

Introduction

Welcome to your English 'A' level course. This course is linked to Edexcel syllabuses 8178 (AS) and 9178 (A2). Good luck with your studies!

Arrangement of Lessons

AS Course (Year 1)

Module One: Textual Commentary

Lesson One	The Nature and History of English
Lesson Two	Influences at Work on a Language
Lesson Three	An Introduction to Grammar
Lesson Four	The Practical Applications of Grammar
Tutor-marked Assignment A	
Lesson Five	The Language of Literature
Lesson Six	Practical Examples for Analysis - Written
Lesson Seven	An Introduction to the Spoken Language
Lesson Eight	English Pronunciation
Lesson Nine	Practical Examples for Analysis - Spoken
Tutor-marked Assignment B	

Module Two: Desk Study

Lesson Ten	Styles of Writing
Lesson Eleven	Possible Questions
Lesson Twelve	A Sample Question in Detail
Tutor-marked Assignment C	

Module Three: The Language of the Media

Lesson Thirteen	The Language of Newspapers
Lesson Fourteen	The Language of Advertising
Lesson Fifteen	The Language of Television and Radio
Tutor-marked Assignment D	

A2 Course (Year 2)

Module Four: Varieties of English

Lesson Sixteen The Acquisition of Language

Lesson Seventeen Style in Speech

Lesson Eighteen Dialect and Accent

Lesson Nineteen Class Dialects

Tutor-marked Assignment E

Lesson Twenty Language and Occasion

Lesson 21 Contemporary English

Lesson 22 The Language of Ethnic Groups

Tutor-marked Assignment F

Module Five: Spoken or Written Commentary

Lesson 23 The Spoken Word

Lesson 24 Spoken English: Some Practice Questions

Tutor-marked Assignment G

Lesson 25 The Written Word

Lesson 26 Written English: Some Practice Questions

Tutor-marked Assignment H

Module Six: Editorial and Language Topics

Lesson 27 Editorial

Lesson 28 The Ideas of Sociolinguistics

Lesson 29 Language Change

Lesson 30 Influences on the Language

Lesson 31 Shakespeare and the Renaissance

Lesson 32 Later Developments

Lesson 33 Trends in the Behaviour of Words

Tutor-marked Assignment I

Lesson 34 Trends in the Behaviour of Words (2)

Lesson 35 Grammar: Further Investigations

Lesson 36 Common Errors and Difficulties

Tutor-marked Assignment J

Publishing Note

Most of this course was originally published by International Correspondence Schools, Ltd of Glasgow and remains copyright ICS. Thanks are due to ICS for the opportunity to reprint that course here.

New 'A' Level Qualifications

A new 'A' level system was introduced in September 2000 for students completing their 'A' levels in June 2002 or later years.

Each new 'A' level specification has a six unit structure and is divided into two parts as follows:

Advanced Subsidiary (AS) – 50% of the total award
A second part, called A2 – 50% of the total award

The first three units make up a new AS qualification, which was awarded for the first time in Summer 2001. The final three units constitute an A2. This, when combined with the AS, represents a 'whole' A level. The first examination for the new A2 level was not until 2002. Students can take the six examinations either singly, or in groups of three - after both the AS and A2 - or all six at the end of A2.

Objectives and Syllabus

Your course has been designed to help you prepare for the A level examination on English Language based on:

Syllabus 8178 (AS) and 9178 (A2) offered by the Edexcel Foundation (London Board Examinations)

Edexcel was formed by the merging of BTEC and ULEAC (University of London Examinations and Assessment Council). We shall refer to Edexcel during this course. Overseas centres still refer to ULEAC.

If you have not already done so, you should contact Edexcel to obtain a copy of the syllabus, and also information for Private Candidates, which contains important details, such as dates for applying to sit examinations. You may contact them at:

Edexcel Foundation London Examinations,
Stewart House,
32, Russell Square,
London WC1B 5DN

Tel: 0870 2409800 Fax: 020 7393 4445

Alternatively, you can download the syllabus from the Edexcel website at:

www.edexcel.org.uk

Syllabus Options

The Edexcel syllabus offers an element of choice. The alternatives are:

AS

Option 1: Units 1, 2 and 3a
Option 2: Units 1, 2 and 3b

A2

Option 1: Units 4, 5a and 6
Option 2: Units 4, 5b and 6

The Oxford Open Learning course follows both **Option 2's**, which cover the written papers, 3b and 5b.

Aims

The Edexcel syllabus enables you to:

- Develop your interest and enjoyment in the use of English.
- Listen critically and attentively to spoken English.
- Express yourself in speech and writing with increasing competence and sophistication.
- Demonstrate expertise in writing for a variety of specific purposes and audiences.
- Know and use key features for the systematic study of spoken and written English.
- Understand and explore concepts and issues relating to language in use.
- Analyse variations in the meanings and forms of spoken and written language from different times.

Specification

Edexcel AS 8178

Unit 1 (exam entry code: 6371)

Textual Commentary 1 hr 30 mins
15% of total 'A' level marks
1 question out of 2

Unit 2 (exam entry code: 6372)

Desk Study 2 hours
20% of total 'A' level marks
1 or 2 writing tasks based on pre-released source materials

Unit 3a (not covered here)**The Language of the Media**

15% of total 'A' level marks

1500 words

Coursework

Unit 3b (exam entry code: 6373/02)**The Language of the Media**

15% of total 'A' level marks

1 question out of 2

1 hr 30 mins

Edexcel A2 9178**Unit 4** (exam entry code: 6374)**Varieties of English**

1 hr 30 mins

15% of total 'A' level marks

1 question out of 2

Unit 5a (not covered here)**Spoken or Written Study**

15% of total 'A' level marks

2,000 to 2,500 words

Coursework

Unit 5b (exam entry code: 6375/02)**Spoken or Written Study** 1 hr 30 mins

15% of total 'A' level marks

1 question out of 2

Unit 6 (exam entry code: 6376)**Editorial and Language Topics** (synoptic unit) 2 hours

20% of total 'A' level marks

2 questions out of 6

The syllabus units match the modular structure of this course, as you will see below.

Are textbooks needed?

The OOL English Language 'A' level course is sufficient in itself and no additional textbook is necessary. However, as you work your way through this course, you will encounter a number of technical terms which are used in the study of English Language. Some of these

may already be familiar to you; others you will find explained as you go along. You will, however, need to look up the meaning of some of the terms yourself – this will help you to acquire the habit of checking meanings and roots of unfamiliar words.

The glossaries at the back of each module will help but you will need a good dictionary. We would recommend *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 10th edition (1999) 0198605722. It would also be helpful for you to be able to refer to *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (2 volumes) or the complete *Oxford English Dictionary* from time to time. One easy way of acquiring accompanying textbooks is through the Oxford Open Learning website (www.ool.co.uk).

Other Suggested Reading

We would strongly encourage you to do as much background reading as you can, in order to deepen your knowledge and understanding. But with so many books available, where do you begin? I hope this list will be helpful in giving you a starting point and narrowing down the field a little. It is not intended that you buy every, or even any, book on this list! Most will be readily available in libraries so you can refer to them when you need to.

You'll probably find that these books vary considerably in depth and difficulty but they're well worth looking at. You might want to 'dip into' them or use them as a reference source rather than reading them from cover to cover. Those marked with an * are those we would particularly recommend.

- Carey, J [ed.] *The Faber Book of Reportage* (Faber and Faber, 1987)
 Cheshire, J, Graddol, D and Swann, J *Describing Language* (Open University, 1987)
 *Crystal, D *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of English Language* (CUP, 1997)
 *Crystal, D *The English Language* (Penguin, 1998)
 Hyszor, F *Language Acquisition* (Hodder and Stoughton)
 McArthur, T [ed.] *The Oxford Companion to the English Language* (OUP, 1992)

Student-based Texts

The books in this section are usually more easily digestible. At the same time they'll provide you with a closer look at specific aspects of the course.

- Rain, F and Rain, R *The Grammar Book* (National Association for the Teaching of English, 1996)
 Crystal, D *Discover Grammar* (Longman, 1998)
 Fabb, N *Sentence Structure Language Workbooks* (Routledge, 1994)
 *Freeborn, D *Varieties of English* (Second edition, Macmillan, 1993)

- Fuller, S et al *Language File* (BBC and Longman, 1990)
 George, K *Language and Literature* (Hodder and Stoughton)
 *Goddard, A et al *English Language A Level: The Starter Pack*
 (Framework Press, 1991)
 Haynes, J *Style: Language Workbooks* (Routledge, 1995)
 Hudson, R *Language Workbooks* (Routledge, 1994)
 Jago, M *Language and Style* (Hodder and Stoughton)
 Keith, G and Shuttleworth, J *Living Language* (Hodder and
 Stoughton)
 Langford, D *Analysing Talk* (Macmillan, 1994)
 Russell, S *Grammar, Structure and Style* (OUP, 1993)
 Salkie, R *Text and Discourse Analysis: Language Workbooks*
 (Routledge, 1995)
 *Stilwell Peccei, J *Child Language: Language Workbooks* (Routledge,
 2003)
 Thorne S *Mastering Advanced English* (Macmillan, 1997)
 Tinkel, A J *Explorations in English* (CUP, 1988)
 Trask, R L *Language Change: Language Workbooks* (Routledge,
 1994)
 *Trudgill, P *Dialects: Language Workbooks* (Routledge, 1994)
 Wainwright, J and Hutton, J, *Your Own Words* (Nelson, 1992)
 *Branford, W, *Elements of English* (Routledge, 1967)

Websites

You might find the following websites helpful.

City of Sunderland College 'A' Level English Resource website:
www.citysun.ac.uk
 Oxford English Dictionary:
www.oed.com

Although you will require no textbooks other than the ICS course material, your success in following the course will be all the more likely if you have an active interest in written and spoken language. Awareness of language-related issues in society is important. The sort of things you may ask yourself could be, for instance:

Why do television and radio newsreaders speak in 'standard English' rather than in local dialect?

- Why do tabloid newspapers have such short, snappy headlines?
- Why should there be such obvious regional differences in the way people speak?
- Where do place names originate from?

- How and why does language change over time? If we were suddenly transported back into medieval Britain, would we be able to understand what was being said?
- How have the rules of grammar as we know them developed?
- How do we acquire language anyway?

These types of questions are likely to be answered by this course but they are the sort of questions you should be puzzling over already. A keen ear for conversation, an interest in the written word and the variety of uses to which it is put, curiosity about your own language, and those of other social, ethnic and professional groups, are all prerequisites for success in English Language 'A' Level.

Examinations

When

Examinations based on the Edexcel specification are available as follows:

	Availability of Units		Availability of Qualification	
	AS	A2	AS	A2
June 2001	1, 2 and 3	-	Yes	-
January 2002	1, 2 and 3	4	Yes	-
June 2002	1, 2 and 3	4, 5 and 6	Yes	Yes
January 2003	1, 2 and 3	4, 5 and 6	Yes	Yes

All modules are available at each sitting thereafter.

Where

Examinations are held at registered Edexcel centres within the UK. NB Edexcel Examinations may be taken at many centres throughout the world (mainly arranged through British Council Offices). Overseas candidates should remember to refer to ULEAC when contacting the British Council in their country of residence.

Oxford Open Learning is not an examination centre.

You must contact Edexcel *as soon as possible* to find out the deadlines for applying to sit the examinations. At this time you should also request the Entry Form for Private candidates and a list of Edexcel centres. You should contact the Entries Section at:

Edexcel Foundation London,
Examinations,
Stewart House,
32, Russell Square,

London WC1 B 5DN

Tel: 020 7393 4444 Fax: 020 7393 4445 www.edexcel.org.uk

You are responsible for making your own arrangements to sit the examination.

Exam Format

There are three examination Units to be taken for AS level, and three further Units for the final 'A' Level examination. All three AS Units must be taken before the three final A2 units ('A' Level examination). AS and A2 can be assessed separately or together. Entry to A2 is only permitted if a previous or concurrent entry for AS has been made. Each candidate must be assessed in each of the six Units to be able to gain an 'A' level.

Unit 1 – Textual Commentary – 1hr 30mins (Advanced GCE 15%)

In this unit you will be given passages for textual commentary. There will be two questions on the examination paper and you will be asked to answer one question. You will be asked to comment on examples of contemporary English in different varieties, both spoken and written. Most questions involve comparisons between pairs or groups of texts. You will be asked to describe and interpret distinguishing features of the texts, relating these to their function and context and discussing your responses to the texts.

Unit 2 – Desk Study – 2hrs (Advanced GCE 20%)

In this unit you will be given textual material for written tasks. You will be asked to answer one question. You will be given a collection of source material with a common link, usually of content, and will be asked to complete one or two writing tasks based on this material. You will also be asked to write a short commentary on the language used in your own writing style. The source material will be given out one week before the examination to give you time to study it in advance.

You may make notes in the margin on the advance material and must bring this into the examination but you may not bring any additional notes into the examination on separate sheets.

You should spend about half an hour in the examination in further preparation, about an hour in writing the tasks and a further half an hour on the commentary.

Unit 3 – The Language of the Media – (Advanced GCE 15%)

This unit gives a choice between writing coursework (Unit 3a) or taking an examination (Unit 3b, 1 hour 30 minutes). Please note that the OOL Course does not cover the coursework option 3a.

In the examination for Unit 3b, you will need to write about passages from the media. There will be two questions on the examination paper and you will be asked to answer one question. You may be asked to comment on, for example, the style, attitudes and content of extracts from newspapers, magazines, radio, television and advertising but the questions will be language related. The questions may include such aspects as bias and prejudice, a contrast between different media, persuasive or manipulative techniques, the representation of particular groups, the work of a particular journalist or broadcaster or a specific radio or television genre.

Unit 4 – Varieties of English – 1hr 30 mins (Advanced GCE 15%)

In this unit you will be asked to study examples of different kinds of English for linguistic analysis and evaluation. There will be two questions on the examination paper and you will be asked to answer one question. There will be a range of literary and non-literary examples in the materials. These may occasionally include transcripts of speech. You will be asked to analyse single texts or to contrast two or more texts relating linguistic features to contexts and functions. The texts may be chosen from some of the following possible areas: language in the classroom, language acquisition, informal and personal uses in the home, letters, diaries and telephone conversations, language in religion and law, games and sport, style in the media and arts.

Unit 5 – Spoken or Written Study – 1hr 30mins (Advanced GCE 15%)

This unit gives a choice between writing coursework (Unit 5a) or taking an examination (Unit 5b 1 hour 30 minutes). Please note that the OOL Course does not cover the coursework option 5a.

In the examination for Unit 5b, you will be given language extracts to study. There will be two questions on the examination paper and you will be asked to answer one question. The questions may be on single texts or you may be asked to compare and contrast texts. You will be asked to write a report which gives your aims in studying the extracts, selects and explains linguistic features from the extracts and comes to some conclusion on the usefulness of your approaches.

Unit 6 – Editorial and Language Topics – 2hrs (Advanced GCE 20%)

In this unit you are expected to draw together many of the different skills you have learned during the course. You will answer two questions in the unit. One question will consist of an editorial task and one question will be on a language topic.

In **Section A, Editorial**, you will be given one or more editorial tasks of different kinds, adapting or rewriting material in various ways or writing in response to given material, together with a commentary on the editorial processes involved and an analysis of the style adopted. There will be two questions on the examination paper and you will be asked to answer one question.

In **Section B, Language Topics**, you will be asked to answer questions on knowledge about language and issues in language. There will be four questions on the examination paper and you will be asked to answer one question. The questions will be drawn from the following areas language change; language and society; language acquisition; language varieties.

Written Work

You will find that there are one or more often two tutor-marked assignments (TMAs) in each of the modules. Your answers should normally be submitted to your tutor for marking. When the marked script is returned, you should receive a set of Suggested Answers.

Besides the TMAs there are a number of progress tests (PTs) to be found at certain points in the course, usually at the ends of lessons. *It is vital that you undertake these as full-scale written work.* Only after you have done what is asked to the best of your ability should you look at the Suggested Answers provided at the end of the module. Probably the single most important thing about English 'A' level is that *you should form your own judgments* on what you study. It is no use regurgitating somebody else's opinion, even if you have found it in these lessons! It is difficult to argue a point well unless you have thought of it for yourself and *believe* in it. Have the courage to form your own opinions.

In addition, there are many, many activities throughout the course, located within the lessons. These are smaller pieces of work, usually requiring brief written answers. You will see that there is a space immediately beneath the activity for you to write in the answer. The size of the space is a clue to how much you might write, but do not be afraid to continue on a separate piece of paper.

Suggested answers are usually given at the end of the lesson but most activities are open-ended and you may well have produced very

different answers. The important thing is that you actively engage with the text. The work you do in the boxes is evidence of your active study and it will also help when you come to revise your work for the examination, taking you back to your train of thought at an earlier date and organising your notes for you.

You can see that there is plenty of work to be done before you will be in a position to take the examination. See how many months are available to you and how much you have to manage in that time. Divide the time available into smaller segments and work out what ground you are going to cover and which assignments you will submit each month. It is only by sticking to a disciplined plan that you can hope to succeed.

Using the Internet

All students would benefit from access to the Internet. You will find a wealth of information on all the topics in your course. As well as the Edexcel website (www.edexcel.org.uk), you should get into the habit of checking the Oxford Open Learning site (www.ool.co.uk) where you may find news, additional resources and interactive features as time goes by. If you have not already done so, you may register for your free copy of *How to Study at Home*, our 200-page guide to home learning, or enrol on further courses. Put it on your Favourites list now!

Good luck!