

English Language

Language Issues and Concepts:
ideas for teaching about language issues and
concepts across A level English Language, including
extended class activities

LANGUAGE CONCEPTS AND ISSUES	
AREA OF STUDY	DESCRIPTION
Written language	Guidance on teaching an understanding of the nature of writing.
Spoken language	Factors to consider and guidance on teaching an understanding of the nature of speech.
Language change over time	Identifying and describing historical features
Standard and Non-standard English	Exploring variation
Language and Power	Exploring language in a social context.
Language and Situation	Exploring language in a social context
Language Acquisition	Understanding the key stages

WRITTEN LANGUAGE: TEACHING IDEAS

1. Give learners a selection of short extracts from written texts (e.g. newspaper article, letter, advertisement, comic, text book, email etc.). Ask them to create a list of identifiable features that are common across the sample texts. Use this as a basis for introducing the key features of written language.
2. Ask learners to list all the different kinds of writing they might encounter during a day as readers and as writers. Create a table which highlights some of the key features in each case e.g. register, audience, purpose, distinctive features of each genre. Use this as a basis for a discussion of personal repertoires.
3. Analyse a range of different written texts within one genre e.g. personal communications i.e. texts that might be written by one person (text to a friend, postcard message, job application letter, note in a card, email complaining about poor service, diary entry, shopping list etc.). Explore how audience, purpose and content shape lexical and grammatical choices.

Secondary texts:

The Frameworks of English, pp.7-8, Ballard (Palgrave Macmillan, 3rd edition 2013)

The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language, pp.257-283,291-3, Crystal (CUP, 2nd edition 2003)

Varieties of English, Chapter 5, Freeborn, French and Langford (Macmillan, 2nd edition 1993)

English Grammar for Today, Chapter 8, Leech, Deuchar and Hoogenraad (Palgrave Macmillan, 2nd edition 2005)

Mastering Advanced English Language, Chapter 5, Thorne (Palgrave Macmillan, 2nd edition 2008)

SPOKEN LANGUAGE: TEACHING IDEAS

1. Give learners a selection of short transcripts (e.g. informal conversation, commentary, phone call, interview, chat show, radio news etc.). Ask them to create a list of identifiable features that are common across the sample texts. Use this as a basis for introducing the key features of spoken language.
2. Look at examples of dialogue in novels and get learners to create transcripts from the written text. In addition, ask learners to create written dialogue from a transcript.
3. Analyse learners to practise making short transcripts from a range of source materials so that they become accustomed to listening closely and seeing the link between prosodic features and meaning.
4. Divide learners into three groups. Ask two of the groups to create CHARACTER cards. They will need to identify a character and to list key details of gender, age, accent, social/educational group, job, hobbies, family). The third group will create CONTEXT cards. They will provide pragmatic details re. a situation, purpose, genre, topic and participants. Get them to make as many cards as possible. Take in the cards and shuffle them, keeping the CHARACTER and CONTEXT cards separate.

Divide learners into groups of 3 and randomly give 2 CHARACTER cards + 1 CONTEXT card to each group. Ask them to create a language profile for each of the characters outlined on their cards and to discuss how their characters might interact in the context they have been given. After acting out a potential exchange, they should create a transcript of the conversation between the two participants. e.g. a fat overweight corporate boss + a young trainee nurse + survival course (i.e. the boss will not be dominant in a conversation about treating an injury). Groups can share their performances/transcripts and feedback on key linguistic features.

5. Analyse a transcript of an informal conversation, a transcript from a television soap and an extract from a script. How good is scripted dialogue at imitating spontaneous speech? Learners should explore the lexical and grammatical choices, the effect of prosodics and how writers attempt to communicate this non-verbal information in a written text.

6. Give learners a radio and a television commentary for the same event. Compare the transcripts and get learners to identify the similarities and difference between the texts, and the reasons for these.

Extended Class Activity: SPOKEN LANGUAGE

Read the following transcripts—they are decontextualised, taken out of their original context so we do not have any contextual factors to help us interpret them.

1. Try to decide which speech genre each example represents. Find linguistic evidence to support your decision.
2. To show that you have engaged with the texts, write a 4-5 sentence overview making connections between them.
3. Suggest a possible context and provide evidence for your choice. You need to think about things such as the purpose, the tenor, whether the speech is public or private, the relationship between participants and the target audience, and the linguistic contextual factors (e.g. deixis, referencing, terms of address, implicature, presupposition).
4. When you have discussed your findings, read through the contextual information and then re-consider each text. How does the additional information shape your response? Did your reading change in the light of the contextual factors?

Read the following transcripts—they are decontextualised, taken out of their original context so we do not have any contextual factors to help us interpret them.

Key:

(.)	micropause
(1)	timed pause (in seconds)
ca.	incomplete word
//	overlapping speech
=	smooth latch on
definitely	emphatic stress
replàce	lowered intonation
{laughs}	paralinguistic features
/sʌmɪnk/	phonemic transcription

Text 1:

- A this is the **entrance** to Marlborough Road (1) and St James' Palace is on the **left** (1) we're looking now (2) through (1) the gates of Hyde Park (3) with the (.) Wellington Museum on the left **there** (5) the carriage has (4) left (1) the park itself (1) and now (1) **crosses** Hyde Park Corner (1) going **under** (.) the Wellington Arch (26) the Duke of Wellington **himself** after whom this (1) arch (.) is named (.) had a **memorable** (2) state funeral himself (3) in the streets of London in **18** (.) 52 (4) still the flowers (2) rain before (1) the procession (.) otherwise (3) everything is (1) **silent** and **still** (71) these **huge** wrought iron gates on the arch (1) are usually **closed** they open (.) very **rarely** for a special occasion like ↑this↑ (2) and the (.) cortege will come through here (.) and then (2) turn to the left (1) and **start** on its journey (.) **down** Constitution Hill (.) which will take it all the way along (1) the **side** (1) of the (1) huge gardens of Buckingham Palace

Text 2:

- A but whichever garage you go to (.) motorists seem concerned about what's going in their tanks =
- B = there's /sʌmɪnk/ wrong with the **fuel** (.) there's **definitely** /sʌmɪnk/ wrong with the fuel (2) hundred per /sen/ /meɪ?/ (.) I'm /telɪnjə/ / ðæ?/ now
- A one theory being investigated is excessive levels of **silicon** in batches of unleaded petrol (.) sent out over the last few weeks (1) a key component in the exhaust system of the oxygen centre (.) has **failed** because of the **tainted** fuel (.) and it costs **two hundred** pounds to replàce

Text 3:

- A I filmed er Saving Private Ryan there↑ and we also made Band of Brothers (.) and
↑**Andrew**↑was in (.) episode eight of Band of Brothers =
- B = now you (.) were you involved in the production of that? I believe // you produced
- A // I **directed** one
and I (1) **wrote** some of them and yes I produced (.) er **helped** to produce the whole
shebang =
- B = indeed and what was it about **Andrew** that made you choose **him** in // comparison
- A // oh nothing
at all I er (.) they cast him (.) I was at home I said who's playing Jackson they said a
guy named Andrew said good enough for me =
- B = that's good enough for me {audience laughter} you've got er h. those **high**
expectations =
- A = yeah

Text 4:

- A you /gʌnə/ go to **Aintree** next Friday?
- B yeah excuse for all women to get dressed up
- C /ən/ like wear a hat
- B yeah it's called **Ladies** Day for a reason /jneɪ/ style /ən/ stuff is // important
- A // mm
- C I'm /lʊkɪn/ forward
- B yeah like **see** all the clothes like // the h.
- C // yeah /ən/ the big hats /ən/ /əmeɪzɪn/ hair // styles
- B // the hen
parties
- A I'm looking forward to the racing /kɒz/ I've **never** /bɪn/ // before
- B // no way never /bɪn/ it's crazy
the first
time // so many p.
- C // yeah so many people:: (.) the Best Dre::ssed (.) all the /fautɪn/ it's // really
- B // really
/greɪ?/ fun
- A but is it too crowded? (.) I mean like can't **move**
- B nah it's /greɪ?/ really you'll want to go back again
- C **so** (.) /wɒtʃə/ wearing?

Contextual information for texts 1-4:

Text 1: BBC Television commentary, David Dimbleby (1997)

This is an extract from the commentary for Princess Diana's funeral on 6th September 1997. She was the first wife of Prince Charles and was well-known for her charity work. She was divorced in 1996 and was fatally injured in a car crash in Paris on the 31st August 1997. Her coffin was carried on a gun carriage through London from Kensington Palace, along the south side of Hyde Park, past the Albert Memorial, beneath Wellington Arch to Constitution Hill and the Mall, where Buckingham Palace is situated. From there, the funeral cortege went on to Westminster Abbey for the official ceremony. The event was not a state funeral, but a royal ceremonial funeral. More than a million people lined the streets to watch the cortege pass.

Text 2: BBC News Channel news item (2007)

This is a report about a problem with contaminated petrol sold at a number of supermarket petrol stations in South East England in February 2007. Motorists had problems with their cars breaking down and tests on the fuel found that it had traces of silicon. The contamination was thought to have damaged a sensor in the exhaust, which then cut the power to prevent long-term damage to the engine. While silicon products are used in diesel fuel, even very small quantities can cause serious problems in petrol engines.

Text 3: Interview with Tom Hanks, 'Friday Night with Jonathan Ross' (2008)

This is an extract from an interview in which Tom Hanks talked about his new film 'Charlie Wilson's War'. Before they discussed the film, Ross asked Hanks about his visits to the UK for previous projects such as the Spielberg film 'Saving Private Ryan' and the HBO television miniseries 'Band of Brothers'. Andrew Lee Potts was another of Ross' guests. While Hanks' interview took place, Potts was waiting in the green room for his appearance later in the show. He appeared in the role of Private Eugene Jackson in 'Band of Brothers' (Episode 8).

Text 4: Informal conversation between friends (2015)

This focus of this conversation between a group of friends is Ladies Day, which takes place on the Friday before the Grand National horse race at Aintree, Liverpool. The event is renowned as much for the display of top fashion as for the horse racing. Newspaper coverage is extensive. It tends to highlight the attendance of celebrities, to comment on fashion trends and the wild behaviour of some racegoers, and to include numerous photographs of the memorable outfits.

Some of the significant lexical and grammatical features students may recognise—which should alert them to the genre before they see the contextual information:

TEXT 1 Commentary

1. Subject specific lexis: place – *Hyde Park, London, Constitution Hill, Buckingham Palace*; funeral—*funeral, procession, cortege* (nouns).
2. Proper nouns: location—*Marlborough Road, Constitution Hill*; famous landmarks—*St James' Palace, Wellington Arch, Hyde Park Corner, Buckingham Palace*.
3. Concrete nouns: architectural—*gates, park, arch*; linked to funeral—*flowers, carriage*.
4. Modifiers: used sparsely—*memorable, huge* (attributive) *silent, still* l. 8 (predicative); *very rarely* (adverb phrase)—all with emphatic stress.
5. Locational language: deixis—*this* (demonstrative pronoun), *now, still* l. 7 (time adverbs), *there, here* (place adverbs); adverbials—*on the left, through the gates ... , under the Wellington Arch, down Constitution Hill, along the side of ...* (all prepositional phrases).
6. First person plural pronoun *we* (engaging viewers).
7. Verb phrases: *is, crosses, are* (present tense for current events); *'re looking* (present progressive for on going action); *will come* (modal indicating future event); *has left* (present perfect for event in past with ongoing relevance); *had* (past tense for completed events); *is named* (passive to emphasise object).
8. Relative clauses providing extra information: *after whom this Arch is named ...* (formal—use of object form *whom* + avoiding preposition at the end of the clause); *which will take it...*
9. Many simple (*we're looking now ... there*) and compound (*is ... and ... is; has left ... and ... crosses*) utterances.
10. Metaphor (reflecting individuality of the speaker): *the flowers (2) rain ...*

TEXT 2 Television news

1. Initial position conjunction (*But*): representing continuation of a topic in a new direction; falling intonation on non-finite verb to mark end of topic (*replàce*).
2. Subject specific lexis: nouns—*garage, motorists, tanks, fuel, unleaded petrol, exhaust system* (focus of topic).
3. Tenor: formality of Speaker A with polysyllabic lexis—*investigated* (past participle), *excessive* (adjective), *component, silicon* (nouns), *tainted* (verb modifier); informal pronunciation of Speaker B—*/sen/, /sʌmɪnk/* (elision); */meɪʔ/, /ðæʔ/* (glottal stop); */telɪnjə/* (elision/reduction).
4. Second person pronoun (generic you) used to represent an unspecified person (cf formal 'one').
5. Contractions: typical of spoken language (particularly informal)—*what's, there's*.
6. Informal vocative: */meɪʔ/*.
7. Informal idiom: *hundred per* */sen/, I'm /telɪnjə/* (Speaker B)
8. Modifiers: linked to Speaker B's evaluation of the situation—repetition of adjective *wrong* (emphatic), adverb of probability(disjunct) *definitely* (with emphatic stress); Speaker A's factual description of situation—adjective *excessive* (negative in this context); enumerator *two hundred* (with emphatic stress); Speaker A's evaluation—adjective *concerned*.
9. Verb phrases: present tense *go, 's, costs* (current situation); passive *being investigated* (subject unimportant); past tense *sent out* (establishes time scale of event i.e. event in past which led to current state of affairs).
10. Distinctive lexical choice: verb modifier *tainted* (figurative cf contaminated/polluted).

TEXT 3 Celebrity interview

1. Pronouns: Speaker A uses first person singular *I* and inclusive plural *we* (speaking about personal experience); Speaker B uses second person *you* (direct address).
2. Proper nouns: names of films/TV programmes—*Saving Private Ryan*, *Band of Brothers*; first names—*Andrew* (actor), *Jackson* (character).
3. Subject specific: *filmed*, *produced*, *directed* (verbs), *episode*, *production* (nouns).
4. Verb phrases: *filmed*, *made*, *involved* (past tense—commenting on past events linked to main speaker); *'s* (present tense quoted clause i.e. direct speech—recounting conversation with no pauses to mark the end of utterances).
5. Discourse markers: adverb *now* (marking conscious development of topic).
6. Grammatical mood: *were you involved ...*, *what was it about ...* (interrogatives—directing topic); *I directed ... and yes I produced ...* (declaratives—providing answers) = complete adjacency pairs.
7. Affirmation: *yeah*; *yes* (informal adverb); *indeed* (disjunct—pragmatic marker, quite formal = emphatic agreement).
8. Comment clause: *I believe* (tentative, hedging).
9. Distinctive: *the whole shebang* (noun phrase)—idiomatic; *good enough for me* (noun phrase)—understatement (repeated by Speaker B for humorous effect + audience response i.e. paralinguistic feature).
10. Utterance types: many compound—*I filmed ... and we also made ... and Andrew was ...*, *I directed ... and I wrote ... and I produced* (polysyndeton – extending turn); elliptical—*said good enough for me*.

TEXT 4 Informal conversation

1. Subject specific lexis: *Aintree*, *Ladies Day*, *Best Dressed* (proper nouns); *hat*, *clothes*, *hair styles* (concrete nouns); *racing* (verbal noun)
2. Discourse marker: *so* (interjection) to introduce new topic
3. Time adverbials: *next Friday* (noun phrase); *before*, *never*, *again* (time adverbs)
4. Tenor: informal e.g. */gʌnə/*, */əmeɪzɪn/*, */wɒtʃəl/*, *it's*, *can't* (elision); *yeah*, */kəz/*, *nah* (informal pronunciation); */greɪʔ/* (glottal stop); */ən/*, */jənəʊ/* (reduction + elision).
5. Informal lexis: *stuff* (noun) = general reference, placeholder; *like* (filler); *no way* (idiom); *crazy* (modifier—predicative adjective).
6. Affirmation: *yeah*; *nah* (informal adverbs); *never* */bɪn/*, *so many people* (reinforcing repetition, mirroring), *mm* (non-verbal interjection); *excuse for all women to get dressed up* *// /ən/ like wear a hat* (completing each other's utterances)
7. Grammatical mood: mainly declarative, but Speaker uses interrogatives to seek information e.g. *you /gʌnə/ go to Aintree next Friday? is it too crowded?*
8. Listing (reflecting enthusiasm) e.g. *the big hats /ən/ /əmeɪzɪn/ hair // styles, so many people:: (.) the Best Dre::ssed (.) all the /fauɪn* (asyndetic).
9. Utterance type: lots of elliptical structures e.g. *you /gʌnə/ go to Aintree next Friday?* (primary auxiliary omitted), *see all the clothes* (subject omitted), *I'm /lʊkɪn/ forward* (object omitted from transitive verb).
10. Comment clauses e.g. */jənəʊ/*, *I mean*

Secondary texts:

Discourse Analysis, Brown and Yule (CUP, 1983) – still relevant, though perhaps more suitable for teachers than learners

Exploring Spoken English, Carter and McCarthy (CUP, 1997) - practical guide addressing the main speech purposes of informal conversation, with a glossary of key terms, transcripts and commentaries; usually comes with an accompanying CD

Analysing Talk, Langford (Palgrave Macmillan, 1994)

The Pragmatics of Politeness, Leech (OUP, 2nd edition 2014)

Grammar, Structure and Style, section on 'Spoken English', Russell (OUP, 3rd revised edition, 2001)

Mastering Advanced English Language, Chapters 10 (spoken language) and 18 (broadcasting language), Thorne (Palgrave Macmillan, 2nd edition 2008)

The Study of Language, Chapter 12, Yule (CUP, 5th edition, 2014)

LANGUAGE CHANGE OVER TIME: TEACHING IDEAS

1. Create an information trail. Set up 'information stations' around the class based on a particular language period. e.g. extracts from text books addressing the lexical and grammatical features of Early Modern English, a print out of a timeline for the EME period, access to the [OED online overview of the period](#), access to a discussion of ['politeness' in EME](#) etc.

Learners can rotate around the 'stations' gathering as much information as possible within a given time, or groups could be asked to interrogate the information in order to report back to the class. The aim should be to gain a sense of the key features of the period and the language. Having completed their information gathering, period texts can be introduced and learners can apply their knowledge.

2. Give learners a selection of short extracts from Old English and Middle English texts. Ask them to create three lists of words: words that have not changed; words that are identifiable but which have different spelling to PDE; and words that they do not understand. Use this to introduce a broad understanding of the source of words in English and their etymology. Including an extract from *Gawaine and the Green Knight* or other texts from the Pearl manuscript (written in the north-west midland dialect) can also form the basis for discussion about the emergence of a standard form of English.
3. Use sample texts from each key period to study the distinctive linguistic features. This will help learners to recognise the key features of each period efficiently and quickly. By embedding study in close reading of texts, learners will be practising the skills required in Component 3.
4. Give learners lists of words so that they can consider word sources and semantic change. They will need access to the OED online or dictionaries that contain etymological information. There is an interesting article on the English Spelling Society website which looks at [five words where the spelling is a result of 'etymological mistakes'](#) and it may be interesting to look at an extract from the novel *The Wake* in which Paul Kingsnorth restricts his vocabulary to words that existed in English 1000 years ago.
5. Use [LG4 past papers](#) to practise the short questions in Component 3. Ask learners to devise their own questions to test their peers on key lexical, grammatical and punctuation features of the language periods.
6. As a particular text type is studied, ask learners to produce their own texts. They should use the knowledge they have gained about the typical content, lexical choice, grammar and other genre conventions to create original texts which mirror the PDE examples they have analysed.

Extended Class Activity: LANGUAGE CHANGE OVER TIME

Read the following newspaper articles which focus on reports about robberies.

1. Identify and describe any lexical, semantic or grammatical features which are typical of the period in which each text was written.
2. Note any contextual factors that may have shaped the reports.
3. Write an overview which shows you have read and engaged with the reports. You may like to think about similarities and differences in approach, the kind of incident reported, the effect on the reader etc.
4. Answer the following question:

Analyse and evaluate what these texts show about the changing nature of news reporting.

TEXT 1 (The Lancaster Newsbook Corpus)

Extract from a seventeenth century 'newsbook' published in 1653. These were some of the first newspapers which reported on a wide range of contemporary stories, particularly foreign and political news. They were published during the first five and half months of Oliver Cromwell's reign as Lord Protector (1653-58).

About this time was committed a great Robery in the Strand over against the Savoy in a Victualling House, the manner thus. Three men came in, in the habit of Gentlewomen, and were directed up one pair of stairs to drink a cup of beer or ale, and finding the key in another door, they went into that room, where they found keys which directed them to a chest, wherein was 600 l. and paying their Reckoning, they carried the rest away, without question.

TEXT 2 (19th Century British Library Newspapers Database)

Extract from *The Derby Mercury* published in January 1800, a local Tory newspaper which was critical of the city's Whig political leaders. In 1800, the paper was made up of four pages including local news and finance, births, deaths and marriages, and advertisements.

A remarkable attempt was made on Saturday night, about ten o'clock, to commit a robbery upon a dog.—This faithful animal, it seems, is the property of one Prorson, of Church-street, Bethnal-green, who, working at a factory at Bow, does not return home above once in a month, but has for a long time past made a practice of sending his mother half a guinea a week by his dog, who has always brought the deposit safe in his mouth. Talking lately of the circumstance in a public-house, a person was induced to stop the animal on Saturday night, near his mother's home, when, in making the attempt, he was so much bitten, that it is thought he will lose the use of one of his fingers ; and, by the interference of a neighbour, who knew the dog's errand, was obliged to relinquish his fraudulent design.

TEXT 3 (The Times Digital Archive)

Extract from *The Times*, one of the UK's oldest papers. When this article was published in May 1954, The Times was a broadsheet newspaper (reflecting its size and the quality of its journalism).

ALLEGED ROBBERY OF CAR DRIVER**TWO GIRLS SENT FOR TRIAL**

JUNE PATRICIA NICHOLL, aged 21, typist, and IRENE ANN SAMPSON, aged 16, both of Riggindale Road, Streatham, at South Western Magistrates' Court on Saturday were sent for trial at the Central Criminal Court charged with being concerned with a man, not in custody, in robbing Frank Kendall of a brief case and contents, valued at £5, at Tooting Bec Road, and with using violence to him.

Kendall, a retailer, of St. John's Hill, Clapham Junction, said in evidence that on April 18 at 12.30 a.m. he was driving his car in Tooting Bec Road when the two girls "thumbed" a lift. Nicholl got in by his side and Sampson into a back seat. A man then opened the door by his side and punched him in the face.

At the same time Sampson held his shoulders against the seat while the man continued to punch him about the head. Then he managed to press the button of the hooter, and the man shouted to the girls to run. They ran away, followed by the man. Afterwards, Kendall said, he found that a brief case was missing from the back of the car. On April 21 in Streatham High Road he pointed out the girls to a detective.

Both girls reserved their defence, and were granted bail.

Secondary texts:

A History of the English Language, Baugh and Cable (Routledge, 6th edition 2012)

A History of the English Language, Blake (Palgrave Macmillan, 1996)

Introduction to English Language, Chapter 3, Blake and Moorhead (Palgrave Macmillan, 1993) – accessible

The Adventure of English, Bragg (Sceptre, new edition 2004)

The English Language, Part III, Crystal (Penguin, 2nd revised edition, 2002) - accessible

The Stories of English, Crystal (Penguin, 2005) - accessible

The Linguistic History of English: An Introduction, Görlach (Palgrave Macmillan, 1997)

Introduction to the Nature and Function of Language, Chapter 4, Jackson and Stockwell (Continuum, revised 2nd edition 2010)

The Story of English, McCrum, MacNeil and Cran (Faber & Faber, 2011)

History of English, McIntyre (Routledge, 2008)

The Oxford History of English, Ed. Mugglestone (OUP, Revised edition 2012) – for teachers (fairly academic essays by a range of linguists including a chapter on the twenty-first century by Crystal)

Mastering Advanced English Language, Chapter 7, Thorne (Palgrave Macmillan, 2nd edition 2008)

The Study of Language, Chapter 18, Yule (CUP, 5th edition 2014)

STANDARD AND NON-STANDARD ENGLISH: TEACHING IDEAS

1. Give learners a selection of sentences with non-standard features e.g. dialect words, non-standard subject-verb agreement, standardisation of irregular verb forms etc. Ask them to use their knowledge of the language levels to describe the non-standard forms and then to re-write the sentences using SE. Discuss acceptability/appropriateness in relation to different contexts, attitudes, and the impact the non-standard forms have on communicating meaning.
2. Ask learners to carry out a survey of attitudes using the example sentences as a basis. They will need to plan the questions they ask carefully in order to gather information about attitudes, understanding, the importance of context etc. The sample group will also be important re. age, gender, education etc.
3. Encourage learners to collect examples of non-standard speech and writing. They will need to record details re. register, physical contextual factors, text type etc. Examples may include non-fluency features in broadcast language, creative language use in advertising, dialect features in informal conversation, non-standard pronunciations in child language, non-standard written language corrected in school work, typos in texts sent from mobile phones etc.
4. Use the activity section of the [British Library](#) 'Language and Literature' site so that learners can explore Grammatical Change, Grammatical Variation, Lexical Change, Lexical Variation, Phonological Change, Phonological Variation, and Social Variation

Extended Class Activity: STANDARD AND NON-STANDARD ENGLISH

1. Read the sample sentences. Do any of the sentences seem linguistically unacceptable to you?
 - Underline any examples of language use you find unacceptable.
 - Try to explain the reason for your decisions.
 - Describe the non-standard language features you have underlined using your knowledge of the language levels.
 - Re-write any sentences you picked out using Standard English.
2. Define contexts in which the sentences would be appropriate, and contexts in which they may be inappropriate.
3. What influenced your response to the sentences?

Sample Sentences

1. Julie got off of the bus in town.
2. I ordered some shoes online and they came really quick.
3. The committee has raised an ask about the ongoing system of micromanagement in the office.
4. It wasn't Jack who done it.
5. She got the ticket off her friend and paid four pound for it.
6. The next station stop will be London Paddington.
7. The teacher showed the class.
8. I seen the film last week with Katie.
9. My driving test was much more harder this time so I failed again.
10. He ain't coming over here again.
11. Give it to Mark and I because we don't mind finishing it.
12. They took selfies with all the politicians when they came for the election.
13. Mary's gotten a certificate for helping in the community centre.
14. You and me, yeah, could go down the shops later, innit.
15. Professionals then went on to emphatically insist that standards have fallen.
16. If somebody believes in you, then they will boost your self-esteem.
17. I've left a real mess in my room, but they can't do nothing about it.
18. What are you looking for?
19. I've got to get back by like six tonight.
20. When it comes to athletics, we're frenemies I suppose—unless we both medal.

4. Read the following extract from the article *'It's time to challenge the notion that there is only one way to speak English'* by Harry Ritchie, a Scottish writer and journalist.

Non-standard English is linguistically the equal of the standard version – in fact, dialects tend to be more sophisticated grammatically than standard (as in the plural "youse" of many non-standard dialects where standard has just one confusing form). Yet standard continues – even now – to be prized as the "correct" form, and any deviation is considered to be wrong, lazy, corrupt or ignorant.

(*The Guardian Online*, 31 December 2013)

Using this extract as a starting point, analyse and evaluate the ways in which speakers and writers may be judged for their use of Standard or Non-Standard English.

Secondary texts:

A History of the English Language, Chapters 4-5 and 9, Blake (Palgrave Macmillan, 1996)
- the emergence of a standard and its aftermath

Introduction to English Language, Chapter 4, Blake and Moorhead (Palgrave Macmillan, 1993) – standardisation and prescriptivism

The English Language, Chapter 4, Crystal (Penguin, 2nd revised edition, 2002) - RP

The Stories of English, Chapters 10, 16 and 18, Crystal (Penguin, 2005) – emerging standard, 'rules' and RP

Watching the English, Fox (Hodder and Stoughton, revised edition 2014) – chapter on 'Linguistic Class Codes'

Varieties of English, Chapters 1-4, Freeborn, French and Langford (Macmillan, 2nd edition 1993) – SE, RP and acceptability

English Grammar for Today, Chapter 11, Leech, Deuchar and Hoogenraad (Palgrave Macmillan, 2nd edition 2005) – prescriptive rules and usage

Mastering Advanced English Language, Chapter 5, Thorne (Palgrave Macmillan, 2nd edition 2008) - SE and RP, attitudes to usage.

LANGUAGE AND POWER: TEACHING IDEAS

1. Divide learners into three groups. Ask two of the groups to create CHARACTER cards. They will need to identify a character and to list key details of gender, age, accent, social/educational group, job, hobbies, family). The third group will create CONTEXT cards. They will provide pragmatic details re. a situation, purpose, genre, topic and participants. Get them to make as many cards as possible. Take in the cards and shuffle them, keeping the CHARACTER and CONTEXT cards separate.
2. Use the cards as the basis for learners to improvise equal and unequal interactions. Interactions can be 'performed' for the rest of the group, with learners identifying examples of lexical, grammatical, stylistic, prosodic and paralinguistic markers of dominance.
3. Ask learners to collect a range of spoken and written election texts. Analyse and evaluate the techniques used to persuade the target audience. e.g. political parties, governing bodies, local councils.
4. Look at a transcript from Hansard (e.g. Prime Minister's Question Time) and analyse the techniques used by politicians and the Speaker to assert authority. Then watch the same debate online, via websites such as Parliamentlive.tv in order to see how prosodics contribute to the power dynamic.

Examples of useful debates:

25 March 2015: [Question 12, NHS \(12:27:14\)](#);
[Question 13, growth in small businesses \(12:29:57\)](#);
[Question 14, noise pollution \(12:32:30\)](#).

5. Ask learners to collect examples of advertising language (e.g. TV and print advertisements, billboard slogans), legal language (e.g. terms and conditions, extracts from [local government legislation](#) and newspapers with a distinctive ideology. Analyse the texts identifying evidence of instrumental or influential power. How do contextual factors shape the choices made by the producers in each case?
6. Look at Texts 2 (broadcast news), 3 (interview) and 4 (informal conversation) in the Spoken Language Activities. Analyse the balance of power in each example.
7. Ask learners to use their knowledge of language and power to create their own pieces e.g. a newsreport covering a topical incident from a particular political perspective; an advertising campaign for a new product targeted at a particular consumer group; a speech designed to persuade; a scripted scene for a soap dramatising a job interview; a list of rules for a Year 7 English classroom.

Secondary texts:

A History of the English Language, Chapters 4-5 and 9, Blake (Palgrave Macmillan, 1996)
- the emergence of a standard and its aftermath

Introduction to English Language, Chapter 4, Blake and Moorhead (Palgrave Macmillan, 1993) –standardisation and prescriptivism

The English Language, Chapter 4, Crystal (Penguin, 2nd revised edition, 2002) - RP

The Stories of English, Chapters 10, 16 and 18, Crystal (Penguin, 2005) – emerging standard, ‘rules’ and RP

Watching the English, Fox (Hodder and Stoughton, revised edition 2014) – chapter on ‘Linguistic Class Codes’

Varieties of English, Chapters 1-4, Freeborn, French and Langford (Macmillan, 2nd edition 1993) – SE, RP and acceptability

English Grammar for Today, Chapter 11, Leech, Deuchar and Hoogenraad (Palgrave Macmillan, 2nd edition 2005) – prescriptive rules and usage

Mastering Advanced English Language, Chapter 5, Thorne (Palgrave Macmillan, 2nd edition 2008) - SE and RP, attitudes to usage

LANGUAGE AND SITUATION: TEACHING IDEAS

1. Use 'situation' as a framework to approach any example of written or spoken language. Encourage learners to use their knowledge of pragmatics to start the process of engaging with a text i.e. thinking about register, audience and purpose, physical and linguistic contextual factors, variety.
2. Language consequences: ask learners to write down a context (e.g. a birthday party), fold over the paper and pass it to the person on their left. The next person should write down a language producer (e.g. a student) fold it down and pass the paper on. This process should be continued for: text type, which could be spoken or written (e.g. Facebook messenger post), target audience (e.g. bank manager), and purpose (invite him for a meal). When the piece of paper is opened up, learners can try to produce a text according to the contextual factors they have been given. This may require some adjustment where the suggestions are impossible to link, but is an interesting exercise in what is/isn't possible in terms of shaping language to situation.
3. Give learners a selection of short extracts from written and spoken texts (e.g. interview, letter, advertisement, comic, informal conversation, email, speech etc.). Ask them to identify key linguistic features that have been shaped by the situation in which the text was produced.
4. Have a 'show and tell' lesson—learners bring in PDE texts and give a short presentation explaining the situation and key linguistic features of the example they have chosen. Encourage them to be creative in their search for an interesting text. Ask them to produce handouts (sample text + notes on situation and language features) or present their findings for display in the classroom.
5. Encourage learners to keep a log book of examples + notes so that they have a rich source of examples to draw on when writing their essay in the Component 1 exam.

Secondary texts:

Teach Yourself Linguistics, Chapter 10, Aitchison (Teach Yourself, 2010)

Introduction to English Language, Chapter 4, Blake and Moorhead (Palgrave Macmillan, 6th edition 1993)

Varieties of English, Freeborn, French and Langford (Macmillan, 2nd edition 1993)

An Introduction to Language and Society, Montgomery (Routledge, 3rd revised edition 2008)

Grammar, Structure, and Style, Chapter on 'The language of society', Russell (OUP, 3rd revised edition 2001)

The Study of Language, Chapter 20, Yule (CUP, 5th edition 2014)

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: TEACHING IDEAS

1. Encourage learners with younger siblings to collect data (with permission from adult carers) – where possible audio recordings as well as transcripts. Analyse the material looking for evidence of the key linguistic features associated with a particular developmental stage.
2. Look at transcripts in Freeborn, Thorne etc. and ask learners to apply their knowledge of conversation analysis to the texts. What kind of interactive skills do children display at different ages?
3. Discuss contemporary concerns that young children are entering school with a lack of basic language skills. Use the following as a stimulus for classroom discussion:

[NLS - *Why do many young children lack basic language skills?*](#)
[Newcastle University – *Early language Delays in the UK*](#)
[Guardian online – *Poor children a year behind in language skills*](#)
[The New Yorker online – *The Talking Cure*](#)

4. Ask learners to think of ways to promote language skills in pre-school children. What kind of activities/games could they devise to build vocabulary, to teach social language (e.g. please, thank you etc), to develop verbal memory, to follow instructions etc? They could produce materials and design a webpage to support parents. See the links below for examples:

[wikiHow - *How to Develop Your Children's Speech and Language Skills*](#)
[Scholastic.com – *Helping Children Build Language Skills*](#)
[*More Than Baby Talk – 10 Ways to Promote the Language and Communication Skills of Infants*](#)

Secondary texts:

Introduction to English Language, Chapter 2, Blake and Moorhead (Palgrave Macmillan, 6th edition 1993)

The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language, Chapter 23, Crystal (CUP, 2nd edition 2003)

Listen to Your Child, Crystal (Penguin, new edition 1989)

Varieties of English, Chapter 6, Freeborn, French and Langford (Macmillan, 2nd edition 1993)

The Language of Children, Gillen (Routledge, 2003)

Introduction to the Nature and Function of Language, Chapter 5, Jackson and Stockwell (Continuum, revised 2nd edition 2010)

An Introduction to Language and Society, 'Part One: The Development of Language', Montgomery (Routledge, 3rd revised edition 2008)

Child Language: A Resource Book for Students, Stilwell Peccei (Routledge, 2005)

Mastering Advanced English Language, Chapter 9, Thorne (Palgrave Macmillan, 2nd edition 2008)

The Study of Language, Chapter 15, Yule (CUP, 5th edition 2014)