

Guidance: Directed writing task

This resource gives you guidance on the possible scope of the directed writing task in our AS and A-level English Language specifications (7701, 7702). AS Paper 2 Section B Question 3, and A-level Paper 2 Section B Question 4, involve a directed writing task which enables both A02 and A05 to be tested. A02 requires subject knowledge and A05 requires students to demonstrate expertise and creativity in the use of English to communicate in different ways.

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The directed writing task requires students to produce a piece of writing in which they present their own views in a particular form. They need to show they can control a style of writing, and write engagingly and purposefully. The writing is centrally about a language topic and so demonstrating subject knowledge is vital.

The topic of language diversity (and additionally language change at A-level) is a good area for student writing as this is a topic which generates strongly held views by public figures. Students can show that they can deconstruct others' arguments and present their own in an appropriate format.

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.

It is essential in preparation for the task for students to have experience of the different ways in which opinions are expressed in real-world texts and pieces of communication, in order for them to recognise the diversity of forms that are available for them in their own writing choices.

Some useful models of opinion-based writing include serious newspaper features such as The Independent's [Voices](#), more light-hearted features such as The Guardian's [Modern Tribes](#) and other articles and editorials in a wide range of publications.