**A Level English Language at Godalming College**

We hope you enjoy the A level English Language course at Godalming. This document provides an overview of the assessment that will take place across your two years of study. Due to the A level being linear, all exam assessment takes place at the end of your two years in May/June across two papers: **Paper 1 – Exploring language** and **Paper 2 – Dimensions of linguistic variation**. Both papers are **2 hours 30 minutes** long and you will be assessed on **3 questions** within each paper. Each paper is worth **40%** of your assessment combining to represent **80%** of the marks towards your qualification. Whilst examined assessment is at the end of your two years, we begin coursework at the end of the first year. The coursework unit comprises a **language investigation** (**2,500 words**) on a linguistic topic of your choice and is worth **15%** of the total marks. The remaining **5%** is assessed through an **academic poster** (**750 – 1,000 words**)which represents a visual summary of your investigation.

**Year 1**:

It’s important to understand that you will have key assessments called **benchmarks** that take place at regular intervals across the two years of study. We have created these benchmarks to reflect key assessment skills across the two papers and these increase in weighting across the academic year.

**Benchmark 1: Language under the microscope** – you will only be analysed on half the question focusing on **1a)** reflecting the knowledge of lexis, semantics and word class that you would have been taught. This is out of **10 marks** and you should spend **20 minutes** on this.

**Benchmark 2: Comparing and contrasting texts** – you will write a comparative essay on two texts, with at least one being a **spoken** text, reflecting your knowledge of spoken language knowledge. This is out of **36 marks** and you should spend **50 minutes** on this.

**Benchmark 3: Mini investigation** – you will have the opportunity to complete a practice coursework piece investigating a particular area of language accompanied with an academic poster. You are only required to explore two out of three areas and required to write **1,500 words**.

**Benchmark 4: Internal exams** – at the end of your first year, you will be assessed on **3 questions** from both A level papers in the form of **2 internal exams**. Your **Paper 1** will assess: **Language under the microscope** and **Language in the media**. Your **Paper 2** will assess: **Comparing and contrasting texts**.

At the end of the first year, we will evaluate the performance in all four benchmarks and then agree on an **Annual Review Grade (ARG)**. This grade will provide the basis for your **predicted grade** which you will need when applying to universities, drama/music schools, art foundation colleges and apprenticeships/employment programmes.

Also at the end of your first year, we will start planning with you ideas about your actual **coursework investigation** based on the content covered in the **curriculum** but also based on your **4 hours’ independent learning** that you complete each week. You will then be expected to collect your **primary data** and complete **wider reading** over the summer holidays to return to college in your second year to start writing your investigation.

**Year 2:**

After collecting your data and completing your research over the summer holidays, you will start writing your investigation. You will have assistance from your coursework teacher to complete each section required with a **full draft** of your investigation due by the **October half term**. This is to allow your teacher to provide feedback on the draft to give back to you before submitting both your **investigation** and **academic poster** by **Christmas**.

You will also continue to be assessed by **benchmarks** this year including the following:

**Benchmark 5: Language change** – you will write a comparative essay on two texts from two different centuries applying your language change knowledge. This is out of **36 marks** and you should spend **50 minutes** on this.

**Benchmark 6: Child language acquisition** – you will write a short analysis of a young child’s speech in relation to their caregiver applying relevant theories and terminology. This is out of **20 marks** and you should spend **40 minutes** on this.

**Benchmark 7: Mock Exam Paper 2** – you will complete a mock exam for Paper 2 in **February** being assessed on **Child language acquisition, Language in the media** and **Language change**. You will have **2 hours 30 minutes** to complete the paper in one sitting.

**Benchmark 8: Mock Exam Paper 1** – you will complete a mock exam for Paper 1 in **April** being assessed on **Language under the microscope, Writing on a topical language issue** and **Comparing and contrasting texts**. You will have **2 hours 30 minutes** to complete the paper in one sitting.

**Assessment Objectives:**

Across your A level English Language assessment, you will be examined on the following assessment objectives:

**AO1** – Apply appropriate methods of language analysis, using associated terminology and coherent written expression.

**AO2** – Demonstrate critical understanding of concepts and issues relevant to language use.

**AO3** – Analyse and evaluate how contextual factors and language features are associated with the construction of meaning.

**AO4** – Explore connections across texts, informed by linguistic concepts and methods.

**AO5** – Demonstrate expertise and creativity in the use of English to communicate in different ways.

**Paper 1: Exploring language** (2 hours 30 minutes, 80 marks)

**Section A: Language under the microscope** (40 mins, 20 marks)

This question is focused on **AO1** and **AO3**. You will be given an **extract of written language** and asked the following question:

**Giving careful consideration to the context of the text:**

1. **Identify and analyse patterns of lexical and semantic use [10]**
2. **Identify and analyse the way sentences are constructed [10]**

For this question, you need to apply your knowledge of **morphology, lexis, semantics, word class** and **rhetorical tropes** for **1a)**. For **1b)**, you need to apply your knowledge of **phrases, clauses, clause elements, syntax, sentence types, verb moods, active vs. passive voice** and **rhetorical schemes**. Try not to overlap your knowledge as you will be penalised for analysing the wrong content in the wrong part of the question. You also need to make **developed analysis** on **context, genre, audience** and **purpose**.

**Section B: Writing on a topical language issue** (45 mins, 24 marks)

This question is focused on **AO2** and **AO5**. You will be given a **statement** of a topical language issue which will change each time and asked to write a response over no more than **500 words** in a particular **genre**. An example of this question is:

***‘When we use language, we are mostly copying other people.’***

**Write a blog post for an online news service (e.g. Buzzfeed or a newspaper or magazine) responding critically to this statement. Try to engage a reasonably well-educated non-specialist audience in no more than 500 words.**

This question relies on your **developed knowledge** of **linguistics issues** both **within the curriculum** but also gained from your **4 hours’ independent learning** each week. You need to have a good knowledge of **current affairs** and an ability to write and use **language features** appropriate to the form. Reading lots of **opinion columns, broadsheet newspaper articles** and **blog posts** will help along with listening to **Radio 4** or **LBC programmes/podcasts**.

**Section C: Comparing and contrasting texts** (1 hour 5 mins, 36 marks)

This question is focused on **AO1, AO3** and **AO4**. You will be given **two texts**, at least one of which is **spoken**, and asked the following question:

**Using appropriate linguistic concepts and methods, analyse the ways in which language is used in these two texts. In your answer you should:**

* **Explore connections and variations between the texts**
* **Consider how contextual factors contribute to the construction of meaning.**

For this question, you need to split your essay response into **3 sections**. You have **flexibility** in how you compare them. You could compare according to **language level (lexis, grammar, pragmatics)**, **areas of context (mode, audience, purpose)** or according to **relevant concepts (power, Standard English, etc)**. You need to integrate relevant **spoken language concepts** and **theories**.

**Paper 2: Dimensions of linguistic variation** (2 hours 30 minutes, 80 marks)

**Section A: Child language acquisition** (40 mins, 20 marks)

This question is focused on **AO1** and **AO2**. You will be given a **transcript of children’s speech** and asked the following question:

**Using the appropriate terminology to explain your findings, examine the language development of the child participant(s) as evidenced in the transcript. You should identify and analyse the phonology, grammar and meaning of their utterances.**

**Use your knowledge of theories and concepts of child language acquisition to support your answer.**

For this question, you need to spend time annotating the text to identify patterns of the child’s speech. You need to comment on **phonology, grammar** and **‘meaning’** in equal amounts. ‘Meaning’ refers to **lexis, semantics** and **pragmatics** in this question. Identify the **lexical and grammatical stage of development** the child should be in for their age and complement your analysis with the **five overarching child language acquisition theories** and the **language level theories**.

**Section B: Language in the media** (45 mins, 24 marks)

This question is focused on **AO2** and **AO3**. You will be given a **media article** (likely to be **multimodal**) and asked the following question:

**Using your understanding of relevant ideas and concepts, investigate how language features and contextual factors construct meanings in this text.**

For this question, you need to make sure that you integrate relevant **language level terminology** alongside **developed understanding** of **context** in a similar vein to the ‘Language under the microscope’ question. You also need to integrate **relevant concepts** such as **power, gender, rhetoric, humour, technology, etc.** Make sure that you always mention within your response **representation, ideology, agenda** and **bias** and integrate **relevant theorists** where appropriate. Do not apply spoken gender theories here.

**Section C: Language change** (1 hour 5 mins, 36 marks)

This question is focused on **AO1, AO3** and **AO4**. You will be given **two texts** from **two different centuries** from **1600 onwards** and asked the following question:

**By detailed analysis of the writing in both passages, discuss and illustrate the variations in language between the ‘x’th and ‘x’th centuries. In your answer you should explore the ways language is used in each text, as well as how contextual factors influence the way meaning is constructed.**

For this question, you need to split your essay response into **3 sections**. You have **flexibility** in how you compare them. You could compare according to **language level change (lexis, semantics, grammar)**, **areas of context (mode, audience, purpose)** or according to **relevant concepts (standardisation, codification, political correctness)**. You need to integrate relevant **language change theories** where appropriate.

**Coursework: Language Investigation** (2,500 words, 30 marks)

You can choose what linguistic topic you would like to analyse as long as the **primary data** (the information you are analysing) can be explored in terms of **syntax** (sentence structure). The investigation has a number of key sections that you need to include. These are:

* **Introduction and Research Focus** (300 words) – this opening section outlines **why you are interested** in this particular linguistic field including some **initial research** (up to 3 sources) which outline the **current literature** in the specific language area. You also need to come up with **3 hypotheses** which link to different **language levels**. These need to be **measurable** so that when you are evaluating whether or not your hypotheses have been proved, your conclusions are clear.
* **Methodology** (250 words) – this section outlines the **context** of how you managed to **obtain your primary data** including any **external factors** that could have impacted your data. You also need to outlined the number of **constant variables** (factors that have remained the same) and any **changeable variables** (factors that have differed) within your data. Here you address issues of **reliability** and **validity** outlining why you chose the **three areas of analysis** (linked to your hypotheses) that you did.
* **Analysis** (1,650 words) – this will be your largest section and should be **divided into three areas**. Each area addresses each **hypothesis**. A good way to begin each ‘chapter’ is to present your primary data in the form of **graphs/charts** so that it is easy to identify the initial patterns. You then need to analyse these patterns using appropriate **language level terminology** linked to **critical analysis of wider reading (concepts/theories)** and **developed comment on context**.
* **Conclusion** (150 words) – this will summarise whether you have met your **hypotheses** or not. You need to address **how** you have managed to meet them and **what happened** if you didn’t.
* **Evaluation** (150 words) – this will summarise how **reliable** and **valid** the findings of your investigation are. It is an opportunity to **reflect** on the process of the investigation and weigh up what you would do differently next time. You could refer to different **data collection methods, language level foci, statistical analysis, etc.** Do not mention more time.
* **Bibliography** – this is a list of all the **references/sources** that you used.
* **Appendices** – this is where you include your **annotated primary data**.

You are assessed equally on **AO1, AO2** and **AO3** in your investigation.

**Coursework: Academic Poster** (750 – 1,000 words, 10 marks)

This is a **visual representation** of your investigation designed for lower sixth A level English Language students requiring a **change in register** to accommodate your new audience. You need to then **transfer information** from your investigation to the poster with the following key areas:

* **Literature Review** – this is an outline of 3-5 **core sources/theories** that you used
* **Methodology** – transfer key information across
* **Analysis & Findings** – you can split this section into the **three chapters** of your investigation analysis and include relevant **graphs/charts**
* **Conclusions** – transfer key information across
* **Future Directions** – transfer key information across from ‘Evaluation’ and also suggest how you’ve **contributed to the field**
* **Sources** – list of references