

A-level English Language (7702)

Frequently Asked Questions v8.0 May 2016

| | |
|---|---|
| A-level English Language | 4 |
| Are A-level English Language (7702) exam papers marked holistically? | 4 |
| Has A-level Language moved away from data analysis and more into essay writing? | 4 |
| What are 'Electronic' texts? | 4 |
| To help students meet AO2 is there a definitive list of preferred theorists? | 5 |
| Are grade boundaries available? | 5 |
| Will you be providing any further example student answers? | 5 |
| Do you intend to offer any further specimen assessment material? | 6 |
| A-level Paper 1: Language, the individual and society | 6 |
| What is the suggested time allocation for each of the questions on A-level Paper 1? | 6 |
| How do students cover Assessment Objective AO2 and AO3 in A-level paper 1? | 6 |
| A-level Paper 1: Language, the individual and society - Section A: Textual variations and representations | 6 |
| Will the texts for Section A always be written texts or is there a chance one, at least, could be spoken? | 6 |
| In Section A, what is the specific teaching focus? Is it language change or it is language varieties? | 6 |
| For Section A of A-level Paper 1, the specification states that there will be two texts, one of which will be contemporary and one older. Does this mean there is overlap between Paper 1 and Paper 2 with the language change topic? | 7 |
| How old will the older texts be for A-level Paper 1? | 7 |
| Will there be a minimum or maximum time limit between texts? | 7 |
| What is the definition of representation and variation? | 7 |
| Do the two texts for Component 1 have to be linked by topic? | 7 |
| How will students avoid repeating some of the same information when answering question 3 having already analysed the texts? | 7 |
| A-level Paper 1: Language, the individual and society - Section B: Children's language development | 7 |
| The questions in Section B suggest a theory-led approach - should students be directed to explore the data and move outwards? | 8 |
| Will there always be spoken data and then written child language acquisition data (for literacy) on Section B? | 8 |
| What does 'multimodal' mean? | 8 |
| Will the data amount always be about the same as the exemplar? It seems there is a little less than in the legacy B specification so will it always be about the same length? | 8 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| In terms of teaching child language acquisition, as there is a lot to cover for a relatively small percentage of assessment, should we only cover one area of child language acquisition or would it still be recommended to cover all aspects? | 8 |
| A-level Paper 2: Language diversity and change | 8 |
| The example questions in the specimen paper seem to cover topics from past and present (change, accent and dialect etc). The idea of opening debate and discussion with students is exciting, but will there be parameters set of the topics the questions may be focused on? | 8 |
| Will students be discredited if they refer to older research? | 8 |
| A-level Paper 2: Language diversity and change - Section A: Diversity and change | 9 |
| As Questions 1 and 2 are just an essay, could you learn this before you go into the exam? | 9 |
| A-level Paper 2 Section A: Will question 1 always be gender? Will question 2 always be about worldwide language variety? | 9 |
| Is it advisable that we teach Diversity AND Change? | 9 |
| Will there be a more specific list for what comes under language diversity and change?..... | 9 |
| Why has the starting date for texts from different periods gone back to 1600? | 9 |
| In how much detail do you need to cover regional and national dialect? What about sociolects?..... | 9 |
| For A-level Paper 2 Section A Language diversity, should we be exploring written data with students alongside spoken data as we always have done in the past?..... | 10 |
| A-level Paper 2: Language diversity and change - Section B: Language Discourses | 10 |
| Will Question 3 always be on language change or could it also be on language diversity?..... | 10 |
| Will Question 4 of Paper 2 (the directed writing) always be an 'opinion article' or could there be another text type that is asked for? | 10 |
| Non-exam assessment: Language in action | 10 |
| The 20% non-exam assessment task looks very weighty (3 elements) and is the same as legacy Language coursework yet less weighting overall. | 10 |
| When do I teach the non-exam assessment component? Does it have to be in year 2 if I'm co-teaching?..... | 11 |
| For the NEA (original writing component) should the writing be about the power of, for example storytelling, or demonstrate the power of storytelling? | 11 |
| Is it okay for a student to focus their non-exam assessment on aspects of the specification that are covered by the examined papers (eg child language acquisition or language change)? | 11 |
| How are the marks distributed for each of the non-exam assessment tasks? | 11 |
| Word count: Will students be penalised for exceeding the word count?..... | 11 |
| Are quotes included in the word count? | 11 |
| How can I get help with non-exam assessment? | 11 |
| Do I need to get approval for the tasks I want to set for my students? | 11 |
| Will area moderation continue? | 12 |
| Will there be face-to-face teacher standardisation? | 12 |
| AS English Language | 12 |
| Are AS English Language (7701) exam papers marked holistically? | 12 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Do students need to know IPA in year 12? | 12 |
| What are 'Electronic' texts? | 12 |
| The assessment objective weightings for the AS seem over-complicated – why have these figures been chosen? | 12 |
| To help students meet AO2 is there a definitive list of preferred theorists? | 12 |
| Are grade boundaries available? | 13 |
| Will you be providing any further example student answers? | 13 |
| Do you intend to offer any further specimen assessment material? | 13 |
| AS Paper 1: Language and the individual | 14 |
| How do students cover Assessment Objective AO3 in AS paper 1? | 14 |
| Is Question 3 classed as separate from Question 1 and Question 2? Therefore, can students repeat analysis from the previous answers as long as they are comparing and contrasting? | 14 |
| For Question 3 can students use representation of the topic as a similarity/difference, e.g. in the specimen paper both texts represent prom as expensive and over the top – then can students go on to analyse how each text uses language to do this? | 14 |
| For Question 3 what things should students be comparing and contrasting? | 14 |
| In Question 3 can audience be identified as a difference? Then students can examine different language choices according to text receiver? | 15 |
| AS Paper 2: Language varieties | 15 |
| Will there be a more specific list for what comes under language diversity? | 15 |
| What do you need to cover for regional and national dialect? | 15 |
| Do we have to cover attitudes at AS level? | 15 |
| AS Paper 2: Language varieties – Section A: Language diversity | 15 |
| AS Paper 2 Section A: Will Question 1 always be occupation? Will Question 2 always be gender? Is it therefore a case of choosing which to teach? | 15 |
| For AS Paper 2 Section A Language diversity, should we be exploring written data with students alongside spoken data as we have always done in the past? | 16 |
| For AS Paper 2 Section A (Language diversity), could students be given a written text (such as an extract from fiction/an advert/a poster etc.) as their starting point for their essay? Or will it always be focussed on spoken language used and likely to be a transcript or table of data? | 16 |
| For Questions 1 and 2 on this paper it says 'use your own supporting examples' – is this referring to theory/case studies or students' actual own examples of language use? | 16 |
| AS Paper 2: Language varieties – Section B: Language discourses | 16 |
| AS Paper 2 Section B: Will Question 3 always be about English varieties in the UK? | 16 |
| For AS Paper 2 Section B, will students always be directed to write an opinion article? Or could they be asked to write in a different genre? | 16 |
| For AS Paper 2 Section B which publications are/are not acceptable models? | 17 |
| Co-teaching | 17 |
| What does co-teachable mean? | 17 |
| AS and A-level qualifications are now linear – what does that mean? | 17 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Will the AS and A-level exams be timetabled together? Will they be at different times? Will the exam be later in the summer? | 17 |
| Can the A-level be studied over 1 year, 2 years or 3 years? | 17 |
| Is the AS content different from the A-level? | 17 |
| Do students have to do the AS if they are intending to do A-level? | 18 |
| Should the new AS be studied over 1 or 2 years? | 18 |
| When do students need to make the decision to study either the AS or A-level? | 18 |
| Guided learning hours | 18 |
| Guided learning hours/Grading | 18 |
| Does Guided Learning Hours (GLH) include homework? | 18 |
| Support and resources | 18 |
| What teaching materials are available? | 18 |
| What exemplar student responses are available? | 18 |
| Will there be a scheme of work divided between two teachers? | 18 |
| Will AQA be developing any textbooks for the new specifications? | 19 |
| What networking opportunities are there for teachers? | 19 |

A-level English Language

Are A-level English Language (7702) exam papers marked holistically?

AS and A-level English Language exam papers are not marked holistically. There are particular assessment objectives being assessed in each question. Page 22 of the specification details the weighting of assessment objectives for AS and A-level English Language.

<http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/english/specifications/AQA-7701-7702-SP-2015-V1-0.PDF>

While examiners are encouraged to mark positively, credit can only be given for responses which address the assessment objectives which are being assessed for a particular question.

Has A-level Language moved away from data analysis and more into essay writing?

Data analysis remains very much a focus of the new specification – for example in Paper 1 there is a large selection of very rich data provided in both Section A and Section B. There are essay questions without data in Section A of Paper 2 of the A-level, and where students in the past have sometimes been restricted by the data, and attempted to apply knowledge which isn't relevant in the context of the particular data given, these essay questions provide an opportunity for students to apply their knowledge more successfully and with less restriction. It is also still possible for students to draw on data in their answers which they may have encountered during their studies. In our extensive consultation with universities, they made it clear that they would like to see more of these types of question in our A-level English Language papers, as they found students often needed to develop better academic essay-writing skills when arriving at university.

What are 'Electronic' texts?

Any texts which are read in digital form (online, on a computer screen etc.) would count as electronic. An online blog would be an example of an electronic text.

To help students meet AO2 is there a definitive list of preferred theorists?

We would not want to prescribe any particular theorists but teaching a range of theorists would be helpful so that students can gain as full an understanding as possible of the different debates around the topics.

It is the way in which students apply theories which will determine the level of the mark scheme their response is placed in, rather than the specific theories referred to. Understanding of how some theories challenge earlier views is likely to help students achieve more highly.

You may find it helpful to look at the Cambridge University Press (CUP) textbook which we have endorsed. Please note that this does not mean that everything contained within it is necessarily a requirement for teaching the specification, and there are lots of different (and equally valid) ways of teaching it.

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/resources/english/as-and-a-level/teach/textbooks>

On our website there is a recommended reading list which you may want to look at and can access by using the following link:

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/as-and-a-level/english-language-7701-7702/teaching-resources>

Are grade boundaries available?

It will not be possible to provide grade boundaries prior to the first examinations. The reformed AS and A levels will be graded to the same standards as the current qualifications regardless of which board the candidates are entered for. Therefore, students who are working at the same level as those who obtained a particular grade in previous years would be expected to obtain that grade in the reformed specifications. This will only be an indication as grade boundaries are subject to change.

When marking the mock papers we suggest you award a numerical mark which will indicate the level they are in. If you want to provide an indication of the grade they are working at, this cannot be determined by the mark achieved from the paper, but by comparing with previous cohorts, as outlined above.

Will you be providing any further example student answers?

We do not intend to provide any further exemplar material at this stage; a range will be made available after the first examination series.

We recognise that change to assessments can be a cause of anxiety and uncertainty. To this end, we have provided commentaries on each of the new AS and A-level specimen question papers, which explain how the questions address the assessment objectives and give some suggestions as to how each task might be approached.

The exemplar student responses were produced to be used alongside the examiner commentaries on the specimen assessment material, in order to help students to 'unpick' what is required for each assessment objective and question.

Do you intend to offer any further specimen assessment material?

We do not intend to provide any further specimen questions as this will restrict what can be used in future exams.

Our specimen question papers are designed to show how topics set for study in the specification will be assessed. They can be useful in helping you prepare your students for examination by allowing them to become familiar with command words and the question structure.

Using the specimen question paper and mark scheme alongside our student responses with examiner commentaries can act as a guide to put your own question papers together, as they will allow you to see a practical demonstration of what is required for each assessment objective.

When putting your own questions together you can take the command words from the specimen material and use a similar question structure. For potential texts you may want to look at the past papers available on e-AQA for our outgoing A-level English Language A and B specifications.

A-level Paper 1: Language, the individual and society

What is the suggested time allocation for each of the questions on A-level Paper 1?

It is recommended that students spend 30 minutes reading and preparing the texts. In Section A, it is recommended that they spend 30 minutes writing their Question 1 answer, 30 minutes writing their Question 2 answer and 20 minutes writing their Question 3 answer. It is recommended that they spend 40 minutes writing their Section B answer.

How do students cover Assessment Objective AO2 and AO3 in A-level paper 1?

In tasks where AO2 is used for assessment students will need to show explicit knowledge of concepts and research findings and explain, interpret and evaluate them. In tasks where AO3 is used for assessment the focus is on students articulating how meanings are created in a text in its context. In order to do so effectively they are very likely to apply their knowledge of concepts and ideas about representation and variation to the textual data.

A-level Paper 1: Language, the individual and society - Section A: Textual variations and representations

Will the texts for Section A always be written texts or is there a chance one, at least, could be spoken?

Texts could be spoken, written or multimodal.

In Section A, what is the specific teaching focus? Is it language change or it is language varieties?

The specific teaching focus is textual variation and representations. One of the ways in which the texts will vary is in their time period, so this is an aspect on which students will be able to comment. Language change is a specific teaching focus in A-level Paper 2.

For Section A of A-level Paper 1, the specification states that there will be two texts, one of which will be contemporary and one older. Does this mean there is overlap between Paper 1 and Paper 2 with the language change topic?

A-level Paper 2, Language diversity and change, is where language change is a key focus, and where students will be looking at the reasons why language changes as well attitudes to language change. In Section A of A-level Paper 1, as the title of the section indicates, Textual variations and representations is the major focus, and not language change. Students will be analysing texts for ways in which they vary, and temporal variation is therefore one of several aspects on which they will be able to comment. There is no overlap in the tasks in Paper 1 and Paper 2.

How old will the older texts be for A-level Paper 1?

Older texts could go back as far as 1600 (as this is the date specified in the specification for students to study when looking at language change), but in Section A of Paper 1 the key focus is Textual variation and representations, so temporal variation is just one of the aspects which students will be able to look at and comment on.

Will there be a minimum or maximum time limit between texts?

One of the texts will be contemporary, and one older (with 1600 being the furthest back the older text could go). We would not want to specify a minimum or maximum time limit between texts as this could bring unnecessary complications. Through their studies, students will be developing the skills to comment on language use in any text with which they are presented, and the texts provided will always give plenty of scope for analysis across several aspects of variation (with temporal variation being just one of these).

What is the definition of representation and variation?

For definitions of these terms, please refer to our *Glossary of key terms and guide to methods of language analysis*.

Do the two texts for Component 1 have to be linked by topic?

Yes, they will always be linked by topic or theme.

How will students avoid repeating some of the same information when answering question 3 having already analysed the texts?

Question 3 assesses AO4, so students could use the same examples as long as they are exploring connections which is what they'll be credited for in Q3.

A-level Paper 1: Language, the individual and society - Section B: Children's language development

The questions in Section B suggest a theory-led approach - should students be directed to explore the data and move outwards?

AO1 and AO2 are weighted equally for Section B of Paper 1. Examining the data in detail and moving outwards would be a useful way to approach this task. Exemplar student answers have been provided to illustrate possible responses, and are accessible on our website.

Will there always be spoken data and then written child language acquisition data (for literacy) on Section B?

There will always be two types of data provided, which could be spoken, written or multimodal (at least two will be covered).

What does 'multimodal' mean?

Multimodal is the term we have used in this specification for that which has previously been referred to as 'blended' or 'mixed' mode, so could include things like messageboards, online forums etc.

Will the data amount always be about the same as the exemplar? It seems there is a little less than in the legacy B specification so will it always be about the same length?

The data provided is likely to be around the same as the exemplar in terms of length. Unlike in the legacy B specification (in ENGB3), in the new A-level Paper 1 students are required to evaluate a particular view, so while there is still a substantial amount of data provided, it has been reduced slightly in order to be manageable for students in light of this task.

In terms of teaching child language acquisition, as there is a lot to cover for a relatively small percentage of assessment, should we only cover one area of child language acquisition or would it still be recommended to cover all aspects?

The different areas of children's language development are all linked, and we would recommend (as with the current specs) that all areas are taught in order for students to gain the richest experience of A-level English Language.

A-level Paper 2: Language diversity and change

The example questions in the specimen paper seem to cover topics from past and present (change, accent and dialect etc). The idea of opening debate and discussion with students is exciting, but will there be parameters set of the topics the questions may be focused on?

The topics of the questions will be those which are listed in the specification as areas for study (4.2.1). These have been chosen for the great scope they provide for debate and discussion.

Will students be discredited if they refer to older research?

Examiners mark positively and would not discredit students. Credit would be given to students for application of research which is relevant to the question.

A-level Paper 2: Language diversity and change - Section A: Diversity and change

As Questions 1 and 2 are just an essay, could you learn this before you go into the exam?

Questions 1 and 2 are indeed evaluative essays on a language issue. This question does not require the analysis of any data – this type of task is provided elsewhere in the spec – but it does require the student to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of key concepts or issues ie language diversity or change. This type of question allows assessment of AOs 1 and 2. Naturally students will have covered much of this *content* in their learning, but the question will prevent students from providing rehearsed answers as students will be required to respond to a stimulus statement that will not be predictable and will require them to marshal their evidence, organise their writing and construct a coherent argument.

A-level Paper 2 Section A: Will question 1 always be gender? Will question 2 always be about worldwide language variety?

In Section A, students have a choice of two questions, one of which will always be an evaluative essay on language diversity, and the other of which will always be an evaluative essay on language change (bearing in mind, of course, that these topics are clearly interrelated to a considerable extent). In terms of specific topics covered by the questions, these could be any of those specified in section 4.2.1 on page 17 of the specification document:

Students should study a range of examples of language in use and research data to inform their study of diversity and change:

- texts using differing sociolects (to include social and occupational groups, gender and ethnicity)
- texts using different dialects (to include regional, national and international varieties of English)
- texts that use language to represent the different groups above
- texts from different periods, from 1600 to the present day

Is it advisable that we teach Diversity AND Change?

It is advisable to cover both diversity and change, since while Section A will have an option of answering either a change-focused question or a diversity-focused question, Section B could focus on either change or diversity. In any case, the two topics are interrelated.

Will there be a more specific list for what comes under language diversity and change?

Section 4.2.1 of the specification lists the key areas of study.

Why has the starting date for texts from different periods gone back to 1600?

1600 represents a good starting point for studies of language change. Between 1600 and the present day there have been many interesting changes in the English language which are important for students to be aware of, the study of which will greatly enhance their knowledge of the subject.

In how much detail do you need to cover regional and national dialect? What about sociolects?

Please refer to 4.2.1 of the specification. More guidance has also been given in our Preparing to Teach meetings (supporting materials for these can be found on our website), and the sample schemes of work we have developed should also be helpful.

For A-level Paper 2 Section A Language diversity, should we be exploring written data with students alongside spoken data as we always have done in the past?

For the language diversity section you should explore written, spoken and electronic texts as outlined on page 17 (A-level Paper 2 Section A) of the specification.

<http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/english/specifications/AQA-7701-7702-SP-2015-V1-0.PDF>

A-level Paper 2: Language diversity and change - Section B: Language Discourses

Will Question 3 always be on language change or could it also be on language diversity?

Question 3 could be focused on either language change or language diversity, as the focus is on language discourses and attitudes to both change and diversity.

Will Question 4 of Paper 2 (the directed writing) always be an ‘opinion article’ or could there be another text type that is asked for?

It may be useful to think about the directed writing task as a creative alternative to a discursive essay format. Discursive skills in both these activities involve marshalling points and presenting them in a coherent form. The focus of Paper 2 Section B on language debates will mean that students’ writing will necessarily have the purpose of conveying opinions and arguing a case. Essentially, the task will always require students to present opinions and views and positions to a non-specialist audience. In the specimen papers for both AS and A-level, the form specified is an opinion article. The form specified won’t always be an opinion article, but it will always be an opinion-based piece with a very broad indication of form allowing students scope to decide exactly how to present their writing.

Non-exam assessment: Language in action

The 20% non-exam assessment task looks very weighty (3 elements) and is the same as legacy Language coursework yet less weighting overall.

The Language non-exam assessment does indeed contain three elements, but the size and nature of the tasks does take into account the weighting of the component and the issue of manageability. When designing the specification, one of the key questions for us to consider was the nature of the non-exam assessment. In order to ensure that the specification offers good progression to further study and employment, and to ensure appropriate skills development, a research-based investigation is a necessary element. It has also proved very popular with teachers and students. However, feedback from teachers also indicated a strong appetite for some sort of original writing to be retained in the new specification. Further testing with teachers supported our choice of offering both types of task. It should also be noted that the legacy coursework units of ENGB4 and ENGA4 account for 20% of the overall A-level, and the tasks required in the new non-exam assessment have been designed to require a similar amount of work and teaching time.

When do I teach the non-exam assessment component? Does it have to be in year 2 if I'm co-teaching?

A-level students may start work on their non-exam assessment at any point during their two year course. Co-teaching doesn't mean that it can't be started until year 2. Please refer to the *Guidance on co-teachability* resource for more information, as well as the sample schemes of work we have provided on our website.

For the NEA (original writing component) should the writing be about the power of, for example storytelling, or demonstrate the power of storytelling?

The three titles don't mean that the writing needs to be specifically about the power of storytelling, persuasion or information. The requirement is to demonstrate the power of storytelling, persuasion or information. You can see some examples in the specification of the kinds of tasks which might be undertaken for each of the three titles (e.g. a short story or a dramatic monologue for the power of storytelling). It is very similar to the legacy ENGB2 unit.

Is it okay for a student to focus their non-exam assessment on aspects of the specification that are covered by the examined papers (eg child language acquisition or language change)?

Yes, it would be acceptable for students to draw on work they have done in other parts of the specification for their non-exam assessment. This component enables students to bring together knowledge from what they have studied across the specification as a whole.

How are the marks distributed for each of the non-exam assessment tasks?

There are 50 marks for the investigation, 25 marks for the original writing and 25 marks for the commentary. You can see the marks for each AO on pages 25-30 of the specification.

Word count: Will students be penalised for exceeding the word count?

No, the word count is provided as guidance only. There are no penalties for exceeding the word count, or indeed falling short of the stated word count. Teachers are advised, however, to guide their students towards the recommended word count.

Are quotes included in the word count?

No, quotes are not included.

How can I get help with non-exam assessment?

The A-level specification is supported by Non-Exam Assessment (NEA) Advisers. They will be able to offer advice and guidance on all non-exam assessment matters, including guidance on task setting.

Do I need to get approval for the tasks I want to set for my students?

No, you do not need to get your non-exam assessment tasks approved. You may, however, seek advice and guidance on task setting from your Non-Exam Assessment (NEA) Adviser.

Will area moderation continue?

No, the conditions of recognition that all awarding bodies have to comply with will no longer permit area moderation.

Will there be face-to-face teacher standardisation?

No, teachers will be standardised online. Teacher online standardisation (T-OLS) offers a number of benefits to schools and teachers. For example in T-OLS, you can see example work that's been marked by the lead moderator, then mark it yourself to get instant feedback on how you compare to the standard. The whole department can access the materials and it is available any time. You can revisit the examples and the lead moderator's advice whenever you need to before you start marking.

AS English Language

Are AS English Language (7701) exam papers marked holistically?

AS and A-level English Language exam papers are not marked holistically. There are particular assessment objectives being assessed in each question. Page 22 of the specification details the weighting of assessment objectives for AS and A-level English Language.

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While examiners are encouraged to mark positively, credit can only be given for responses which address the assessment objectives which are being assessed for a particular question.

Do students need to know IPA in year 12?

Students should become familiar with phonemic symbols as part of their studies.

What are 'Electronic' texts?

Any texts which are read in digital form (online, on a computer screen etc.) would count as electronic. An online blog would be an example of an electronic text.

The assessment objective weightings for the AS seem over-complicated – why have these figures been chosen?

In order to achieve co-teachability with the A-level, and to keep all our mark schemes consistent, it has been necessary to weight the AOs in this way for AS.

To help students meet AO2 is there a definitive list of preferred theorists?

We would not want to prescribe any particular theorists but teaching a range of theorists would be helpful so that students can gain as full an understanding as possible of the different debates around the topics.

It is the way in which students apply theories which will determine the level of the mark scheme their response is placed in, rather than the specific theories referred to. Understanding of how some theories challenge earlier views is likely to help students achieve more highly.

You may find it helpful to look at the Cambridge University Press (CUP) textbook which we have endorsed. Please note that this does not mean that everything contained within it is necessarily a requirement for teaching the specification, and there are lots of different (and equally valid) ways of teaching it.

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/resources/english/as-and-a-level/teach/textbooks>

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<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/as-and-a-level/english-language-7701-7702/teaching-resources>

Are grade boundaries available?

It will not be possible to provide grade boundaries prior to the first examinations. The reformed AS and A levels will be graded to the same standards as the current qualifications regardless of which board the candidates are entered for. Therefore, students who are working at the same level as those who obtained a particular grade in previous years would be expected to obtain that grade in the reformed specifications. This will only be an indication as grade boundaries are subject to change.

When marking the mock papers we suggest you award a numerical mark which will indicate the level they are in. If you want to provide an indication of the grade they are working at, this cannot be determined by the mark achieved from the paper, but by comparing with previous cohorts, as outlined above.

Will you be providing any further example student answers?

We do not intend to provide any further exemplar material at this stage; a range will be made available after the first examination series.

We recognise that change to assessments can be a cause of anxiety and uncertainty. To this end, we have provided commentaries on each of the new AS and A-level specimen question papers, which explain how the questions address the assessment objectives and give some suggestions as to how each task might be approached.

The exemplar student responses were produced to be used alongside the examiner commentaries on the specimen assessment materials, in order to help students to 'unpick' what is required for each assessment objective and question.

Do you intend to offer any further specimen assessment material?

We do not intend to provide any further specimen questions as this will restrict what can be used in future exams.

Our specimen question papers are designed to show how topics set for study in the specification will be assessed. They can be useful in helping you prepare your students for examination by allowing them to become familiar with command words and the question structure.

Using the specimen question paper and mark scheme alongside our student responses with examiner commentaries can act as a guide to put your own question papers together, as they will allow you to see a practical demonstration of what is required for each assessment objective.

When putting your own questions together you can take the command words from the specimen material and use a similar question structure. For potential texts you may want to look at the past papers available on e-AQA for our outgoing A-level English Language A and B specifications.

AS Paper 1: Language and the individual

How do students cover Assessment Objective AO3 in AS paper 1?

In tasks where AO3 is used for assessment the focus is on students articulating how meanings are created in a text in its context. In order to do so effectively they are very likely to apply their knowledge of concepts and ideas about representation and variation to the textual data.

Is Question 3 classed as separate from Question 1 and Question 2? Therefore, can students repeat analysis from the previous answers as long as they are comparing and contrasting?

It is possible for students to use examples in Question 3 that they've also used in Q1 or Q2, as long as they are comparing and contrasting to meet the requirements of AO4. Some of the same points about individual texts might well be relevant (mode and technological factors for example in the specimen paper) but AO4 focuses more on a comparison and contrast of the two texts together.

For Question 3 can students use representation of the topic as a similarity/difference, e.g. in the specimen paper both texts represent prom as expensive and over the top – then can students go on to analyse how each text uses language to do this?

The focus needs to be on language use, so as long as students are looking at the language used in the texts to represent proms as expensive and over the top, then this could be a point of comparison/contrast. This focus could help students access the top level of the mark scheme.

For Question 3 what things should students be comparing and contrasting?

By comparing and contrasting the texts, showing ways in which they are similar and different in their language use, students will clearly be exploring connections between them. They may look at similarities and differences in terms of intended audience or purpose, mode or genre, for example. Exploring these connections will require students to refer closely to linguistic concepts about variation – for example, different levels of formality.

Students need to cover the areas listed in sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 of the specification (page 13) and be able to apply these to the texts they are presented with in the exam as appropriate.

<http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/english/specifications/AQA-7701-7702-SP-2015-V1-0.PDF>

You might also want to look at the indicative content of the specimen mark scheme for guidance on Question 3.

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/as-and-a-level/english-language-7701-7702/assessment-resources>

In Question 3 can audience be identified as a difference? Then students can examine different language choices according to text receiver?

Students may look at similarities and differences in terms of intended audience.

You may find the following resources available on our website helpful:

- Glossary of key terms and guide to methods of language analysis
- Possible texts to help prepare for AS paper 1

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/as-and-a-level/english-language-7701-7702/teaching-resources>

AS Paper 2: Language varieties

Will there be a more specific list for what comes under language diversity?

Section 3.2.1 of the specification lists the key areas of study.

What do you need to cover for regional and national dialect?

Please refer to 3.2.1 of the specification. More guidance has also been given in our Preparing to Teach meetings (supporting materials for these can be found on our website), and the sample schemes of work we have developed should also be helpful.

Do we have to cover attitudes at AS level?

Yes – attitudes to diversity is included (please see 3.2.1 Language diversity in the AS spec).

AS Paper 2: Language varieties – Section A: Language diversity

AS Paper 2 Section A: Will Question 1 always be occupation? Will Question 2 always be gender? Is it therefore a case of choosing which to teach?

Section A consists of a discursive essay on language diversity, with a choice of two questions. Question 1 and Question 2 could focus on any of the topics specified in section 3.2.1 on page 14 of the specification document:

Students should study a range of examples of language in use and research data to inform their study of diversity:

- texts using different sociolects (to include social and occupational groups, and gender)
- texts using different dialects (to include regional and national varieties of English within the British Isles)
- texts that use language to represent the different groups above

For AS Paper 2 Section A Language diversity, should we be exploring written data with students alongside spoken data as we have always done in the past?

For the language diversity section you should explore written, spoken and electronic texts as outlined on page 14 of the specification.

<http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/english/specifications/AQA-7701-7702-SP-2015-V1-0.PDF>

For AS Paper 2 Section A (Language diversity), could students be given a written text (such as an extract from fiction/an advert/a poster etc.) as their starting point for their essay? Or will it always be focussed on spoken language used and likely to be a transcript or table of data?

Section 3.2.1 of the specification lists the key areas of study. Written, spoken or electronic texts could all feature.

For Questions 1 and 2 on this paper it says ‘use your own supporting examples’ – is this referring to theory/case studies or students’ actual own examples of language use?

This is referring to both theory and students’ own examples. It means that students must go beyond the data given to answer the question fully. On page 14 of the specification it outlines that students should study a range of examples of language in use and research data to inform their study of diversity.

<http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/english/specifications/AQA-7701-7702-SP-2015-V1-0.PDF>

A balance of referring to the data and bringing in their own examples would seem a sensible approach. Please refer to the level descriptors in the specimen mark scheme for further support.

AS Paper 2: Language varieties – Section B: Language discourses

AS Paper 2 Section B: Will Question 3 always be about English varieties in the UK?

Question 3 will always be a directed writing task on attitudes to language. As stated in 3.2.3 (Writing skills) on page 14 of the specification, students will develop skills in “writing about language issues in a variety of forms to communicate their ideas to a non-specialist audience”. For Question 3 therefore, the form will always be one which enables students to write about a language issue and communicate their ideas to a non-specialist audience successfully in an examination. The example given in the specimen assessment materials is an opinion article, which will allow students to do this.

For AS Paper 2 Section B, will students always be directed to write an opinion article? Or could they be asked to write in a different genre?

It may be useful to think about the directed writing task as a creative alternative to a discursive essay format. Discursive skills in both these activities involve marshalling points and presenting them in a coherent form. The focus of Paper 2 Section B on language debates will mean that students’ writing will necessarily have the purpose of conveying opinions and arguing a case. Essentially, the task will always require students to present opinions and views

and positions to a non-specialist audience. In the specimen papers for both AS and A-level, the form specified is an opinion article. The form specified won't always be an opinion article, but it will always be an opinion-based piece with a very broad indication of form allowing students scope to decide exactly how to present their writing. Please refer to our Teaching guide: Directed writing task resource which you may find helpful.

For AS Paper 2 Section B which publications are/are not acceptable models?

For Paper 2 Section B we have not specified which publications are/are not acceptable as models. In section 3.2.3 on page 14 of the specification it states;

Students will develop skills in:

- writing discursively about language issues in an academic essay
- writing about language issues in a variety of forms to communicate their ideas to a non-specialist audience.

Please ensure that your students fulfil the requirements of the specification.

Co-teaching

What does co-teachable mean?

This means that the AS has been designed to be co-taught with the first year of the A-level. This means that you will be able to cover, in the first year of the two year A-level course, the content that students will require in order to take the AS exam at the end of that first year. In practice this means that AS students can be taught in the same classes as students in their first year of study for the A-level. Please refer to the *Guidance on co-teaching* resource for more information.

AS and A-level qualifications are now linear – what does that mean?

It means that students will sit all their exams and submit their non-exam assessment work (A-level only) at the end of their course.

Will the AS and A-level exams be timetabled together? Will they be at different times? Will the exam be later in the summer?

The timetable is set at an inter-board level. All exam boards are involved in that process. [The timetable for summer 2016](#), which includes the new AS exams, has now been published.

Can the A-level be studied over 1 year, 2 years or 3 years?

The courses can be completed over the number of years that is appropriate for you and your students (within the shelf life of the specifications). It is important to remember that the assessments must all be completed at the same time, at the end of the course.

Is the AS content different from the A-level?

The content of AS will be a sub-set (approximately 50%) of the content of the A-level. AS assessments will be different from the A-level assessments.

Do students have to do the AS if they are intending to do A-level?

No, the AS is now a separate standalone qualification. Performance in the AS will not contribute to the overall A-level grade. Students may elect to take the A-level only, the AS only, or the AS and the A-level.

Should the new AS be studied over 1 or 2 years?

The new AS may be assessed after one year and we would generally expect schools and colleges to teach AS over one year.

When do students need to make the decision to study either the AS or A-level?

This will depend on the approach taken in individual schools and colleges. We have designed the specifications to be co-teachable, to allow schools and teachers the flexibility of being able to defer entry to AS or A-level until part way through the course. We know that schools will have different approaches to the teaching of AS and A-level. Some schools may elect to offer A-levels only, some AS and A-level, and some schools and colleges will choose not to co-teach. AQA does not require entries to be made until term 2 (by February 21st) in the year of the examination, thus giving teachers and students opportunity to determine the most appropriate approach, depending on their circumstances.

Guided learning hours

Guided learning hours/Grading

A-level: 360 GLH, Grading A*-E

AS: 180 GLH, Grading A-E

Does Guided Learning Hours (GLH) include homework?

Homework is not included in GLH - the regulations state that unsupervised study or preparation, or the time taken for assessments cannot be taken as part of GLH. Please see further detail from Ofqual at <http://ofqual.gov.uk/blog/whats-the-deal-with-guided-learning-hours/>

Support and resources

What teaching materials are available?

We have a wide range of resources accessible on our website, including sample schemes of work, student exemplar responses, commentaries on the specimen assessment materials, a glossary of key terms and a recommended reading list.

What exemplar student responses are available?

Sample student responses to all of the questions in the specimen assessment materials, with examiner commentaries, are available on our website.

Will there be a scheme of work divided between two teachers?

We have provided two sample schemes of work, one of which is aimed at those planning to co-teach the AS and the A-level, and the other of which is intended for those planning to teach the A-level only. Each of these divides the work between two teachers.

Will AQA be developing any textbooks for the new specifications?

AQA has not published its own textbooks; however, there are textbooks available for the new specifications, with the CUP textbook being AQA approved.

What networking opportunities are there for teachers?

The AQA English hub school network offers free, regional, termly opportunities for GCSE and A-level teachers to:

- discuss assessment objectives, schemes of work and resources with peers
- build confidence through shared ideas, inspiration and support
- review suggested resources.

Although facilitated by specialist English advocates, agendas are tailored to voiced regional needs.

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/resources/english/plan/hub-school-network>
