

This is an introductory exercise to get you thinking about your own experiences with language and to hear about the experiences of others when you start your course in September.

Babyhood

- 1) What do you know about how you learned to talk? What was your first word and how old were you when you said it? Did you go on to have favourite phrases that you repeated again and again?
- 2) If you are bilingual, which language did you learn to speak first? Did you mix up the two languages? Who spoke English to you and who spoke your other language?
- 3) Can you remember being taught nursery rhymes or being told stories? Which were your favourites and why?

Early Childhood

- 4) Do you remember learning to read? Think back to Infants' School. Did your coat peg have a name or picture on it? Did you have name tags on your clothes? Could you read your name?
- 5) Did you work through reading schemes like 'Biff and Chip'? Did you learn to read letter by letter or did you learn whole words? What did you find easy or difficult about reading? How did you feel about reading aloud?
- 6) Think back to learning to write. Were you taught to use a particular style of handwriting? Were you right or left-handed? What type of comments did the teacher write on your work?

Secondary School

- 7) How would you rate your speaking and listening skills during secondary school? Did you participate in class discussion or were you held back by, for example, shyness? What type of spoken work did you do at GCSE?
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- 8) What sort of accent did you have at school? Did your parents or teachers ever criticise or try to change the way you spoke? Did you ever move schools? If so, did you find that you spoke differently from the other children? How did they, and you, react?
- 9) If you are bilingual, what was happening to your command of two languages at this time? Was English beginning to dominate? Did you speak different languages to different people? Did you see being bilingual as an advantage?
- 10) How did your language skills progress through secondary school? Can you remember any turning points? Eg. your GCSE Speaking and Listening assessment; earning a particularly good mark for an essay.

Now

- 11) How do you rate your language skills at present? How would you describe your accent? Do you feel you are judged by the way you speak? Do you ever change the way you speak according to where you are and who you are speaking to? If you are bilingual, what factors influence your choice of language?
 - 12) Why have you chosen to study English Language A Level? What do you expect to gain from the course?
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