 'a tough sell' but that's the point. Articles/essays/texts to use (which are not reprinted here): George Orwell, *"Politics and the English Language"* Any extract from *Hansard*, although PMQs would seem most interesting Any political speech or Interview but the annual conference speeches by the Party Leader may be a good focus Development activity: • Could lead to an ABC debate (see Learner Resource 7). • Having argued for the tricky point of view, students could be given free rein to argue the point on either side or to choose a more measured response. • They could also, depending on their rhetorical flourishes, re-write their speech to either follow or flout Orwell's rules for political language.	Learner Resource 7

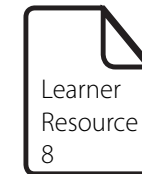| Activities	Resources
10. All's spell that ends spell This is another resource which challenges students to figure out the (fairly obvious) language issues from examples. As with Activity 6, the idea is to challenge students to take a descriptivist approach then use their linguistic knowledge to 'invent' the topical issue for themselves. The examples on Learner Resource 8 are designed to allow students to 'invent' one of a couple of language issues. It might be pleasant and productive to allow a plurality of interpretation from the data, not least for a little variety when marking responses. There is an obvious leaning towards the issue of English spelling being overly complicated but some students may spot a link to the need for a Lingua Franca or even some notion of prescriptivism/change being unavoidable. Development activity: • Students could use the data to design a planning sheet for a response. See Activity 5 for a guideline. • A good old-fashioned 'answer Q2' response could be another way to develop this idea. • A more creative approach might ask students to identify other idiosyncrasies in our spelling system and suggest their own methods of simplification. This would also be an excellent opportunity (if done at the right time) to link to etymology.	Learner Resource 8

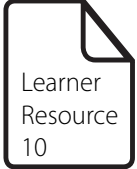| Activities	Resources
11. Taboo: who cares? (**Warning** – this activity contains the use of some very strong language.) Taboo language is always a fertile ground for cultivating nascent linguists' interest so providing them with an opportunity to study it in depth is a good way to get them thinking about a key issue in language change and social attitudes. They are also likely to have a strong opinion on certain words and usages. Learner Resource 9 (Warning – this resource contains several instances of the f-word) is a history of the word *'f*ck'* taken from the *Online Etymology Dictionary* which can be accessed via this link (http://www.etymonline.com/). Students should begin by creating a timeline(s) for the history of the word using the information given. Prior to this, they are asked to explain different spellings of the word in the resource itself. Following the task they have the chance to use the same or similar resources to study other taboo terms. This can then be used as research to back up a piece disagreeing with one of the statements below: • Taboo language should be removed from our lexicon. • Taboo language: People should get the f*ck over it. Development activity: • The research portion of the task could be given greater depth by using Google n-Gram to chart the usage of the terms over time. This would also be a handy way of introducing corpus study to students prior to investigations. This could also be a good chance to introduce other corpora such as the BNC (British National Corpus). • When writing the piece, or preferably extracts of a piece, the audience and genre can be shifted to force students to experiment with tone and also the creative ways in which they 'use' the terms themselves. This could begin with a study of the 'house-styles' of various publications.	Learner Resource 9 ▶ Click here

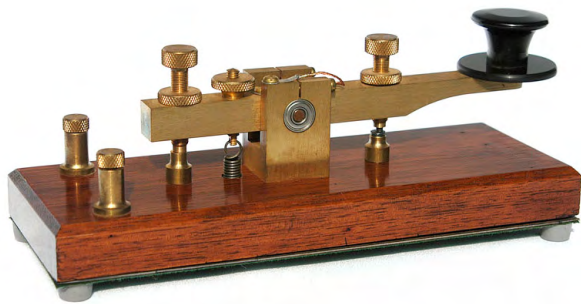| Activities	Resources
12. Style, style, style! The students need to consider not only what they're aiming at, but what they're avoiding. They should also be aware of stylistic differences between genre-requirements and audience needs. This genre and audience will be specified in each exam series and this will require students to adapt accordingly. This lesson activity, which is not dissimilar to Activity 3, asks students to pick apart the style of various extracts of writing on language that are found in Learner Resource 10. Students could attempt to 'take back-bearings' from the language features and predict the GAP for each one. A = The Guardian B = Slate Blog C = Daily Mail D = The Plain English Society E = Reith Lecture 1996 Development activity: • The ideas/issues from one extract could be written in the style of another. This allows students to 'play' with various forms and practise their skill at adapting forms. • They could pick an issue from the texts and use it as a starting point for research into that issue. • Extract A is an ideal opportunity to encourage students to write a riposte to it, and other similar articles, which bemoan 'management speak'. This could include a consideration of asymmetrical power relationships in spoken interactions, Grice, and Brown and Levinson's work on politeness all of which, arguably, are part of the motivation behind such talk.	Learner Resource 10

Learner Resource 1 Technology's evil influence

The advent of new technology has often prompted doom-mongers to bemoan the erosion of the quality of the English language (and presumably others).

For each of the inventions below, imagine the potential influence it could have had on English speech and communication.

Try to write a couple of sentences/utterances in this affected speech.

The Telegraph: Developed by Morse (amongst others) in the first half of the 19th century, the telegraph sent electric signals from a transmitter to a receiver. This involved the use of Morse code and led to the development of telegraphese. To speed the sending of messages (and save costs when paying by the letter or word) an abbreviated style developed in which many function words were omitted. See the example below from Orville Wright (17/12/1903):

Success four flights thursday morning all against twenty one mile wind started from Level with engine power alone average speed through air thirty one miles longest 57 seconds inform Press home Christmas . Orevelle Wright

The telephone: First patented by Alexander Graham Bell in 1876, this device allowed for…well, phone calls. Two people who can't see each other talking.

How might it have changed the way people speak? Think about salutations and valedictions. Consider the discourse structure of a phone call.

Radio and TV: The radio predates the television by almost 100 years but both were embedded in British culture by the mid-20th century. Both allowed for mass, one-way communication of information and entertainment and, latterly, the mass communication of American sitcoms and chat-shows.

This one might be easier if you consider the changing content of TV and radio in the last 20–30 years.

Txt Mssgs: The old kind when you could only write 140 characters and each message would cost you 12p! Have some LOLs with this one and your response should be Gr8.

Seriously though, consider the effect of texting on both spoken language and orthography.

Learner Resource 2

Use the table below to fill in your ideas.

Technology:	
Key language features associated with this device	
Potential influence on language	
Evidence of influence on language today	

Learner Resource 3 Newspeak

Below are examples of an invented language (based on English) which was designed to simplify communication and prevent people thinking things which were 'harmful'.

Your task is to identify the rules of this language from the examples given below.

> **Doubleplusgood**   **speedful**   **goodwise**
>
> **stealed**   **postthinked**   **goodest**
>
> **Goodthink**   **crimethink**   **duckspeak**   **bellyfeel**
>
> **Goodthinkful**   **malreported**   **antefiling**
>
> **Plusfull**   **constructionwise**   **facecrime**   **badful**
>
> **Runned**   **refs**   **unperson**   **uncold**   **unfull**
>
> *Instruction to an editor to fix a news report:* **reporting bb dayorder doubleplusungood refs unperson rewrite fullwise upsub antefiling**

Once you've identified the rules of the language, have a go at writing a few sentences describing the lesson or your day so far.

Learner Resource 4 Newspeak explained

Newspeak is featured in George Orwell's dystopian novel *1984*. The purpose of Newspeak, in the novel, is to replace English as the official language of the fictional state Oceania. The aim is to simplify language and prevent users expressing or even thinking ideas which could go against the state ideals. At the time of the novel, the Newspeak dictionary has been revised several times to reduce the number of words. Fewer words mean fewer thoughts and greater control.

The vocabulary iss split into three areas (those of you with a mind for wider reading could look up how this system mirrors CK Ogden's 1930s language concept of Basic English):

- A: Concrete physical things
- B: Political words
- C: Scientific or technical words

All words in the language function as both nouns and verbs which reduces the need for many words currently in English. For example, 'knife' is both the noun and verb which removes the need for the English verb 'cut'.

Compounding of available words allows for new inventions (although these are mostly in the B vocabulary). "Goodthink" thus means a thought which is good and the act of thinking good thoughts.

A limited number of prefixes and suffixes are used to alter class and meaning.

Prefixes:

- Un- which negates the meaning of the word to which it is attached. For example, 'cold' becomes 'uncold'. Incidentally, this removes the need for 'warm' in the vocabulary.
- Ante- means before.
- Plus- is an intensifier.
- Doubleplus- adds greater emphatic stress.

Suffixes:

- -ful which is used to create adjectives.
- -ed which is the only permissible past tense (the irregular past tense having been abolished).
- -wise which is used to create adverbs.

Section	Content	Language (these are options not a checklist)
Headline 2 mins	Sum up the key issue of the debate in one line. This needs to 'hook' the reader and clearly show which side you're on (you're against this by the way). If this doesn't come to you quickly, leave it until the end. Try phrases like: *LOLz* *those infernal machines* *we're all DOOMED*	Pun/humour Statistic Shocking fact Quotation Intertextuality
Opening: Hook, hook, hook 5 mins	Begin with an analogy. Try using these phrases to help. *'Technology' for our cavemen cousins…* *Early technophobes…* *Loss of the art of…* *Before you know it…*	Humour/sarcasm Hyperbole Synthetic personalisation Minor sentence
Define the scope of the debate 5 mins	What is technology? Pick the area you're going to focus on because you can't do it all. We will focus (somewhat out-datedly) on txt spk. *Throughout time people have worried…* *The advent of texting (or txting)…* *A wave of hysteria about…* *Emoticons/emojis…* *Bad grammar…awful spelling* *Textese*	Exemplification including acronyms, initialisms, emoticons and elliptical grammar Semantic field of texting Declarative mood (mostly)
Accept and debunk 5 mins	Explore why people think it and why they're wrong. To do this you'll need to link back to your earlier analogy and other technology. *Vandalising the English language* *A haven for illiterates* *Degradation of language* *What about the telegram* *Unfounded fears of the uninitiated* *Abbreviations, according to one study, account for a mere 6% of all texts*	Emotive language Passive voice Parallelism Antithesis or juxtaposition Analogy Statistics

Learner Resource 5

Section	Content	Language (these are options not a checklist)
Counter-argue 10 mins (2 paragraphs)	Present your case. You've said why they're wrong so why are you right? Why is technology good? Your two points are: Language creativity has always been the driving force behind all change. Where would we be without Shakespeare's idioms? …Still bemoan the loss of –eth and thy and thou… Are we all powering our toys with accumulators not batteries? What would you call the Internet without… You have to know the rules to break them and brevity is nothing new Abbreviation has existed as long as language *IOU is from the seventeenth century* *Adam 4 Eve is…well not that old* *No-one visits the veterinarian after their dog gets caught in a refrigerator* *Brevity is the soul of wit and not just a lazy g*t*	Logical structure: Present your argument, exemplify, explain, conclude (in each section) Interrogatives Authority voices Humour/puns/irony Exemplification (feel free to use your own)
Draw it all together 5 mins	Restate your case persuasively. Prove you're right. *So, how can it be said…* *If texting is ruining…* *Embrace the present…* *If it's good enough for Shakespeare…* *The doom-mongers may say…*	Get your rhetorical guns out and…FIRE!
Pithy one-liner 3 mins	You're on your own. Sum yourself up in one line.	Aaaaaand stop. You're done. You have five minutes to check it, change it and move on.

END OF HUMAN RIGHTS FARCE

Fracked off
North-East fury over Southern peer's slur on our countryside

BULGING BRITAIN'S FATNESS EPIDEMIC

WHAT A BURKHA

KILLER STORM TO HIT UK
Philippines typhoon set to batter Britain
EXCLUSIVE

SATAN SYMBOL ON CHEST

BOY, 4 HAS MARK OF DEVIL
Sinister . . . mystery mark on Samuel

EXCLUSIVE

100 UK TERROR ATTACKS SMASHED EVERY WEEK
Isis plots to murder Brits
STAR
SPECIAL REPORT

SUPER PILL IS KEY TO LIVING LONGER

Learner Resource 7 The ABC of discussion

Introduce your point:

The crucial point to make about this debate is…because of…

Moreover, it is clear that…

Finally, considering my previous points…

Agree:

I agree with that point because, as you said…

The example you gave really made clear…

Build:

Your point is good and I agree with your examples. In addition to that, have you also considered…

This point further strengthens…

Challenge

Your point, whilst persuasive, is not one I can agree with.

You need to consider…because…

Furthermore…

See page 16

Night	**Dumb**
Fight	**Debt**
Knight	**Psychology**

Cough	**Bough**
Through	**Though**

Ghoti

Color	**Theater**	**Center**
Analyze	**Traveled**	**Catalog**

As everyone always says, a letter needs a beginning, middle and end. Much of the time, your letter should start 'Thank you for your letter of 15 April' and certainly not 'I acknowledge receipt of...', 'I am in receipt of...' or 'Further to your recent....'.

The European Commission has announced an agreement whereby English will be the official language of the EU, rather than German, which was the other contender. Her Majesty's Government conceded that English spelling had room for improvement and has therefore accepted a five-year phasing in of "Euro-English".

In the first year, "s" replaces the soft "c". Sertainly, this will make sivil servants jump for joy. The hard "c" will be dropped in favour of the "k", Which should klear up some konfusion and allow one key less on keyboards.

There will be growing publik enthusiasm in the sekond year, when the troublesome "ph" will be replaced with "f", making words like "fotograf" 20% shorter.

In the third year, publik akseptanse of the new spelling kan be expekted to reach the stage where more komplikated changes are possible. Governments will enkourage the removal of double letters which have always ben a deterent to akurate speling. Also, al wil agre that the horible mes of the silent "e" is disgrasful.

By the fourth yer, peopl wil be reseptiv to steps such as replasing "th" with "z" and "w" with "v".

During ze fifz yer, ze unesesary "o" kan be dropd from vords kontaining "ou" and similar changes vud of kors be aplid to ozer kombinations of leters. After zis fifz yer, ve vil hav a reli sensibl riten styl. Zer vil be no mor trubls or difikultis and everivun vil find it ezi to understand ech ozer. ZE DREM VIL FINALI COM TRU!

The following is the etymology of the word f*ck (abridged from the *Online Etymology Dictionary*). In it, the word f*ck is printed with standard orthography.

Before you read it, try to explain why this introduction uses 'f*ck' even though just a few lines down the uncensored version appears.

fuck (v.)

"to have sexual intercourse with" (transitive), until recently a difficult word to trace in usage, in part because it was omitted as taboo by the editors of the original OED when the "F" entries were compiled (1893–97). Johnson also had excluded the word, and *fuck* wasn't in a single English language dictionary from 1795 to 1965. "The Penguin Dictionary" broke the taboo in the latter year.

Written form attested from early 16c.; OED 2nd edition cites 1503, in the form *fukkit*, and the earliest attested appearance of current spelling is 1535 ("Bischops ... may *fuck* thair fill and be vnmaryit" [Sir David Lyndesay, "*Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaits*"]). Presumably it is a more ancient word, but one not written in the kind of texts that have survived from Old English and Middle English. The word apparently is hinted at in a scurrilous 15c. poem, titled "*Flen flyys*," written in bastard Latin and Middle English. The relevant line reads:
Non sunt in celi
quia fuccant uuiuys of heli

"They [the monks] are not in heaven because they fuck the wives of [the town of] Ely." *Fuccant* is pseudo-Latin, and in the original it is written in cipher. The earliest examples of the word otherwise are from Scottish, which suggests a Scandinavian origin, perhaps from a word akin to Norwegian dialectal *fukka* "copulate," or Swedish dialectal *focka* "copulate, strike, push," and *fock* "penis."

OED remarks that these "cannot be shown to be related" to the English word. Liberman has this to say:

Germanic words of similar form (f + vowel + consonant) and meaning 'copulate' are numerous. One of them is G. *ficken*. They often have additional senses, especially 'cheat,' but their basic meaning is 'move back and forth.' ... Most probably, *fuck* is a borrowing from Low German.

Fuck was outlawed in print in England (by the Obscene Publications Act, 1857) and the U.S. (by the Comstock Act, 1873). The word continued in common speech, however. During World War I: "It became so common that an effective way for the soldier to express this emotion was to omit this word. Thus if a sergeant said, 'Get your ----ing rifles!' it was understood as a matter of routine. But if he said 'Get your rifles!' there was an immediate implication of urgency and danger."

The abbreviation *F* (or *eff*) probably began as euphemistic, but by 1943 it was regarded as a cuss word in its own right. In 1948, the publishers of "The Naked and the Dead" persuaded Norman Mailer to use the euphemism *fug*. When Mailer later was introduced to Dorothy Parker, she greeted him with, "So you're the man who can't spell 'fuck'" [The quip sometimes is attributed to Tallulah Bankhead]. Hemingway used *muck* in "For Whom the Bell Tolls" (1940). Related: *Fucked*; *fucking*. *Fuck-all* "nothing" first recorded 1960. Verbal phrase *fuck up* "to ruin, spoil, destroy" is attested from c.1916. A widespread group of Slavic words (such as Polish *pierdolić*) can mean both "fornicate" and "make a mistake." *Fuck off* attested from 1929; as a command to depart, by 1944. Egyptian legal agreements from the 23rd Dynasty (749–21 B.C.E.) frequently include the phrase, "If you do not obey this decree, may a donkey copulate with you!" [Reinhold Aman, "Maledicta," Summer 1977].

fuck (n.)

1670s, "an act of sexual intercourse," from *fuck* (v.). From 1874 in coarse slang sense "a woman (considered in sexual terms);" from 1929 as something one doesn't give when one doesn't care. *Flying fuck* originally meant "sex had on horseback" and is first attested c.1800 in broadside ballad "New Feats of Horsemanship."

Task: Trace the etymology of other taboo lexis in the English language. Think too about words which are no longer offensive (bloody, bugger (arguably), termagant) and see if you can identify why they lost their power to shock.

Below are extracts of writing on language that have been professionally produced. Annotate each one to identify the linguistic features that contribute to the style of each piece.

A
Management speak top-ten

Among the most spirit-sapping indignities of office life is the relentless battering of workers' ears by the strangled vocabulary of management-speak. It might even seem to some innocent souls as though all you need to do to acquire a high-level job is to learn its stultifying jargon. Bureaucratese is a maddeningly viral kind of Unspeak engineered to deflect blame, complicate simple ideas, obscure problems, and perpetuate power relations. Here are some of its most dismaying manifestations.

1 Going forward

Top of many people's hate list is this now-venerable way of saying "from now on" or "in future". It has the rhetorical virtue of wiping clean the slate of the past (perhaps because "mistakes were made"), and implying a kind of thrustingly strategic progress.

B
What gets lost when English becomes the lingua franca of the Internet, and the world?

The Fall of Language in the Age of English, by the Japanese novelist and scholar Minae Mizumura, has all the ingredients of a rage-read. Indeed, when it was published in Japan in 2008, it **infuriated commentators**, who dismissed Mizumura as "reactionary," "jingoistic," or "elitist" and swarmed across Amazon deleting positive reviews. More than 65,000 copies have sold since then – which suggests the slender work's declinist soothsaying continues to touch a nerve. The book appears this month in English (enemy territory!), where – if we Yanks could be trusted to read something first penned in a non-Western tongue – it would likely inspire more umbrage, more name-calling, more amorphous unease.

C
Why do the English need to speak a foreign language when foreigners all speak English?

My roots read like a World Cup draw. My half-Welsh father was born and spent his boyhood in Argentina and thus speaks Spanish almost as naturally as English. My mother's family are Norwegian.

Given this absurdly multi-lingual background, you might think I'd be distraught at hearing that 380,000 teenagers in England did not take a single language at GCSE last year. Department for Education figures show that fewer and fewer of us are learning a foreign language, while more and more foreigners are becoming multi-lingual. This, say distraught commentators, will condemn us pathetic Little Englanders to a live of dismal isolation while our educated, sophisticated, Euro-competitors chat away to foreign customers and steal all our business as a result.

In fact, I think those pupils who don't learn other languages are making an entirely sensible decision. Learning foreign languages is a pleasant form of intellectual self-improvement: a genteel indulgence like learning to embroider or play the violin. A bit of French or Spanish comes in handy on holiday if you're the sort of person who likes to reassure the natives that you're more sophisticated than the rest of the tourist herd. But there's absolutely no need to learn any one particular language unless you've got a specific professional use for it.

D
Management speak

Apart from the usual business jargon and gobbledygook (plenty of examples of which you will find elsewhere on this site), offices up and down the country, and indeed across the world, resound with corporate 'management speak', or 'marketing speak'.

Management speak is typically used to make something seem more impressive than it actually is.

Last year, a survey revealed that many staff who work for big corporate organisations find themselves using management speak as a way of disguising the fact that they haven't done their job properly. Some people think that it is easy to bluff their way through by using long, impressive-sounding words and phrases, even if they don't know what they mean.

Below is a list of some of our 'favourite' examples. ballpark figure; be proactive not reactive

E
Is our language in decay?

Is our language sick? You might think so, judging from the complaints: "The standard of speech and pronunciation in England has declined so much ... that one is almost ashamed to let foreigners hear it," moaned a writer in a daily newspaper. "The language the world is crying out to learn is diseased in its own country" ranted another.

But why? English is a major world language: is it really in need of hospital treatment? A cobweb of old ideas ensnares people as they think about language - any language, and this must be swept away. Webs, especially cobwebs, may entangle. But webs themselves are not a tangle. They have a pattern. Nature forces humans to weave the language web in a particular way, whatever language they speak. We are free only within a preset framework. I'll be looking at some key topics, how language changes, how it began, how children learn it, and how we remember words.

But first, the cobweb of worries must be removed. This envelopes all of language, though especially language change. Change is one thing. Decay is another. Is British English really changing for the worse, as some people argue?

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