



Linguistics A Level: Instructions for Transition Work

First of all, a preliminary 'Welcome' to Linguistics A Level. This transition work is a great way to start getting excited about the course ahead and to get a flavour of what the independent study of Linguistics feels like. We think you're going to really enjoy some of the tasks we've selected for you as they'll allow you access to a world of texts far beyond the restrictions of GCSE. If you don't enjoy this transition work then it's a pretty good indicator that this course isn't for you and you need to have a serious re-think.

*It's worth you having a Linguistics folder so that you can keep all of your work safe, ready to bring it into school when the course starts.

Task 1: Read!

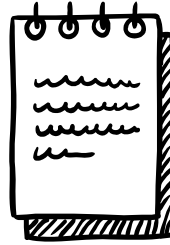
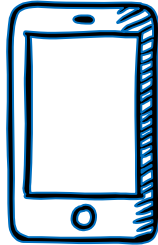
One of the best things you can do to prepare for Linguistics A level is to read and keep your eyes open for anything to do with language in the media. A newspaper article about accents in the work place, tweets about gender, blogs on new words, adverts aimed at teenagers... anything to do with language in the real world!

There have been some great articles and investigations in to the new language that has emerged from the Covid pandemic – really worth an explore!

The following blogs, websites and people to follow on Twitter are a great starting point to set you off paying more attention to real language in the real world:

Twitter:

@wordspinster
@EngLangBlog
@davcr
@VyvEvans
@tonythorne007



Websites:

www.englishlangsfx.blogspot.com/

Written by Dan Clayton at St Francis Xavier College; provides excellent materials and discussions, plus lots of links to other relevant sites.

<http://www.universalteacher.org.uk/>

Lots of invaluable information on all aspects of your Linguistics course.

<http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk/>

Lancaster Uni Language and Linguistics site. Enormous. They have a specific A Level site within this and loads of resources.

<http://www.geoffbarton.co.uk/>

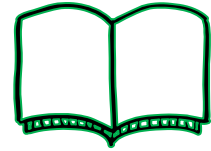
useful site which covers many aspects of the course.

<http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/>

Very good for dialects, phonology.

<https://www.diplomacy.edu/blog/language-time-coronavirus-crisis-uk-case-study>

Transition tasks



Activities are from the **Leaping into Language Guide**.

This guide, produced by The English and Media Centre, is brilliant and has 19 different activities included! There is a resource and audio file pack which you will need for some of the tasks.

You are welcome to browse all of them and try as many as you like, but you will need to complete task 7 (Textercise) and then either task 4 (Do We Need New Words) or task 5 (Language Fingerprints).



Task 7: Textercise:

This activity gives you eight texts. You need to read them all, choose three to work on specifically and then answer the questions on your chosen three.

Once you have answered the questions, you need to find 3-5 of your own varied set of texts from the world around you.

Like the texts in the guide, your texts could be written, spoken, online, serious, silly, informative, clever and/or important. Then use the same questions to help you think about them. We will discuss these various texts on transition day.

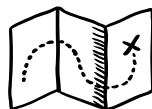
Either Task 4: New Words:



The English language is always generating new words. New words can be created out of nothing (**neologisms**) or be formed by using other words – or parts of words – together in new combinations (what are called **compounds** e.g. football and **blends** e.g. smog/ brunch). Sometimes initials of words in a phrase might be used (**acronyms** e.g. radio / NASA and **initialisms** e.g. GCSEs) and you might also see parts of words being added to the front or end of another word to give it a new form (**prefixes** e.g. metrosexual and **suffixes** e.g. racism. sexism). Most A Level English Language courses look at how and why new words are formed, but there is also debate about whether we need new words and when (or whether) they should appear in dictionaries.

For this task, you have a table of some new words to read and then make notes on - in response to some questions.

Or Task 5: Language Fingerprints:



As you learn more about language use, you'll start to see that everybody has their own unique language style. Lots of things influence this – where we're from, how old we are, the type of work we do and our interests, our family backgrounds and our own individual personalities – but we all have what's called an **idiolect** (an individual language style). It's not quite the same as a fingerprint, but there are some similarities. And while detectives can use fingerprints to track down individuals, **forensic linguists** can also use this idea of individual language style to identify people, or aspects of a person's background.

This activity puts you in the role of a language detective trying to solve a crime. The police need your help to work out who might have sent an abusive social media message from an anonymous account to a local politician. They have three suspects in custody and your job is to offer a view on which one you think is most likely to have sent the message, based on possible language clues.