

Year 12 Transition

English Language

An insight into English Language A Level



Name	
Teacher	

BQ: How does language shape a receiver's perception of gender?

Engage task:

1. What is language?

2. How would you define gender?

3. What stereotypes about men and women exist?

4. Does gendered language exist? How do you know?

5. Which words do you know that typically end or begin with 'man'? E.g. manmade

The power of meaning:

One way to signify gender lexically is through gender-specific compounding.

Compounding	
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Baron-Cohen argues that people with a female brain “make the most wonderful counsellors, primary school teachers, nurses, carers, therapists, social workers, mediators, group facilitators or personnel staff”. This, he says, is because they have empathy, an attribute he clearly associates with women. Using these beliefs, it therefore stands to reason that if a man does the job, the occupational role, for example ‘nurse’ needs to precede with ‘male’.

Why do you think this is?

List some compounds that focus on men and what they mean:

Compound	Meaning

Exploring gender discourse

When are you analysing a text linked to Language and Gender, ask yourself the following questions:

- Who has produced the text?
- What are their motivations?
- Who is the intended audience?
- What type of text is being produced?
- What is the intended purpose?

Language and Gender



You are going to look at two products and have a go at apply the questions above to the way the producer advertises their product.

Annotate the answers to the questions around the texts on the next page. Think about the representation of gender. These are adverts persuading consumers to buy their product – why has the text producer represented gender in this way?





**REAL MEN
DO THE
HEAVY
LIFTING.**



Dove
**MEN+
CARE**
DEODORANT

[TOUGH ON SWEAT, NOT ON SKIN.]

Theory

When we analyse a text that has been produced, linguists use theory to support their ideas. We do this at A Level too.

Tannen's Difference Approach

- _____

- _____

- _____

Howe

- Men have linguistic strategies for gaining power and are more likely to respond than to provide backchannelling.
- Howe agrees with Tannen's Difference Approach but suggests that gender is not a key factor; she claims that boys and girls develop differences based on other factors which aren't only gender based.
- Howe's research suggests the following contrasts between men and women in communication:

1. _____

2. _____

Analysing song lyrics

Song lyrics are deliberately constructed and can tell listeners a lot about the artist's views, opinions and passions.

We are going to look at some extracts from famous songs and apply our knowledge of Tannen and Howe's theory, along with the list of questions you have practised during the previous task.



Annotate the answers to the questions around the texts on the next page. Consider how language is used to represent gender.

The Man – Taylor Swift (2019)

I'd be a fearless leader
I'd be an alpha type
When everyone believes ya
What's that like?

I'm so sick of running as fast as I can
Wondering if I'd get there quicker if I was a man
And I'm so sick of them coming at me again
'Cause if I was a man
Then I'd be the man
I'd be the man
I'd be the man

Girls Just Want To Have Fun – Cyndi Lauper (1983)

The phone rings in the middle of the night
my father yells what you gonna do with your life
oh daddy dear you know you're still number one
but girls they want to have fun

oh girls just want to have
That's all they really want
some fun
when the working day is done
you know girls, they want to have fun

A Level English Language Summer Homework

Why English Language A Level?

The study of 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

Language Levels	You will study:
Lexis and Semantics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the denotative and connotative meanings of words• how meanings are constructed through the use of figurative language such as metaphor• sense relationships between words through the concepts of semantic fields, synonyms, antonyms, hypernyms and hyponyms• how individuals and groups vary vocabulary choices according to audience and purpose, and how levels of formality may vary according to these contextual factors• how speakers may use specialist registers• how speakers' sociolects and dialects reflect variations according to group membership and geographical region• how variation in text design reflects variation in language use between individuals, groups, communities and nations• how new words are formed through the process of neology, for example through blending, compounding, and the forming of acronyms, initialisms and eponyms• how words and their meanings change over time, for example through narrowing, broadening, amelioration, pejoration, and semantic reclamation
Grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• how free morphemes combine with affixes to show tense or number (inflectional function), or to form new words (derivational function);• how head words in phrases are modified to form larger structures to provide more detail about people, places, objects or events;• how elements are arranged in clauses to support meaning and to achieve different kinds of effects;• how point of view can be grammatically realised in different ways through writers' and speakers' use of the active or passive voice;• how English verbs show the concept of time through tense and aspect;• how single clauses form multi-clause structures through co-ordination and subordination, and how in writing, these represent different types of sentences;• how clauses and sentences function in different ways, for example to form statements, form questions, give commands or make exclamations;• how the grammar of speech is not the same as that of writing.

Phonology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the phoneme as a basic distinct unit of sound • the different types of vowel phonemes (long, short and diphthongs) • how consonant phonemes are formed in terms of voicing, place of articulation and manner of articulation; • how individual phonemes combine to form syllables; • how variations of the same phoneme may occur in pronunciations of certain words; variations in speech patterns of individuals and groups in terms of regional accent, and as a result of accommodation; • the representation of the speech patterns of individuals and groups in different discourses; • the use of sound iconicity (e.g. onomatopoeia, alliteration, assonance, consonance) for effect; • how speakers use variations in pitch, intonation, volume and speed depending on situational aspects; • How the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) can be used to represent and talk about the different aspects of the sound system.
Pragmatics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the implied meanings of words, utterances and speech acts in their specific contexts • face, politeness and co-operation in language interaction • how people draw inferences from others' language uses • the influence of different contexts on the meanings of communicative acts • how attitudes, values and ideologies can be signalled through language choices • how language is used to enact and reflect relationships between people • aspects of culturally-based routines that are founded on shared assumptions and traditions
Discourse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discourse structure: how a text is structured overall (i.e. how its parts are assembled). For example: a question and answer format; problem – solution structure; narrative structure; adjacency pairs in a spoken interaction • How references are made within and between texts using cohesive devices and referencing • Narrative structures in texts
Graphology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how text producers use aspects of text design to help create meaning, for example through the use of layout, space, typographical and orthographical features and colour; • how images are used on their own or in conjunction with writing and sound as multimodal texts to represent ideas, individuals or groups; • how variation in text design reflects variation in language use within individuals and groups and across time, and as a result of advances in technology and shifting cultural practices

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.

Purpose	What is the <i>primary</i> purpose of this text? How do you know? What <i>other</i> purposes are there? Evidence?
Audience	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?
Style	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 in your first English Language lesson. Any questions? Email sfadal@thedustonschool.org

