



# A Level Language Summer Homework



# Why A Level Language?

The study of English Language or Linguistics will help you understand how people communicate and assign meaning (semantics), how they do things with words (pragmatics) or how language relates to social factors (sociolinguistics), psychological aspects (psycholinguistics), or power and injustice (discourse analysis). Studying these subjects will open your eyes to a world that has previously been hidden in plain sight. By studying language in depth, you will develop critical awareness and gain invaluable skills for your future working life – vital communication, analytical and critical skills. But importantly, such critical awareness will allow you to be a conscious, critical human being who is able to challenge taken-for-granted assumptions, understand the role of language in social control, propaganda and manipulation, and be able to use this understanding to make the world a less oppressive, more equal and just place.

## Language Levels

<u>Language Levels</u>	<u>You will study:</u>
<u>Lexis and Semantics</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the denotative and connotative meanings of words</li><li>• how meanings are constructed through the use of figurative language such as metaphor</li><li>• sense relationships between words through the concepts of semantic fields, synonyms, antonyms, hypernyms and hyponyms</li><li>• how individuals and groups vary vocabulary choices according to audience and purpose, and how levels of formality may vary according to these contextual factors</li><li>• how speakers may use specialist registers</li><li>• how speakers' sociolects and dialects reflect variations according to group membership and geographical region</li><li>• how variation in text design reflects variation in language use between individuals, groups, communities and nations</li><li>• how new words are formed through the process of neology, for example through blending, compounding, and the forming of acronyms, initialisms and eponyms</li><li>• how words and their meanings change over time, for example through narrowing, broadening, amelioration, pejoration, and semantic reclamation</li></ul>
<u>Grammar</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• how free morphemes combine with affixes to show tense or number (inflectional function), or to form new words (derivational function);</li><li>• how head words in phrases are modified to form larger structures to provide more detail about people, places, objects or events;</li><li>• how elements are arranged in clauses to support meaning and to achieve different kinds of effects;</li><li>• how point of view can be grammatically realised in different ways through writers' and speakers' use of the active or passive voice;</li><li>• how English verbs show the concept of time through tense and aspect;</li><li>• how single clauses form multi-clause structures through co-ordination and subordination, and how in writing, these represent different types of sentences;</li></ul>



## Summer Homework Tasks:

### Task 1:

Select four texts (of your choice) that are different from each other in terms of style, genre and purpose. These texts can be: leaflets, articles, transcripts of television or radio programmes. Sources are everywhere: newspapers, magazines, online and on screen.

- Summarise each text and identify genre, audience and purpose.
- Annotate relevant language features. Your aim is to find examples of a text using different features to meet their audience
- Produce a commentary of 500 words comparing how the text producers use language to achieve their purpose and create particular meaning and effects. The commentary is to address all of the texts together.

<b>Purpose</b>	What is the <i>primary</i> purpose of this text? How do you know? What <i>other</i> purposes are there? Evidence?
<b>Audience</b>	Who did the author intend/expect would read this text? How does the language used demonstrate this? What effect did the author intend to have on the expected audience? Who else might read this text? Why? How would the language affect this audience? Is this in line with the writer's intention for the piece? Are there any mismatches between intended audience and purpose, or language use? Why have these occurred? What might they tell you about the text, or the context in which it was written?
<b>Style</b>	How does this text exploit/ignore the conventions of its type? Why? Effect? In what context would it appear? Are there different possible contexts? How does this affect the way the text might be received? How formal is this text? How do you know? Why has the writer chosen this degree of formality (assuming it is a deliberate choice. If not, what does this tell you?)?

### Task 2:

#### Research Task: Language Issues

Research current language debates such as accent discrimination, words of the year, the use of slang. Identify one language debate you want to focus on and summarise what the debate is about and then give your opinion on what side you agree with and why. Link to the purpose and audience of language.

Your summer homework is due the week beginning 5<sup>th</sup> September in your first English Language lesson. Any questions? Email [etappenden@thedustonschool.org](mailto:etappenden@thedustonschool.org)