

GCE

AS and A Level Specification

English Language A

AS exams 2009 onwards

A2 exams 2010 onwards



Contents

1	Introduction	2
1.1	Why choose AQA?	2
1.2	Why choose English Language A?	2
1.3	How do I start using this specification?	3
1.4	How can I find out more?	3
2	Specification at a Glance	4
3	Subject Content	5
3.1	Unit 1 ENGA1 - Seeing Through Language	6
3.2	Unit 2 ENGA2 - Representation and Language	8
3.3	Unit 3 ENGA3 - Language Explorations	14
3.4	Unit 4 ENGA4 - Language Investigations and Interventions	15
4	Scheme of Assessment	22
4.1	Aims	22
4.2	Assessment Objectives	22
4.3	National Criteria	23
4.4	Prior Learning	23
4.5	Synoptic Assessment and Stretch and Challenge	23
4.6	Access to Assessment for Disabled Students	24
5	Administration	25
5.1	Availability of Assessment Units and Certification	25
5.2	Entries	25
5.3	Private Candidates	25
5.4	Access Arrangements and Special Consideration	26
5.5	Language of Examinations	26
5.6	Qualification Titles	26
5.7	Awarding Grades and Reporting Results	26
5.8	Re-sits and Shelf-life of Unit Results	26
6	Coursework Administration	27
6.1	Supervision and Authentication of Coursework	27
6.2	Malpractice	28
6.3	Teacher Standardisation	28
6.4	Internal Standardisation of Marking	29
6.5	Annotation of Coursework	29
6.6	Submitting Marks and Sample Work for Moderation	29
6.7	Factors Affecting Individual Candidates	29
6.8	Retaining Evidence and Re-using Marks	29
7	Moderation	30
7.1	Moderation Procedures	30
7.2	Post-moderation Procedures	30
	Appendices	31
A	Performance Descriptions	31
B	Spiritual, Moral, Ethical, Social and other Issues	34
C	Overlaps with other Qualifications	35
D	Key Skills - Teaching, Developing and Providing Opportunities for Generating Evidence	36

1 Introduction

1

1.1 Why choose AQA?

It's a fact that AQA is the UK's favourite exam board and more students receive their academic qualifications from AQA than from any other board. But why does AQA continue to be so popular?

- **Specifications**

Ours are designed to the highest standards, so teachers, students and their parents can be confident that an AQA award provides an accurate measure of a student's achievements. And the assessment structures have been designed to achieve a balance between rigour, reliability and demands on candidates.

- **Support**

AQA runs the most extensive programme of support meetings; free of charge in the first years of a new specification and at a very reasonable cost thereafter. These support meetings explain the specification and suggest practical teaching strategies and approaches that really work.

- **Service**

We are committed to providing an efficient and effective service and we are at the end of the phone when you need to speak to a person about an important issue. We will always try to resolve issues the first time you contact us but, should that not be possible, we will always come back to you (by telephone, email or letter) and keep working with you to find the solution.

- **Ethics**

AQA is a registered charity. We have no shareholders to pay. We exist solely for the good of education in the UK. Any surplus income is ploughed back into educational research and our service to you, our customers. We don't profit from education, you do.

If you are an existing customer then we thank you for your support. If you are thinking of moving to AQA then we look forward to welcoming you.

1.2 Why choose English Language A?

- There is continuity with the 6 Unit Specification A from which this specification has evolved.
- There is a coherent development from AS with its focus on language in its personal and immediate contexts to A2 which places language in its wider social, historical and global contexts.
- Learners develop their writing skills in both AS and A2 units.
- There is an emphasis on learners' critical skills and their ability to analyse how language and social values are interconnected.
- Essay questions enable learners to draw on their own examples of language in use, based on the study of language relevant to them.

AS learners:

- explore language and representation through analytical and creative work
- have the opportunity to explore creative and transactional forms of writing
- will develop their understanding of how language creates meanings in written, spoken and electronic modes.

The AS course also provides learners who may not specialise further in English Language with valuable insights into:

- the language development of children
- the importance of cultural sensitivity in language.

A2 learners explore:

- how the English language has changed since 1600 and is changing today
- how English varies globally, regionally and socially
- cultural debates about the nature and significance of language
- how to carry out language research on topics of their own choice and contribute to a language debate in a particular form.

Stretch and challenge is provided for A2 learners by:

- Unit 3 Section B: Language Discourses which requires learners to evaluate how language and language issues are debated and represented in society.
- Unit 4 Language Investigation which requires primary and secondary research skills and the ability to work independently. The Language Intervention element requires learners to communicate their knowledge to a non-specialist audience.

1.3 How do I start using this specification?

Already using the existing AQA English Language A specification?

- Register to receive further information, such as mark schemes, past question papers, details of teacher support meetings, etc, at **<http://www.aqa.org.uk/rn/askaqa.php>**
Information will be available electronically or in print, for your convenience.
- Tell us that you intend to enter candidates. Then we can make sure that you receive all the material you need for the examinations. This is particularly important where examination material is issued before the final entry deadline. You can let us know by completing the appropriate Intention to Enter and Estimated Entry forms. We will send copies to your Exams Officer and they are also available on our website **http://www.aqa.org.uk/admin/p_entries.html**

Not using the AQA specification currently?

- Almost all centres in England and Wales use AQA or have used AQA in the past and are approved AQA centres. A small minority are not. If your centre is new to AQA, please contact our centre approval team at **centreapproval@aqa.org.uk**

1.4 How can I find out more?

Ask AQA

You have 24-hour access to useful information and answers to the most commonly-asked questions at **<http://www.aqa.org.uk/rn/askaqa.php>**

If the answer to your question is not available, you can submit a query for our team. Our target response time is one day.

Teacher Support

Details of the full range of current Teacher Support meetings are available on our website at **<http://www.aqa.org.uk/support/teachers.html>**

There is also a link to our fast and convenient online booking system for Teacher Support meetings at **<http://events.aqa.org.uk/ebooking>**

If you need to contact the Teacher Support team, you can call us on 01483 477860 or email us at **teachersupport@aqa.org.uk**

2 Specification at a Glance

2

AS Examinations	
<p>Unit 1 – ENGA1 Seeing Through Language</p> <p>60% of AS, 30% of A Level 2 hour written examination 90 marks</p> <p>Language Analysis task and Language Development essay Available January and June</p>	<p>AS Award 1701</p>
<p>Unit 2 – ENGA2 Representation and Language</p> <p>40% of AS, 20% of A Level Coursework 60 marks</p> <p>One Investigation and one Production task plus commentary (2000-2500 words) Available January and June</p>	

A2 Examinations	
<p>Unit 3 – ENGA3 Language Explorations</p> <p>30% of A Level 2 hour 30 minutes written examination 90 marks</p> <p>Language Variation and Change task and Language Discourses task Available January and June</p>	<p>A2 Award 2701</p>
<p>Unit 4 – ENGA4 Language Investigations and Interventions</p> <p>20% of A Level Coursework 60 marks</p> <p>One Investigation and one Intervention task (3000-3750 words) Available January and June</p>	

$$\boxed{\text{AS}} + \boxed{\text{A2}} = \boxed{\text{A Level}}$$

3 Subject Content

This specification begins by asking learners to study language in its immediate contexts of audience, purpose, subject matter, genre and mode. Examples of texts in the AS examinations will be contemporary but the emphasis on mode and multi-modal texts will provide an element of language change as candidates explore the effects and uses of changing communications technology.

Early study should place emphasis on the learners' own uses and experiences of language as they are at the centre of a rich and varied linguistic environment. They should also explore the creativity and pleasure that different forms of speech and writing can generate. The use of coursework enables learners to pursue their own academic and creative interests and to develop as autonomous learners.

In the A2 units learners explore language in its wider social, geographical and temporal contexts, broadening their study. They also explore how ideas about the nature and functions of language are created and are linked to social beliefs and values. They will increasingly reflect on the ways knowledge about language is produced and socially situated.

A key approach to linguistic study

The AS coursework unit foregrounds a key approach to language study that characterises the whole specification. Learners will explore texts as parts of discourses that create and communicate social knowledge and beliefs. They will be able to explore how gender, ethnicity, ability, sexuality are represented. Learners will be able to explore how events (eg global warming), institutions (eg the NHS) and people (eg hoodies or asylum seekers) are represented. The possibilities of coursework will enable the learner to explore how a discourse is inflected in different texts and genres from different sources or over a period of time.

At a high level the approaches of the linguistic school of Critical Discourse Analysis underline this approach. For AS and A level, learners can analyse texts by exploring four functions of language:

- the expressive function – how a text represents its writer or producer and conveys their attitudes and values
- the experiential function – how a text represents people, institutions and events
- the relational function – how a text creates an ideal audience position, creating a power relation between producer and audience, and shaping the audience's response
- the textual function – how texts create coherence and cohesion.

This approach to textual study should be introduced in preparation for the AS examination unit and will become a core method for the whole specification.

A further useful approach will be to explore the linguistic representation of participants, processes and circumstances. When developing knowledge of linguistic frameworks learners will thus consider how different elements of language function to produce representations. As well as looking at how texts create an ideal audience position, learners should explore how actual readers or listeners with their own context of reception might interpret texts.

A key approach to teaching and learning

A second key approach that characterises this specification is the interconnection of production and analysis work. As well as analysing how language produces social knowledge, learners are asked to write texts that will make challenging and positive contributions to the kinds of discourse they have studied.

This connection is also seen as a productive approach to teaching and learning. As an aid to understanding how texts work, processes of textual intervention and transformation are effective learning strategies. Small scale re-writings modifying pronouns or modal verbs can foreground interesting textual effects. Large scale re-writings (eg as a dialogue with two voices or from another point of view) can explore alternative values and ways of seeing. Re-writing also develops learners' creative skills and can be a source of pleasure.

Language as an object of study

In the A2 units learners will explore how ideas about language are created and constituted. In Unit 3 section B they will look at texts about language and be expected to analyse critically the ways discourses about language create social knowledge and beliefs about language.

They may be presented with texts that contribute to the discourse of language change as a process of decay. They may be asked to analyse texts that are part of the discourse about political correctness as intolerant and excessive. They may need to analyse texts which form the discourses of regional accents as incorrect or ugly.

As well as analysing how these texts produce knowledge and ideas about language, learners will be asked to use their own study of language to challenge these discourses. In the examination this will be done in an essay form. In their coursework they will write about a language issue for a specific audience and purpose. This will stretch and challenge learners as they seek to communicate their insights and knowledge beyond the confines of their academic community. They are also being asked to make an intervention in discourses about language.

In their study of language variation and change learners will be expected to analyse examples of language in use. They will also be expected to show

understanding of the ways such data has been investigated and interpreted by researchers. For example, learners will explore critically the ways that approaches to gender and language have evolved to produce different ideas about language, moving from deficit and dominance views to difference, diversity and discourse approaches.

Useful References

Helpful ideas about ways of approaching textual study, the use of re-writing and textual interventions, and how ideas about language are generated can be found in:

Fairclough, N. (1989) *Language and Power*, London: Longman

Pope, R. (1995) *Textual Intervention*, London: Routledge

Crowley, T (1989) *The Politics of Discourse: The Standard Language Question in British Cultural Debates* London: Macmillan

3.1 Unit 1 ENGA1 – Seeing Through Language

Introduction

This unit is designed to introduce candidates to the study of the modes of language. It employs the core variation concepts of audience, purpose, field, genre and adds the idea of mode. Candidates are required to study how language is used in written, spoken and electronic forms.

The unit also requires candidates to study a language issue: Language Development. Candidates will explore how children learn language and how this is linked with cognition and how they are able to understand and express themselves through language.

Unit Subject Content

1 Language and Mode

Candidates should study:

- written, spoken and electronic texts
- planned and spontaneous texts
- texts about a range of subjects, for varying audiences and purposes
- ways of classifying modes (eg continuum, typology and dimensions approaches).

When analysing a text candidates should explore:

- the use of language according to the mode
- the impact of context
- how language is used to realise a text's functions and convey meaning.

This will involve analysing:

- significant features of lexis, grammar, semantics and pragmatics
- how speaker/writer identity is conveyed
- how the listener/reader is positioned

- the functions of the text (interactional and transactional)
- the structure and organisation of texts
- representational issues.

2 Linguistic Frameworks

Candidates will need to be able to describe significant features of texts using Linguistic Frameworks. The following list is a guide to the kind of features candidates are expected to explore. Recognised alternative systems for describing language are perfectly acceptable.

Phonological:

- alliteration, assonance, rhythm, rhyme
- the forms and functions of non-verbal aspects of speech

Lexical-semantic:

- denotational and connotational meaning, figurative language, structural semantics (semantic fields, synonyms, antonyms, hypernyms, hyponyms), jargon, levels of formality

Grammatical:

- nouns: proper/common; singular/plural; concrete/abstract
- adjectives: comparative/superlative; attributive/predicative
- adverbs: manner, place, direction, time, duration, frequency, degree, sentence
- verbs: infinitive; mood (imperative/interrogative/declarative/exclamative); main/auxiliary/modal auxiliaries; present and past participles; person; tense; voice; aspect (progressive/perfective),
- pronouns: personal (person, number and function); interrogative; demonstrative

- prepositions
- determiners: definite/indefinite articles; demonstrative adjectives; numerals
- conjunctions: co-ordinating, sub-ordinating
- sentence functions: statement, command, question, exclamations
- sentence types: minor, simple, compound, complex, compound-complex
- clause types: main, sub-ordinate, co-ordinate
- clause elements: subject, verb, object, complement, adverbials

Textual:

- text structures
- cohesion (lexical, grammatical and graphological)
- the forms and functions of graphological features of texts
- discourse features of texts (eg speaker switches and the management of turn-taking; the nature and purpose of feedback)

Language Development

For this topic candidates should study how children go through the initial phases of language acquisition and how they develop writing skills.

Candidates should study:

- the functions of children's language
- the development of phonological and pragmatic competence, lexis, grammar and semantics
- the relationship between children's spoken and written language
- the development of the conventions of writing and multimodal texts
- theories about language development: imitation, innateness, cognition, input, socio-cultural, genre theory.

The format of the question paper

The unit is divided into two sections:

- **Section A** Language and Mode
- **Section B** Language Development

Candidates will answer two questions in total. They will answer one question from **Section A** and one from **Section B**.

In **Section A** there will be one question. In **Section B** there will be a choice of two questions. One question will be set on initial language acquisition and one will be set on children's development of writing.

The unit allows 30 minutes for the reading and preparation of the data to be analysed in answering Section A and B. It is recommended that candidates then spend 45 minutes writing their Section A answer and 45 minutes writing their Section B answer.

Section A: Language and Mode

Candidates will be required to write an analysis of two texts for comparison.

The texts may be:

- written, spoken, electronic
- planned or unprepared
- monologue or dialogue.

Candidates will be asked to

- analyse how the texts' language is affected by their mode and context
- how the texts convey meanings.

Section B: Language Development

This section tests candidates' ability to engage with some important issues about the use of written and spoken language.

Candidates will write an essay on one of two topics:

- initial language acquisition
- or
- children's writing.

One question will be set on each of the topics. The question will be divided into two parts to scaffold candidates' answers. Candidates will be asked to:

- comment linguistically on a small piece of data from children's speech or writing
- write discursively in response to an essay cue question based on issues raised by the data.

3.2 Unit 2 ENGA2 – Representation and Language

Introduction

This coursework unit is designed to develop candidates' ability to write for specific audiences and purposes and to explore the key ideas of representation and ideology. It draws on the key concepts of use-related variation, and develops their ability to use linguistic frameworks to analyse and interpret language in use.

In the unit candidates will produce creative and analytical work linked by the issues of how texts produce representations of people, institutions and events, and help to produce, reproduce or challenge social values and attitudes.

Unit Subject Content

1 Investigating representations

For the Investigation task candidates should investigate how texts might produce social values and how they might contribute to maintaining or changing values.

Candidates may study texts used to represent:

- social groups (eg according to gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, age, class)
- individuals (eg a celebrity)
- events and issues (eg a war, death, work)
- institutions (eg the monarchy).

Work should focus on how lexis, grammar, semantics and discourse structure in individual texts produce representations. Candidates will need to use the linguistic frameworks developed in unit 1 to carry out a critical discourse analysis.

Candidates should explore the texts':

- purposes
- construction of an author identity
- construction and positioning of an ideal reader and the shaping of response
- representation
- possible actual audience and interpretations
- genre.

2 Producing representations

For the production task candidates should explore how to write in order to make a positive intervention in discourses about:

- a social group (eg according to gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, age, class)
- an individual (eg a celebrity)

- an event or issue (eg a war, death, work)
- an institution (eg the monarchy).

This work should draw on the knowledge about textual representations developed in the investigation coursework.

For the production task candidates may explore writing in a wide variety of genres for different audiences and purposes in order further to understand use-related variation. The key concepts in negotiating this task are the following elements of context:

- audience
- purpose
- field
- mode
- genre.

Candidates may write in literary and non-literary forms.

Coursework Piece 1: Investigation

Candidates should analyse between three and five texts (which may be extracts from longer texts).

There should be a temporal relationship between the texts. An investigation may focus on a number of texts:

- produced at the same time (eg surveying newspaper articles published on the same day)
- evolving over times (eg a news story spanning a period of time)
- produced at different times (eg texts produced in the 1950s, 1970s and the 21st century).

The analysis should be 1000 – 1500 words long. Copies of the analysed text should be presented with it.

Coursework Piece 2: Production

Candidates should produce one text of 600 words.

The text should have a clear genre other than an academic one such as an essay. The intended audience, purpose and place of publication should be specified as much as is appropriate to the genre. Genres may be literary or non-literary.

The text should be written to produce or challenge a particular representation of a social group, individual, event or institution.

The text should be accompanied by a 400 word commentary justifying the intended representation and explaining how it has been achieved.

Tasks, Marks and Weightings

Question	Length	AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4	Total
1. Language Investigation	1000 – 1500 words	10 (6.7%)		20 (13.3%)		30 (20%)
2. Language Production and Commentary	600 plus 400 words				30 (20%)	30 (20%)
AS Unit Total	2000 - 2500	10 (6.7%)		20 (13.3%)	30 (20%)	60 (40%)
<i>A Level Total</i>		<i>(3.3%)</i>		<i>(6.7%)</i>	<i>(10%)</i>	<i>(20%)</i>

Unit 2 Coursework- Representation Investigation

Mark	AO1: Select and apply a range of linguistic methods, to communicate relevant knowledge using appropriate terminology and coherent, accurate written expression (Award a mark out of 10)	Mark	AO3: Analyse and evaluate the influence of contextual factors on the production and reception of spoken and written language (Award a mark out of 20)
9-10	Uses sophisticated and demanding linguistic terms with rare mistakes. Guides reader structurally and stylistically. Makes very few technical errors. <i>Candidates are likely to describe:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sentence types, clauses and clause elements • pragmatic features • structural features • types of turn. 	17-20	Makes close detailed points drawing on and integrating various aspects of description. Engages perceptively with texts' meanings, purposes and effects. <i>Candidates are likely to explore:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sentence and clause effects • communicative strategies • processes of nominalisation and transitivity • conceptualised techniques/issues/representations.
7-8	Uses a range of linguistic terms or in some depth with occasional errors. Develops a line of argument in controlled linguistic register. Shows firm control of technical accuracy. <i>Candidates are likely to describe:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • types of nouns, adjectives, adverbs • verb tenses, aspect, voice, modality • interactive features. 	13-16	Analyses context's influence and interprets texts' communicative intent clearly and in detail. <i>Candidates are likely to analyse:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • particular effects, representations, views and attitudes • representations of processes and circumstances.
5-6	Uses linguistic terms consistently and largely accurately. Communicates clearly with clear topics and paragraphs. Makes infrequent technical errors. <i>Candidates are likely to describe:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • word classes: adjectives, verbs, adverbs, conjunctions • sentence functions. 	9-12	Understands effect of context and what texts are trying to communicate. <i>Candidates are likely to analyse:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meanings of word choices • representation of participants • relational aspects of the text - positioning of ideal reader.

4	<p>Begins to use linguistic terms but with some errors.</p> <p>Expresses ideas with organisation emerging.</p> <p>Occasional technical errors.</p> <p><i>Candidates are likely to label:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>pronouns precisely</i> • <i>some phonological features</i> • <i>some lexical-semantic features.</i> 	7-8	<p>Shows awareness of effect of context.</p> <p>Begins to interpret what texts are trying to communicate.</p> <p><i>Candidates are likely to explain:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>address</i> • <i>topics, meanings and attitudes broadly.</i>
3	<p>Attempts to use linguistic terms with occasional accuracy of description.</p> <p>Conveys basic ideas with some organisation.</p> <p>Frequent errors.</p> <p><i>Candidates are likely to identify :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>graphology/complexity/formality.</i> 	5-6	<p>Identifies some features of language variation.</p> <p>Has broad awareness that context has influenced language use.</p> <p><i>Candidates are likely to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>identify functions and audience broadly.</i>
2	<p>Attempts to use frameworks with minimal accuracy achieved or quotes judiciously without linguistic description.</p> <p>Makes basic errors that intrude on communication.</p>	3-4	<p>Gives simple/generalised/descriptive accounts of the content of texts.</p> <p><i>Candidates are likely to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>give well selected but unanalysed quotations.</i>
1	<p>Rarely quotes or refers to the language of the text(s).</p> <p>Has major flaws in language that impede communication.</p>	1-2	<p>Misunderstands audience/purpose/context/content/meaning significantly.</p>
0	Does not communicate.	0	Does not comment on the texts.

Unit 2 Coursework - Representation Production

Mark	AO4: Demonstrate expertise and creativity in the use of English in a range of different contexts, informed by linguistic study		
	A Form and Content	B Style and Structure	C Commentary
9-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses form in original and innovative ways as appropriate. • Provides interesting and engaging content for audience, addressing their situation and interests. • Creates challenging and detailed representations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes judicious choices – creative and stylish. • Makes rare errors. • Writes appropriately, controlling vocabulary and syntax. • Guides reader. • Uses cohesion well to link topics and sections. • Concludes effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Justifies representations and places in wider contexts. • Shows insight about the construction of meaning. • Explores effects of sentence and clause structure and patterns on representation.
7-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controls form, paying attention to genre and needs of audience. • Uses appropriate content to produce a detailed representation suited for context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses and sustains effective style. • Firm control of accuracy. • Uses language with precision and clarity. • Develops a line of thought. • Effective opening and introduction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows understanding of representation issues. • Analyses language choices. • Makes detailed comments about the representational effects of word class choices, eg tenses, modality, adverb types, adjective types, noun types.
5-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handles form competently, showing knowledge of requirements and conventions. • Produces a developed and convincing representation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins to make stylistic choices for effect. • Infrequent technical errors. • Addresses the audience appropriately. • Conveys ideas clearly. • Develops and organises content. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explains intentions with regard to representation. • Interprets some language choices. • Comments on use of eg nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs and how they represent the subject matter.

Mark	AO4: Demonstrate expertise and creativity in the use of English in a range of different contexts, informed by linguistic study		
	A Form and Content	B Style and Structure	C Commentary
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses clear structural elements. • Employs basic features of the form. • Produces a text that is inconsistent in representation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language reflects audience/purpose/genre. • Makes occasional errors. • Uses some appropriate style for context. • Uses clear topics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explains some language choices. • Covers content unevenly. • Discusses matters of address to audience. • Discusses pronouns and sentence functions.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows awareness of textual structures and formal conventions but with weak control of formal principles. • Shows awareness of form. • Relies heavily on sources and stereotypes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modifies language for audience and purpose. • Makes frequent errors. • Shows some awareness of necessary style. • Achieves basic control and organising of content. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows limited awareness of representation issues. • Identifies features of style with limited comment or focus. • Makes broad comments about access, formality, complexity.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realises formal conventions in a basic way. • Content is developed without clear representation focus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a general style with broad shaping for audience and purpose. • Makes intrusive basic errors. • Uses simple structural features: paragraphed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paraphrases or describes content.
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misjudges form. • Writes a short and fragmentary text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has major language flaws: communication impeded. • Uses inappropriate style. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes nature of text at a broad level.
U	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has no sense of form or shaping of material. • Does not produce a focussed representation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fails to communicate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes no comments on work.

3.3 Unit 3 ENGA3 - Language Explorations

Introduction

This unit is designed to introduce candidates to the wider study of language in society. After the AS units which focussed on language in its immediate contexts (use-related variation according to subject, purpose, audience, genre and mode), this unit places language in its wider geographical, social and temporal contexts.

Candidates will study how and why language changes and varies. They will learn to describe, explain and evaluate variation in both spoken and written language, showing the effects of historical, geographical, social and personal factors. Candidates will be expected to be familiar with major research and ideas in these areas. They will also need to show understanding of popular and academic explanations, attitudes and views concerning language variation and change. Candidates will also be expected to show knowledge of methodological issues linked to these explanations and views.

The unit is also designed to be **synoptic**. It will test candidates' acquired ability to analyse and evaluate spoken and written language in both their immediate and wider contexts. They will study the nature of language in use but also the ways in which ideas about language are created and constituted.

Unit Subject Content

For **Section A Language Variation and Change** candidates should study:

- language variation: regional, social (i.e. according to age, gender, class, ethnicity, groups) and international (English as a world language)
- standard and vernacular dialects and accents
- the distinctive phonological, lexical and grammatical features of regional and social varieties
- the causes of social and regional variation
- effects of age, gender, group membership, social class and social context on language variation
- attitudes to variation and standard and vernacular varieties
- debates about the role of standard and vernacular varieties in education
- methodologies for the study of language variation
- theories and explanations of language variation (eg status vs solidarity explanations of accent variation; dominance, difference and diversity approaches to gender and interaction)

- descriptivist and prescriptivist approaches to language study
- language change from 1600 onwards
- the causes of change in language
- effects of age, gender, group membership, social class and social context on language change
- language change and social values (eg the PC debate)
- theories about the nature and causes of change (eg internal vs external)
- attitudes to language change
- methodologies for the study of language change.

For **Section B Language Discourses** candidates should study discourses about:

- international, regional and social accents and dialects
- language change
- gender and interaction
- political correctness.

Candidates should study a range of popular texts aimed at a non-linguistic audience which discuss language topics and issues. They should be able to analyse how the writers use language to convey their ideas about language. Candidates will need to evaluate both the ideas and how they are presented.

The format of the question paper:

The unit is divided into two sections:

- **Section A** Language Variation and Change
- **Section B** Language Discourses

Candidates will answer **two** questions in total. They will answer **one** question from **Section A** and **one** from **Section B**.

In **Section A** there will be a choice of two questions; in **Section B** there will be one question.

The unit allows 30 minutes for the reading and preparation of the data to be analysed in answering Section A and B. It is recommended that candidates then spend 60 minutes writing their Section A answer and 60 minutes writing their Section B answer.

Section A: Language Variation and Change

Section A is designed to elicit candidates' ability to evaluate ideas and issues about language variation and change by using their knowledge and study and two pieces of data.

The task will be an essay cue requiring the evaluation of a particular idea, proposition or approach regarding language variation and change.

The task will present candidates with two pieces of data. These may be spoken or written texts, word lists, graphical or tabular information about language use or a model representing ideas about language.

Section B: Language Discourses

Section B is designed to elicit candidates' ability to evaluate how language and language issues are debated and represented in society.

The task will present candidates with two passages about a language topic.

Candidates will be given texts about language aimed at a popular, non-linguistic audience and they may be given texts from different times.

The question will ask candidates to:

- analyse and evaluate how the two texts contribute to a discourse about language, constituting social knowledge about the language issue
- assess the validity of the views about language in the texts, drawing on their own knowledge and study of language.

3.4 Unit 4 ENGA4 - Language Investigations and Interventions

Introduction

This unit is designed to develop candidates' ability to investigate language independently. It enables them to pursue areas of individual interest and to explore methodological issues concerning data collection and analysis.

The unit is also designed to develop candidates' writing skills by requiring them to communicate their linguistic insights and understanding to a non-specialist audience. Candidates are required to use their knowledge and understanding to make an intervention in a linguistic debate.

This unit enables candidates to develop a creative and critical approach to their studies.

The features which distinguish the tasks as coursework assessments are the candidate's:

- individual identification of a research question and investigation topic
- individual development and execution of a methodology for data collection and analysis
- ability to work in greater depth and/or with greater range
- ability to describe and analyse the sounds of spoken English
- opportunity to carry out longitudinal and developmental studies
- explore style models and develop creative skills through a research and drafting process.

Unit Subject Content

1 Language Investigation

For this unit candidates must carry out an original piece of language research to answer questions they have posed or to test an hypothesis they have

generated. The investigation should focus on **spoken** rather than written language.

For the purposes of the investigation spoken is taken simply to refer to language which is literally intended to be spoken aloud. This definition will therefore include scripted and spontaneous speech. Candidates are permitted to look at written text if it illuminates a question about spoken language. It would be permissible to study Teletext subtitles as a way of evaluating the access they provide to the spoken dialogue.

Candidates will need to devise a methodology to collect original data to investigate. They will need to evaluate and then apply appropriate linguistic frameworks for analysis. They are also required to integrate reading of appropriate secondary sources to illuminate their investigation.

The content will be defined by the candidate's choice of topic. However they should learn about:

- the asking of questions and generation of hypotheses about language
- the formulation of aims and objectives
- the design of methodologies
- issues affecting the validity of data and analysis
- ethical issues
- data collection
- data preparation and processing
- using secondary sources
- selecting linguistic frameworks for analysis
- carrying out data analysis
- drawing conclusions
- evaluating their investigation methods and conclusions
- academic referencing.

The format of the Language Investigation

A Language Investigation should contain:

- 1 **Introduction** This should outline the topic and justify its significance. It should clarify what question(s) the investigation explores or the hypothesis it tests. It should place the investigation within a particular area of study and state what levels of language will be explored.
- 2 **Aims** The investigation should clarify what it is trying to find out.
- 3 **Methodology** The investigation should provide an evaluative explanation of how data has been collected and analysed.
- 4 **Data** The data used in the investigation must be presented. Recordings of spoken data must be available.
- 5 **Analysis** The body of the investigation will report the findings of the analysis of the data.
- 6 **Conclusion** The investigation should clarify what has been found out with regard to the aims and question (s) or hypothesis.
- 7 **Evaluation** A brief analysis of the successfulness and validity of the methodology should be presented. It may be appropriate to indicate further research that might be carried out if more time and words were available.
- 8 **Bibliography** A list of primary and secondary sources used in the investigation should be provided using a standard academic format.
- 9 **Appendices** It may be appropriate to submit processed versions of the data to illustrate how analyses have been arrived at.

The investigation should be between 1750-2500 words (excluding data).

Advice on setting assignments

For their investigation candidates may look at a wide variety of types of spoken language. It is vital that an investigation is based on original primary language data. It should not be a survey of academic literature.

When investigating language there are a number of different questions candidates can ask. What are the features of language that are used? What is language used for? Who is using it? How do people feel about it?

These different questions can be summarised by the following main types of investigation:

- 1 A **Language** based investigation: what are the distinctive features of this type of language?
- 2 A **Function/Use** based investigation: what is the language used to do?
- 3 An **Attitudes** based investigation: how do people feel about this language?

- 4 A **User** based investigation: who uses this type of language?

Candidates will need to decide what kind of data they will need to collect:

Primary language data (spoken language, written language, word lists (eg lists of new words, slang terms etc, pronunciation features)

Secondary language data (attitudes to language, uses of language, views about language)

Comparative, contrastive or longitudinal data.

Sample Assignments:

- a study of dialect and accent features across three generations in a family
- a study of figurative language in a politician's speeches
- a study of attitudes to rising intonation on declaratives
- a comparison of the language of all male and all female groups in a problem solving activity
- an evaluation of the access provided to spoken language on television by Teletext subtitles.

2 Language Intervention

The Language Intervention coursework task is designed to allow candidates to make an informed contribution to social debates about language, communicating their knowledge beyond the confines of their academic discipline.

Candidates must write about a language debate in a particular form for a non-specialist audience.

Candidates should study writing in different forms to inform, argue, instruct and persuade, eg articles, editorials, letters to the editor, scripts. They should study how to transform and represent linguistic ideas for a non-specialist audience.

The topic for the intervention should come from the subject matter studied for **Unit 3**. Candidates may use any topical language issues that arise during their course to which they want to respond. Candidates should produce one or two texts totalling 1250 words.

Sample Assignments:

- a feature article in a quality/broadsheet newspaper about whether regional accents and dialects are dying out and whether this matters
- a feature article in a lifestyle magazine about whether women and men really do use language differently in interaction
- a script for a radio documentary on Radio 4 about World English, standardisation and fragmentation

- a webpage for a county council explaining the issues about the words used to refer to people from different social groups and its policy
- a review of the book *Between You And I: A Little Book of Bad English* by James Cochrane to appear in a quality newspaper
- a short story exploring issues about identity and attitudes to accents and dialects
- an extract for an Usborne children's book about the history of English, focussing on attitudes to language change.

Tasks, Marks and Weightings

Task	Length	AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4	Total
1. Language Investigation	1750 – 2500 words	10 (3.3%)	10 (3.3%)	10 (3.3%)		30 (10%)
2. Language Intervention	1250 words				30 (10%)	30 (10%)
Unit Total/ A Level Total	3000 - 3750	10 (3.3%)	10 (3.3%)	10 (3.3%)	30 (10%)	60 (20%)

Unit 4 Language Investigation Coursework

Mark	AO1: Select and apply a range of linguistic methods, to communicate relevant knowledge using appropriate terminology and coherent, accurate written expression	AO2: Demonstrate critical understanding a range of concepts and issues related to the construction and analysis of meanings in spoken and written language	AO3: Analyse and evaluate the influence of contextual factors on the production and reception of spoken and written language
9-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies a sophisticated and searching range of frameworks in depth to enhance and illuminate understanding. • Clear and accurate description. • Perceptive methodology. • Evaluates methodology and explores alternative avenues of investigation. • Guides reader structurally and stylistically. • Makes very few technical errors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a conceptualised overview of theories and research which informs the investigation. • Identifies and challenges standpoints making evaluative comments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates analytical grasp of how language works across different levels. • Places analysis in wider contexts. • Shows perceptive / conceptualised/ illuminating/open-minded approach. • Uses interesting and judicious examples and quotation. • Evaluates appropriateness/success.
7-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies a relevant range of linguistic frameworks, showing some depth and detail, and with rare errors. • Describes significant language features and patterns clearly and accurately. • Shows value of linguistic descriptions. • Reflects on methodology. • Develops a line of argument in a controlled linguistic register. • Shows firm control of technical accuracy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows depth or range of knowledge and understanding of linguistic concepts, theories and research which underpin investigation. • Formulates some overviews of issues raised by data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyses language features, their explanatory context and their communicative impact confidently. • Makes a subtle interpretation integrating various levels of description. • Explores texts' meaning, purpose and effects. • Makes evaluative comments which are well supported.
5-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies linguistic frameworks consistently and largely accurately. • Selects fruitful linguistic approaches. • Well focussed aims. • Explains and justifies methodology. • Communicates clearly with clear topics and paragraphs. • Makes infrequent technical errors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows detailed knowledge of linguistic ideas, concepts and research. • Develops own views on linguistic issues, raised by the data. • Shows knowledge of linguistic ideas, concepts and research. • Outlines linguistic issues raised by the data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyses meanings of a range of language features. • Analyses context's influence in detail. • Engages with texts' communicative intent. • Quotes aptly. • Makes some evaluative comment tied to textual detail.

4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies a linguistic framework with some errors. • Clarifies some linguistic aims. • Describes methodology. • Expresses ideas with organisation emerging. • Occasional technical errors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reveals familiarity with linguistic approaches. • Adopts a linguistic approach to the collection and study of data. • Makes some use of key issues, eg purpose/field/ audience/ representation/ text types. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands effect of context. • Illustrates some effects of producer/ audience/mode/ purpose/field. • Begins to interpret what text communicates. • Illustrates using quotations.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempts to use linguistic description with occasional accuracy of description. • Conveys basic ideas with some organisation. • Frequent errors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows awareness of linguistic ideas, concepts and approaches. • Generates some purposeful discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies some features of language variation. • Has broad awareness that • Context has influenced language use.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempts to use frameworks with minimal accuracy achieved or quotes judiciously without linguistic description. • Makes basic errors that intrude on communication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is uncertain about how to carry out linguistic study. • Is anecdotal/descriptive with implicit relevance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives simple/generalised/ descriptive accounts of the content of texts and data. • Paraphrases. Quotes excessively. • Gives well selected but unanalysed quotations.
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal engagement with language of the data. • Quotes/refers to data rarely. • Has major flaws in language that impede communication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has little focus on linguistic issues. • Engages with content only or other non-linguistic issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misunderstands mode/ purpose/context/ content/ meaning significantly.
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not communicate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows no understanding of anything concerned with the study of language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not analyse data.

Unit 4 Language Intervention Coursework

Mark	AO4: Demonstrate expertise and creativity in the use of English in a range of different contexts, informed by linguistic study.		
	A Form	B Style	C Content
9-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a demanding form effectively. • Is original and innovative as appropriate. • Produces a polished and impressive piece. • Gives a well shaped and structured tour of issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates flair, precision, deftness. • Uses technical aspects for stylistic effect. • Uses vocabulary and syntax subtly to express arguments. • Combines information, argument, with stylishness, wit and playfulness. • Uses language to entertain as well as inform and argue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a conceptualised overview of theories and research. • Analyses and evaluates alternative views. • Identifies and challenges standpoints. • Adopts an exploratory/original/evaluative approach.
7-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses form skilfully and knowledgeably. • Guides reader. • Shows some ability to innovate/take risks. • Links arguments, topics and sections/speakers. • Uses cohesion well. • Concludes effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pays close attention to the communication of meaning. • Makes judicious choices – creative and stylish. • Handles complexity and difficulty well. • Makes rare technical errors. • Writes accessibly, controlling vocabulary/syntax. • Argues well-documented viewpoints. • Addresses the audience's situation and interests. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates nature of debates and issues about language. • Identifies different views and interpretations. • Comments on others' ideas.
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows convincing control of form, paying attention to genre and needs of audience. • Develops a line of thought. • Effective opening and introduction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses and sustains effective style. • Has firm control of technical accuracy. • Addresses the audience appropriately. • Uses language effectively to inform. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates depth or range of knowledge of linguistic ideas/concepts/research. • Develops own views on language topic. • Communicates detailed linguistic insights about examples of language in use.

Mark	AO4: Demonstrate expertise and creativity in the use of English in a range of different contexts, informed by linguistic study.		
	A Form	B Style	C Content
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handles form competently, showing knowledge of requirements and conventions. Develops and directs content. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begins to make stylistic choices for effect. Makes infrequent technical errors. Works to transform linguistic ideas for audience. Takes some technical features or research for granted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates some knowledge of linguistic ideas, concepts and research. Outlines views on language topic. Comments on how language is used.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses clear structural elements. Employs basic handling of the form. Uses clear topics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language reflects audience/purpose/genre. Makes occasional errors. Uses some appropriate style for context. Recognises need to use a linguistic register. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows familiarity with linguistic ideas, concepts and research. Makes sustained explanation of how language is used.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows awareness of textual structures/conventions but with weak control of formal principles. Shows awareness of form. Achieves basic control and organising of content. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modifies language for audience and purpose. Makes frequent errors. Shows some awareness of necessary style. Uses frequent overly academic elements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows awareness of linguistic ideas, concepts and research.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses simple organisational features: paragraphed. Realises conventions in a basic way. Writes an essay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses a general style with broad shaping for audience and purpose. Makes intrusive basic errors. Uses a consistently academic style. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writes anecdotally with implicit relevance.
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Misjudges form. Writes a short and fragmentary text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has major language flaws: communication impeded. Uses inappropriate style. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieves little focus on linguistic issues.
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has no sense of form or shaping of material. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fails to communicate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows no understanding of anything concerned with the study of language.

4 Scheme of Assessment

4.1 Aims

AS and A level courses based on this specification should encourage candidates to deepen their interest and enjoyment in the use of English as they:

- develop and apply their understanding of the concepts and methods appropriate for the analysis and study of language
- undertake independent investigative work related to language in use
- engage creatively and independently with a varied programme for the study of English from the past to the present day
- develop their skills as producers and interpreters of language.

4.2 Assessment Objectives (AOs)

The Assessment Objectives are common to AS and A Level. The assessment units will assess the following Assessment Objectives in the context of the content and skills set out in Section 3 (Subject Content).

- AO1 Select and apply a range of linguistic methods, to communicate relevant knowledge using appropriate terminology and coherent, accurate written expression
- AO2 Demonstrate critical understanding of a range of concepts and issues related to the construction and analysis of meanings in spoken and written language, using knowledge of linguistic approaches
- AO3 Analyse and evaluate the influence of contextual factors on the production and reception of spoken and written language, showing knowledge of the key constituents of language
- AO4 Demonstrate expertise and creativity in the use of English in a range of different contexts, informed by linguistic study

Quality of Written Communication (QWC)

In GCE specifications which require candidates to produce written material in English, candidates must:

- ensure that text is legible and that spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate so that meaning is clear;
- select and use a form and style of writing appropriate to purpose and to complex subject matter
- organise information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary when appropriate.

In this specification QWC will be assessed in all units by means of AO1.

Weighting of Assessment Objectives for AS

The table below shows the approximate weighting of each of the Assessment Objectives in the AS units.

Assessment Objectives	Unit Weightings (%)		Overall Weighting of AOs (%)
	Unit 1	Unit 2	
AO1	20	6.7	26.7
AO2	20		20
AO3	20	13.3	33.3
AO4		20	20
Overall weighting of units (%)	60	40	100

Weighting of Assessment Objectives for A Level

The table below shows the approximate weighting of each of the Assessment Objectives in the AS and A2 units.

Assessment Objectives	Unit Weightings (%)				Overall Weighting of AOs (%)
	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	
AO1	10	3.3	6.7	3.3	23.3
AO2	10		13.3	3.3	26.7
AO3	10	6.7	10	3.3	30
AO4		10		10	20
Overall weighting of units (%)	30	20	30	20	100

4.3 National Criteria

This specification complies with the following.

- The Subject Criteria for English Language
- The Code of Practice for GCE
- The GCE AS and A Level Qualification Criteria
- The Arrangements for the Statutory Regulation of External Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland: Common Criteria

4.4 Prior Learning

There are no prior learning requirements.

We recommend that candidates should have acquired the skills and knowledge associated with a GCSE English course or equivalent.

However, any requirements set for entry to a course following this specification are at the discretion of centres.

4.5 Synoptic Assessment and Stretch and Challenge

Synoptic Assessment

Synoptic assessment in English Language requires candidates to synthesise the insights they have developed through the application of linguistic knowledge to the study of speech and writing, including multimodal texts. Critical understanding of meaning and variation in language will be informed by the appropriate use of linguistic analyses. Candidates will need to demonstrate their skills of interpretation and expression in insightful, accurate, well-argued responses.

Synoptic assessment in AQA English Language A is assessed in the A2 units which are designed to enable candidates to produce a range of writing and to make connections between all elements of the specification. In Unit 3, Language Explorations, candidates will be assessed on their ability to analyse and evaluate spoken and written language in both their immediate and wider contexts. Candidates will need to demonstrate an ability to write in an academic form. Questions 1 and 2, Language

Variation and Change, will require candidates to use their critical analysis skills when studying data in order to show their understanding of language as a culturally and institutionally situated social discourse. Question 3, Language Discourses, will require candidates to evaluate how language and language issues are debated and represented in society.

Language Investigations and Interventions, Unit 4, enables candidates to develop further a creative and critical approach to their studies by undertaking independent language study and by writing in a particular form for a non-specialist audience. It will be necessary for candidates to draw on the knowledge, understanding and skills they have developed at AS level. For the investigation element, candidates will be required to choose an investigation topic and generate a hypothesis. Candidates will then need to collect their own data and will be assessed on their ability to work with data in greater detail and depth using their critical skills. Candidates will be required to synthesise their findings by drawing conclusions in relation to their aims. Candidates will need to

evaluate the methodology used in their investigations and to reference their sources in an academic format. For the linked intervention element, candidates will need to transform and represent linguistic ideas connected to their investigation for a non-specialist audience.

Stretch and Challenge

The requirement that stretch and challenge is included at A2 is met by a number of requirements in the specification. These include:

- making connections across all units
- demonstrating knowledge and understanding of major research ideas
- studying language beyond its immediate context by looking at geographical, social and temporal contexts

- developing skills of critical analysis that enable candidates to explore how underlying assumptions and values influence the way ideas about language are represented in society
- expressing knowledge and understanding in both academic and non-academic forms of writing
- extended writing in the form of a language investigation which requires candidates to conceptualise a task, formulate an approach and collect data in order to carry out independent analysis and evaluation.

4.6 Access to Assessment for Disabled Students

AS/A Levels often require assessment of a broader range of competences. This is because they are general qualifications and, as such, prepare candidates for a wide range of occupations and higher level courses.

The revised AS/A Level qualification and subject criteria were reviewed to identify whether any of the competences required by the subject presented a potential barrier to any disabled candidates. If this were the case, the situation was reviewed again to ensure that such competences were included only where essential to the subject. The findings of this process were discussed with disability groups and with disabled people.

Reasonable adjustments are made for disabled candidates in order to enable them to access the assessments. For this reason, very few candidates

will have a complete barrier to any part of the assessment.

Candidates who are still unable to access a significant part of the assessment, even after exploring all possibilities through reasonable adjustments, may still be able to receive an award. They would be given a grade on the parts of the assessment they have taken and there would be an indication on their certificate that not all the competences have been addressed. This will be kept under review and may be amended in the future.

The use of the term “spoken” in AO2 can mean a written record of speech. The subject does not therefore require listening skills. Reading independently may be problematic for some students but should not be a barrier to assessment.

5 Administration

5.1 Availability of Assessment Units and Certification

Examinations and certification for this specification are available as follows:

	Availability of units		Availability of certification	
	AS	A2	AS	A Level
January 2009	✓			
June 2009	✓		✓	
January 2010	✓	✓	✓	
June 2010	✓	✓	✓	✓
January 2011 onwards	✓	✓	✓	✓
June 2011 onwards	✓	✓	✓	✓

5.2 Entries

Please refer to the current version of *Entry Procedures and Codes* for up to date entry procedures. You should use the following entry codes for the units and for certification.

Unit 1 – ENGA1

Unit 2 – ENGA2

Unit 3 – ENGA3

Unit 4 – ENGA4

AS certification – 1701

A Level certification – 2701

5.3 Private Candidates

This specification is available to private candidates. Private candidates should write to AQA for a copy of *Supplementary Guidance for Private Candidates*. Arrangements must be agreed with AQA for the assessment and authentication of coursework.

5.4 Access Arrangements and Special Consideration

We have taken note of equality and discrimination legislation and the interests of minority groups in developing and administering this specification.

We follow the guidelines in the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) document: *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration: General and Vocational Qualifications*. This is published on the JCQ website (<http://www.jcq.org.uk>) or you can follow the link from our website (<http://www.aqa.org.uk>).

Access Arrangements

We can make arrangements so that candidates with disabilities can access the assessment. These arrangements must be made **before** the examination. For example, we can produce a Braille paper for a candidate with a visual impairment.

Special Consideration

We can give special consideration to candidates who have had a temporary illness, injury or indisposition at the time of the examination. Where we do this, it is given **after** the examination.

Applications for access arrangements and special consideration should be submitted to AQA by the Examinations Officer at the centre.

5.5 Language of Examinations

We will provide units for this specification in English only.

5.6 Qualification Titles

Qualifications based on this specification are:

- AQA Advanced Subsidiary GCE in English Language A, and
- AQA Advanced Level GCE in English Language A.

5.7 Awarding Grades and Reporting Results

The AS qualification will be graded on a five-point scale: A, B, C, D and E. The full A Level qualification will be graded on a six-point scale: A*, A, B, C, D and E. To be awarded an A*, candidates will need to achieve a grade A on the full A Level qualification and an A* on the aggregate of the A2 units. For

both qualifications candidates who fail to reach the minimum standard for grade E will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate. Individual assessment unit results will be certificated.

5.8 Re-sits and Shelf-life of Unit Results

Unit results remain available to count towards certification, whether or not they have already been used, as long as the specification is still valid.

Candidates may re-sit a unit any number of times within the shelf-life of the specification. The best result for each unit will count towards the final qualification. Candidates who wish to repeat a

qualification may do so by re-taking one or more units. The appropriate subject award entry, as well as the unit entry/entries, must be submitted in order to be awarded a new subject grade.

Candidates will be graded on the basis of the work submitted for assessment.

6 Coursework Administration

The Head of Centre is responsible to AQA for ensuring that coursework/portfolio work is conducted in accordance with AQA's instructions and JCQ instructions.

This specification operates a consortium network and all centres following the specification belong to a local consortium managed by a consortium adviser appointed by AQA. The purpose of the consortium network is to support teachers with all aspects of the specification but particularly with the coursework unit.

Centres wishing to enter candidates for this specification should request permission to join a local consortium by contacting, in writing, the subject department at AQA.

Upon joining a local consortium, centres will be sent details of their consortium adviser, including a contact address and telephone number. The consortium adviser will be the principal source of guidance and support for not only the coursework element of this specification but will also offer advice on other

aspects of the specification such as texts chosen as wider reading. Teachers may contact their consortium adviser at any time during the course.

The consortium adviser will:

- help centres identify appropriate investigation topics and approaches
- offer advice and support, particularly on the coursework component, but on all aspects of the specification
- assist in the training of members of the consortium in the assessment of coursework
- conduct standardising meetings to ensure consistency and reliability of marking, using the standardisation material issued free of charge to every centre
- provide guidance on ensuring effective internal standardisation of marking within centres.

6.1 Supervision and Authentication of Coursework

The Code of Practice for GCE requires:

- **candidates** to sign the Candidate Record Form (CRF) to confirm that the work submitted is their own, and
- **teachers/assessors** to confirm on the CRF that the work assessed is solely that of the candidate concerned and was conducted under the conditions laid down by the specification.

The completed CRF for each candidate must be attached to his/her work. All teachers who have assessed the work of any candidate entered for each component must sign the declaration of authentication. Failure to sign the authentication statement may delay the processing of the candidates' results.

The teacher should be sufficiently aware of the candidate's standard and level of work to appreciate if the coursework submitted is beyond the talents of the candidate.

In most centres teachers are familiar with candidates' work through class and homework assignments. Where this is not the case, teachers should make sure that coursework is completed under direct supervision.

In all cases, some direct supervision is necessary to ensure that the coursework submitted can be confidently authenticated as the candidate's own.

If teachers/assessors have reservations about signing the authentication statements, the following points of guidance should be followed.

- If it is believed that a candidate has received additional assistance and this is acceptable within the guidelines for the relevant specification, the teacher/assessor should award a mark which represents the candidate's unaided achievement. The authentication statement should be signed and information given on the relevant form.
- If the teacher/assessor is unable to sign the authentication statement for a particular candidate, then the candidate's work cannot be accepted for assessment.
- If malpractice is suspected, the Examinations Officer should be consulted about the procedure to be followed.

6.2 Malpractice

Teachers should inform candidates of the AQA Regulations concerning malpractice.

Candidates must **not**:

- submit work which is not their own;
- lend work to other candidates;
- allow other candidates access to, or the use of, their own independently-sourced source material (this does not mean that candidates may not lend their books to another candidate, but candidates should be prevented from plagiarising other candidates' research);
- include work copied directly from books, the internet or other sources without acknowledgement or attribution;
- submit work typed or word-processed by a third person without acknowledgement.

These actions constitute malpractice, for which a penalty (eg disqualification from the examination) will be applied.

If malpractice is suspected, the Examinations Officer should be consulted about the procedure to be followed.

Where suspected malpractice in coursework/ portfolios is identified by a centre after the candidate has signed the declaration of authentication, the Head of Centre must submit full details of the case to AQA at the earliest opportunity. The form JCQ/M1 should be used. Copies of the form can be found on the JCQ website (<http://www.jcq.org.uk/>).

Malpractice in coursework/portfolios discovered prior to the candidate signing the declaration of authentication need not be reported to AQA, but should be dealt with in accordance with the centre's internal procedures. AQA would expect centres to treat such cases very seriously. Details of any work which is not the candidate's own must be recorded on the coursework/portfolio cover sheet or other appropriate place.

6.3 Teacher Standardisation

This specification operates a consortium network and all centres following the specification belong to a local consortium managed by a consortium adviser appointed by AQA. The purpose of the consortium network is to support teachers with all aspects of the specification but particularly with the coursework units.

The consortium adviser will hold an annual standardising meeting for teachers in the consortium, usually in the autumn term. At that meeting the adviser will provide support in developing appropriate coursework tasks and using the marking criteria. The focus of the standardising meetings will be a booklet of standardisation materials issued prior to that meeting by AQA.

If your centre is new to this specification, you must send a representative to one of the meetings. If you have told us you are a new centre, either by submitting an estimate of entry or by contacting the

subject team, we will contact you to invite you to a meeting.

We will also contact centres if:

- the moderation of coursework from the previous year has identified a serious misinterpretation of the coursework requirements
- inappropriate tasks have been set, or
- a significant adjustment has been made to a centre's marks.

In these cases, centres will be expected to send a representative to one of the meetings. For all other centres, attendance is optional. However, centres are strongly advised to attend their local consortium meetings. Consortium meetings provide valuable support and training for teachers, offer opportunities to meet other teachers within the consortium and enable the useful exchange of ideas and sharing of good practice.

6.4 Internal Standardisation of Marking

Centres must standardise marking within the centre to make sure that all candidates at the centre have been marked to the same standard. One person must be responsible for internal standardisation. This person should sign the Centre Declaration Sheet to confirm that internal standardisation has taken place.

Internal standardisation involves:

- all teachers marking some trial pieces of work and identifying differences in marking standards

- discussing any differences in marking at a training meeting for all teachers involved in the assessment
- referring to reference and archive material such as previous work or examples from AQA's teacher standardising meetings

but other valid approaches are permissible.

6.5 Annotation of Coursework

The Code of Practice for GCE states that the awarding body must require internal assessors to show clearly how the marks have been awarded in relation to the marking criteria defined in the specification and that the awarding body must provide guidance on how this is to be done.

The annotation will help the moderator to see as precisely as possible where the teacher considers that the candidates have met the criteria in the specification.

Work could be annotated by either of the following methods:

- key pieces of evidence flagged throughout the work by annotation either in the margin or in the text
- summative comments on the work, referencing precise sections in the work.

6.6 Submitting Marks and Sample Work for Moderation

The total mark for each candidate must be submitted to AQA and the moderator on the mark forms provided or by Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) by

the specified date. Centres will be informed which candidates' work is required in the samples to be submitted to the moderator.

6.7 Factors Affecting Individual Candidates

Teachers should be able to accommodate the occasional absence of candidates by ensuring that the opportunity is given for them to make up missed assessments.

If work is lost, AQA should be notified immediately of the date of the loss, how it occurred, and who was responsible for the loss. Centres should use the JCQ form JCQ/LCW to inform AQA Candidate Services of the circumstances.

Where special help which goes beyond normal learning support is given, AQA must be informed through comments on the CRF so that such help can be taken into account when moderation takes place.

Candidates who move from one centre to another during the course sometimes present a problem for a scheme of internal assessment. Possible courses of action depend on the stage at which the move takes place. If the move occurs early in the course the new centre should take responsibility for assessment. If it occurs late in the course it may be possible to arrange for the moderator to assess the work through the 'Educated Elsewhere' procedure. Centres should contact AQA at the earliest possible stage for advice about appropriate arrangements in individual cases.

6.8 Retaining Evidence and Re-using Marks

The centre must retain the work of all candidates, with CRFs attached, under secure conditions, from the time it is assessed, to allow for the possibility of an enquiry about results. The work may be returned

to candidates after the deadline for enquiries about results. If an enquiry about a result has been made, the work must remain under secure conditions in case it is required by AQA.

7 Moderation

7.1 Moderation Procedures

Moderation of the coursework is by inspection of a sample of candidates' work by a moderator appointed by AQA. The centre marks must be submitted to AQA and to the moderator by the specified deadline. We will let centres know which candidates' work will be required in the sample to be submitted for moderation.

Centres are offered a choice of moderation method. They can opt for:

EITHER Postal Moderation

The selected sample of candidates' coursework is posted to the moderator at home. The sample is then re-marked by the moderator.

OR Consortium moderation

Consortium moderation replaces postal moderation for those centres that prefer this method. Teachers from a consortium attend a moderation meeting in their consortium area, supervised by their consortium

adviser. The samples of coursework are taken to the moderation meeting by the centre and are re-marked at the meeting.

For both moderation methods, following the re-marking of the sample work, the moderator's marks are compared with the centre marks to determine whether any adjustment is needed in order to bring the centre's assessments into line with standards generally. In some cases it may be necessary for the moderator to call for the work of other candidates in the centre. In order to meet this possible request, centres must retain under secure conditions and have available the coursework and the CRF of every candidate entered for the examination and be prepared to submit it on demand. Mark adjustments will normally preserve the centre's order of merit, but where major discrepancies are found, we reserve the right to alter the order of merit.

7.2 Post-moderation Procedures

On publication of the AS/A level results, we will provide centres with details of the final marks for the coursework unit.

The candidates' work will be returned to the centre after the examination. The centre will receive a report

giving feedback on the appropriateness of the tasks set, the accuracy of the assessments made, and the reasons for any adjustments to the marks.

We may retain some candidates' work for archive or standardising purposes.

Appendices

A Performance Descriptions

These performance descriptions show the level of attainment characteristic of the grade boundaries at A Level. They give a general indication of the required learning outcomes at the A/B and E/U boundaries at AS and A2. The descriptions should be interpreted in relation to the content outlined in the specification; they are not designed to define that content.

The grade awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the Assessment Objectives (see Section 4) overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of the examination may be balanced by better performances in others.

AS performance descriptions for English language

	Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3	Assessment Objective 4
Assessment Objectives	Select and apply a range of linguistic methods to communicate relevant knowledge using appropriate terminology and coherent, accurate written expression.	Demonstrate critical understanding of a range of concepts and issues related to the construction and analysis of meanings in spoken and written language, using knowledge of linguistic approaches.	Analyse and evaluate the influence of contextual factors on the production and reception of spoken and written language, showing knowledge of the key constituents of language.	Demonstrate expertise and creativity in the use of English in a range of different contexts, informed by linguistic study.
A/B boundary performance descriptions	Candidates characteristically: a) communicate relevant knowledge and understanding of the methods of language study b) consistently use appropriate terminology to support interpretations when applying this understanding c) structure and organise their writing well d) communicate content and meaning through expressive and accurate writing.	Candidates characteristically: a) communicate relevant understanding of linguistic approaches, concepts and issues b) explore the significant features of linguistic variation that create meaning in spoken and written language c) generally use specific references to support their responses.	Candidates characteristically: a) explore the relationships between spoken and written language and the contexts in which both are used b) communicate a practical understanding of issues relating to language in use.	Candidates characteristically: a) write effectively in a form and style matched to audience, purpose and genre b) select and order relevant content c) identify where, and suggest how, key linguistic features are used in their writing to create specific effects.
E/U boundary performance descriptions	Candidates characteristically: a) communicate some understanding of the methods of language study b) apply this understanding to support interpretations c) communicate content and meaning in writing using straightforward language.	Candidates characteristically: a) communicate some understanding of linguistic approaches, concepts or issues b) identify features of linguistic variation that create meaning in spoken and written language c) make some related references to texts to support their responses.	Candidates characteristically: a) note some relationships between spoken and written language and the contexts in which both are used b) communicate some understanding of issues relating to language in use.	Candidates characteristically: a) demonstrate some ability to write in a form and style matched to audience, purpose or genre b) select and order content c) identify where some linguistic features are used in their writing to create effects.

A2 performance descriptions for English language

	Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3	Assessment Objective 4
Assessment Objectives	Select and apply a range of linguistic methods to communicate relevant knowledge using appropriate terminology and coherent, accurate written expression.	Demonstrate critical understanding of a range of concepts and issues related to the construction and analysis of meanings in spoken and written language, using knowledge of linguistic approaches.	Analyse and evaluate the influence of contextual factors on the production and reception of spoken and written language, showing knowledge of the key constituents of language.	Demonstrate expertise and creativity in the use of English in a range of different contexts, informed by linguistic study.
A/B boundary performance descriptions	Candidates characteristically: a) communicate extensive knowledge and understanding of the methods of language study b) create and sustain well organised and coherent arguments, using appropriate terminology to support informed interpretations c) structure and organise their writing using an appropriate linguistic register d) communicate content and meaning through expressive and accurate writing.	Candidates characteristically: a) communicate critical understanding of linguistic approaches, concepts and issues b) distinguish and describe a range of significant features of linguistic variation that creates meaning in spoken and written language c) consistently make reference to authorities, texts and sources to support their responses.	Candidates characteristically: a) explore and comment on the significance of the relationships between spoken and written language and the contexts in which both are used b) communicate an informed understanding of concepts and issues relating to language in use.	Candidates characteristically: a) write effectively in a form and style matched to audience, purpose and genre b) select and order complex and relevant content c) identify where and explain how key linguistic features are used in their writing to create specific effects.
E/U boundary performance descriptions	Candidates characteristically: a) communicate knowledge and some understanding of the methods of language study b) present responses making some use of appropriate terminology to support interpretations c) communicate content and meaning using straightforward language accurately.	Candidates characteristically: a) communicate an understanding of linguistic approaches, concepts or issues b) identify features of linguistic variation that create meaning in spoken and written language c) make some reference to authorities, texts or sources to support their responses.	Candidates characteristically: a) comment on the relationships between spoken and written language and the contexts in which both are used b) communicate some understanding of concepts and issues relating to language in use.	Candidates characteristically: a) demonstrate some ability to write in a form and style matched to audience, purpose or genre b) select and order relevant content c) identify where key linguistic features are used in their writing to create specific effects.

B Spiritual, Moral, Ethical, Social and other Issues

European Dimension

AQA has taken account of the 1988 Resolution of the Council of the European Community in preparing this specification and associated specimen units.

Environmental Education

AQA has taken account of the 1988 Resolution of the Council of the European Community and the Report *“Environmental Responsibility: An Agenda for*

Further and Higher Education” 1993 in preparing this specification and associated specimen units.

Avoidance of Bias

AQA has taken great care in the preparation of this specification and specimen units to avoid bias of any kind.

C Overlaps with other Qualifications

There are no overlaps with other qualifications

D Key Skills - Teaching, Developing and Providing Opportunities for Generating Evidence

Introduction

The Key Skills Qualification requires candidates to demonstrate levels of achievement in the Key Skills of Communication, Application of Number and Information Technology.

The units for the 'wider' Key Skills of Improving own Learning and Performance, Working with Others and Problem Solving are also available. The acquisition and demonstration of ability in these 'wider' Key Skills is deemed highly desirable for all candidates, but they do not form part of the Key Skills Qualification.

Copies of the Key Skills Units may be downloaded from QCA's website (www.qca.org.uk/qca_6455.aspx).

The units for each Key Skill comprise three sections:

- What you need to know.
- What you must do.
- Guidance.

Candidates following a course of study based on this specification for [subject] can be offered opportunities to develop and generate evidence of attainment in aspects of the Key Skills of:

- Communication;
- Application of Number;
- Information Technology;
- Working with Others;
- Improving own Learning and Performance;
- Problem Solving.

Areas of study and learning that can be used to encourage the acquisition and use of Key Skills, and to provide opportunities to generate evidence for Part B of the units, are signposted below.

	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4
Communication				
C3.1a	✓	✓	✓	✓
C3.1b	✓	✓	✓	✓
C3.2	✓	✓	✓	✓
C3.3	✓	✓	✓	✓
Application of Number				
N3.1	✓	✓	✓	✓
N3.2	✓	✓	✓	✓
N3.3	✓	✓	✓	✓
Information Technology				
ICT3.1	✓	✓	✓	✓
ICT3.2	✓	✓	✓	✓
ICT3.3	✓	✓	✓	✓
Working With Others				
WO3.1	✓	✓	✓	✓
WO3.2	✓	✓	✓	✓
WO3.3	✓	✓	✓	✓
Improving Own Learning and Performance				
LP3.1	✓	✓	✓	✓
LP3.2	✓	✓	✓	✓
LP3.3	✓	✓	✓	✓
Problem Solving				
PS3.1	✓	✓	✓	✓
PS3.2	✓	✓	✓	✓
PS3.3	✓	✓	✓	✓



GCE English Language A (2700) 2009 onwards

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Free launch meetings are available in 2007/8 followed by further support meetings through the life of the specification. Further information is available at:

<http://events.aqa.org.uk/ebooking>

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Dr Michael Cresswell, Director General.



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342