A LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Exam Board: AQA

Sixth Form

What's my starting point?

If you love words, are fascinated by how people communicate, and want to uncover the hidden power of language, then A Level English Language is the course for you!
This isn't just an extension of GCSE English - it's an adventure into the living, evolving world of language. You'll explore how English is shaped by history, culture, identity, and technology. From analysing real conversations and political speeches to decoding personal letters, social media posts and journal entries, you'll start to see language not as fixed, but as a reflection of who we are.
Over two years, you'll delve into the mechanics of communication - lexis, semantics, grammar, pragmatics - and discover how every word choice tells a story. You'll learn how children acquire language, how it changes over time, and how it can be used to persuade, connect, and divide.
Be ready to read widely, think deeply, and debate passionately. You'll develop the tools of a linguist, gaining insights that stretch far beyond the classroom - into media, society, and everyday life.
To embark on this journey, you'll need at least a Grade 6 in both English Language and English Literature, and a Grade 5 in Mathematics.

What will I study?

AQA A Level English Language invites you to uncover the hidden patterns, power plays and personal stories behind the words we use every day. This is your chance to become a true language detective, exploring how English shifts, adapts and reflects the world around us.
As part of your Paper 1 studies, you'll dive into a wide range of real-world texts - from social media posts and news articles to political speeches, adverts, transcripts and podcasts - and analyse how language changes depending on audience, purpose and context.
In preparation for Paper 2, you'll explore diversity and change within the English Language.
For example, you will explore accents and dialects across the UK, investigating how people's speech reveals their identity, background and belonging.
You will also examine how language can represent, include or exclude, and how it's used to construct identity, influence audiences and challenge stereotypes.
The course also takes you through time: tracing the evolution of English from Old English to emojis, and exploring the fascinating process of child language acquisition - how we move from babbling babies to confident communicators.
In your independent language investigation, you'll become a researcher, choosing a topic that excites you, from gendered language on social media to regional slang, political rhetoric or generational differences in speech. You'll also craft a piece of original writing – an opinion article - using your linguistic knowledge to shape your own voice.
By the end, you'll not only have sharpened your analytical skills, but also developed a deeper understanding of how language reflects and reshapes our world.

How will I be assessed?

There are 2 end-of-course examinations:
Paper 1 – Language and the Individual (40%)
Paper 2 – Language Varieties (40%)

Students are also required to submit a Non-Examined Assessment (NEA) portfolio worth 20% of their final grade.

English Language combines well with…

A Level English Language combines brilliantly with other subjects that explore communication and society. Psychology links through the study of how we think and acquire language, while Sociology reveals how language reflects identity, class and culture. Media Studies sharpens your awareness of how language shapes meaning and influences audiences. History enriches your understanding of how English evolves, and Modern Languages offers insight into linguistic diversity. Together, these subjects create a dynamic, interdisciplinary view of how language connects the world.