

Support Material

GCE English Language

OCR Advanced GCE in English Language: H469

Unit: F653

This Support Material booklet is designed to accompany the OCR Advanced GCE specification in English Language for teaching from September 2008.

Contents

Contents	2
F653 Guidance for Centres	3
Language and Speech – compulsory section	4
The Language of Popular Written Texts – optional section	5
Language and Cultural Production – optional section	6
Language, Power and Identity – optional section	7
Appropriate Terminology in F653	8
Further Reading	9

F653 Guidance for Centres

This guide is prepared to help centres in planning for the A2 theory papers. It is meant to give additional information to experienced teacher/lecturers who might wish to expand their teaching of the topic areas. It is also of particular value to the NQT's or those having to teach the OCR specification for the first time. It is not intended as a document telling centres how to teach the subject. However in offering guidance, it does suggest methods for selecting materials and organising approaches to each topic.

The four topic areas which make up the examination paper are:

Language and Speech
The Language of Popular Written Texts
Language and Cultural Production
Language, Power and Identity

Candidates moving from the AS to A2 level of study will be expected to show a deeper knowledge and understanding of the following linguistic frameworks:

- Phonology/phonetics
- Lexis
- Grammar and Syntax
- Morphology
- Discourse

In addition they will also be required to demonstrate understanding of how mode of production, and context, including time and place, can affect both the form of the language used and its meanings. These studies will be synthesised in essay based answers, so covering the necessary synoptic assessment. There is no specific study of historical linguistics in the paper. In order to meet the demand of change over time passages can be set in any part of the examination reflecting older forms of English. Such passages will not be drawn from materials pre-dating 1850.

Language and Speech – compulsory section

In the examination passage based materials will be set. Passages will be dated and given a basic context. The material in the passages will draw candidates' attention to debates, issues, attitudes and technical aspects of spoken English. Candidates will be expected to use this material as a base for developing essays in relation to the set questions. These essays, as far as possible, should be objective and be supported by some basic phonemic illustration. A set of IPA symbols will be printed on the examination paper. Whilst there are clearly many complex social aspects of speech in English, candidates will need guidance in negotiating the basics of technical language, which will be needed to support methodical commentary.

In this question detailed analysis of the lexis, syntax and grammar of the set passages is not required. Nor will candidates be expected to write sentences transcribed phonemically. In order to help candidate gain confidence in this approach the following strategies should prove useful:

- Candidates will require basic guidance and practice in using a few phonemic symbols.
- Candidates will need to hear a wide range of spoken voices, to include dialect speech.
- They will need some introduction to the basic history of RP and be able to recognise it is not 'fixed' as an accent.
- Some basic introduction to the phenomenon of Estuary English with illustration.

Should time and staffing allow, further developments in teaching might include:

- A very brief introduction to articulatory phonetics.
- A basic introduction to prosodics/suprasegmental aspects of speech.
- Work where specific sounds of a local dialect can be compared to the conventions of RP.
- Instruction in how to use a vowel quadrilateral.

Practice in some kinds of investigative writing around the following kinds of topics would help prepare for formal analytical essays:

- What is 'good' speech and who says what it is?
- What is happening to modern RP?
- To what extent is Estuary English affecting speech patterns in the UK?
- Why are some accents more popular than others?
- In what ways do the popular media affect patterns of speaking?
- What specific technical features of 'bad speech' seem to worry people who write angry letters about it?

Such topics invite research, careful listening and limited wider reading. They also help candidates to write focused and objective responses to the academic demands of the questions.

The Language of Popular Written Texts – optional section

In the examination passage based materials will be set. Passages will be dated and given a basic context. They are likely to have some kind of thematic linkage. The materials will be drawn from varieties of popular writing and candidates will need to analyse the lexis, grammar, syntax and discoursal features of the passages. If speech occurs in the passages this could require some sort of technical commentary. Whilst a precise definition of popular is difficult, the Specification lists some of the possible types of writing which could appear on the paper. It is not anticipated that candidates need to be aware of any kind of literary approach to this type of stylistic study. In order to help candidates gain experience in basic stylistic analysis the following approaches could be helpful:

- What are the broad general characteristics of particular kinds of writing?
Examples could be drawn from both fiction and non fiction. Candidates can also offer genres outside of formal English set texts with which they are familiar.
- What kinds of things in the text might make it popular?
- What are the major linguistic differences between factual and fictive writing?
- Why is journalism considered a popular kind of writing?
- In what ways are popular books marketed/advertised?
- What, if any, are the differences between popular texts written for females as opposed to those ostensibly written for males?
- What kinds of writing is popular for younger audiences/what are its linguistic constituents?

Should time and staff interest allow, the following could be valuable further research directed activities:

- Study of popular writing which explores sub-cultures and visually supported narratives.
- Study of writing which employs non-standard English/dialect/idiolects
- Study of writing exploring the power and importance of metaphorical language
- Study of the creation of the authorial voice or the narrator.
- Study of the effects of the digital media upon popular writing and such ideas as print-on-demand.

Such broader approaches can make the application of formal stylistic commentary and analysis easier to apply and also ensures some kinds of wider reading and research. There are possible overlaps between this topic and some aspects of the F654 paper.

Language and Cultural Production – optional section

In the examination passage based materials will be set. Passages will be dated and given a basic context. They are likely to have some kind of thematic linkage. As the Specification indicates cultural production covers a range of media industries which will include the ever expanding one of the digital media. Candidates will need to analyse the lexis, grammar, syntax and discoursal features of the topic. Since all the media will have played a significant part in candidates' lives it will be important that centres adopt strategies which clearly allow candidates to look at what is written and how it is written, rather than to engage in more generalised media studies. Since advertising is so invasive, it offers a possibly fruitful route into the topic:

- What kinds of voices and speech introduce specific advertisements?
- How far is self-referencing and intertextuality a linguistic feature of advertisements?
- What is market-speak/writing?
- What kinds of writing occurs in public relations and press releases?
- Does advertising still use language which discriminates between genders?
- How do celebrities and personalities sell themselves to us?

Further activities which could broaden the scope of the topic and assist candidates in some kind of research and wider reading could come under the following:

- How do modern visual media make use of the written word? Examples can be drawn from film and television and such artefacts as comic books and illustrated texts.
- In linguistic terms what does 'the power of the media' mean?
- Web pages are an ever expanding way of exploiting digital technology. In what ways do web pages 'offer and ever broadening range of linguistic features'?
- In what ways do magazine exploit 'linguistic divergence' in their contents?
- How do technologies like Twitter, Facebook and various chatrooms allow participants to engage in language variations?
- What comparisons might be made between a range of linguistic features in media productions made forty years ago and those of today?

Approaches which are driven by some of the above will ensure that candidates are able to apply apposite linguistic terminology in essays. It will also encourage research and wider reading. There is also a possible overlap with some aspects of work being followed in F654.

Language, Power and Identity – optional section

In the examination passage based materials will be set. Passages will be dated and given a basic context. They are likely to have some kind of thematic linkage. Candidates will need to apply the same range of linguistic constituents to this topic as in all others. Sociological essays, with limited application of formal language analysis, will not provide a substantial enough analytical framework. Candidates will benefit from guidance in closely examining a range of examples from language used in a variety of professional, cultural and general social situations. This could be taken from the exclusive lexis of professional writing/speech. It should include a wide range of journalistic models. It could include close dissection of differing languages deemed politically correct/incorrect. It might introduce candidates to vox-pops/demotic languages. The language of press releases and marketing would also prove fruitful areas of research. Some of the materials for this subject could prove contentious and will need a little sensitivity in organising. Centres should avoid preparing candidates for a potentially narrow topic like one aspect of gender construction. Centres should also remember that analysis of the spoken is a significant aspect of both power and identity and candidates will need to be prepared should examples appear in the examination paper. The following broad topics are likely to offer the critical frameworks suitable for A2 level work:

- Social groupings – the family, school, friendship, ethnic identity, social class.
- Authority groupings – the law/legal system, institutional power and privilege, professional groups.
- Age difference – the young and old.
- Status – beauty, wealth, celebrity styles, economics of capital and consumption.
- Gender – how have the configurations of gender changed?
- In what ways does image-construction control and manipulate our identities?
- Does the written/spoken language have the same power and authority in a world dominated by image production?

Adaptation and reconstituting any of the above should provide the kinds of reading necessary to enhance students' analytical abilities and the need to find a technical register of linguistics appropriate for writing about the topic. There is also the possibility of work in this topic having an overlap with preparation for F654.

Appropriate Terminology in F653

The technical terminology of linguistics is huge. Candidates will need to learn to use some of it in textual analysis, especially since this is a requirement of the Assessment Objectives. As usual, caution is needed in helping candidates move beyond the simplicities of 'Parts of Speech' to a more mature illustration of linguistic theory. The following seem to have reasonable authority and does conform to the broad expectations of A2 language standards. It is therefore anticipated the **some** of the following should appear in the answers depending upon the specific questions:

Phonology

- Simple phonemic illustration recognising such vowels as monophthong and diphthong
- Use of a basic vowel quadrilateral
- Identification of schwa vowel
- Identification of glottalisation
- Basic elements of stress/intonation in selected words

Grammar – General Features of Narrative

- Anaphoric and cataphoric referencing
- Textual cohesion
- Collocations in word choices
- Colloquial, idiolectic and sociolectic syntax
- Connotations and denotations
- Discourse features – how the text functions beyond sentence level. Also the ideological ways in which a subject is addressed.
- Discourse markers – how linguistic features give clues about specific discourses. A very good example is used in speeches: "My lords, ladies and gentlemen".

Grammar – Beyond the Simple Parts of Speech

- Abstract and concrete nouns
- Active and passive voice
- The use of verb auxiliaries, especially modals
- Clause structures
- Direct and indirect speech/free indirect speech
- Disjunctive syntax – very common in e-based communications
- The full range of pronoun inflections
- Ellipsis and elision in the syntax.

Suggestions for Further Reading

Since 'wider reading' is part of the AO3 objectives, centres should consider how far they can increase candidates' exploration of the subject area. Many books on linguistics are highly technical and not aimed at the A-level market. Some of those produced for A-level are geared to a particular examination syllabus; or present information which is of questionable academic value to the OCR Specification. The following limited range of titles can be used by both teachers/lecturers and students with a considerable degree of assurance:

- Crystal, D. *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of the English Language*
- Crystal, D. *Language and the Internet* (Cambridge University Press)
- Crystal, D. *Rediscover Grammar* (Longman)
- Carter, R. *Working with Texts, A Core Book for Language Analysis* (Routledge). Also the inter-text series by the same publishers, a range of satellite titles linked to language studies. Some are relevant to the OCR paper. Centres need to note the quality and variability of approaches of individual titles, suggesting caution and inspection before purchase.

Titles for teachers/lecturers

Wells, JC. *Longmans Pronunciation Dictionary (with CD)*

Trudgill, P. *The Dialects of English* (Oxford, Blackwell)

Montgomery and Fabb. *Ways of Reading* (Routledge) Although produced for English literature students this text can be invaluable for language studies. It is often more incisive than the inter texts and has some material therein which makes excellent practice for classroom language work.

The growth of information on the internet should provide much help to candidates. Websites range from the idiosyncratic to the magisterial British Library Sound Archives. Online dictionaries thrive and sites dealing with regional and dialect usage are accessible. With such a growing range, no specific sites are recommended. If centres do need more guidance in resources they should contact OCR directly.