English Language A Level

Course Description:

English Language at A Level provides you with a natural progression from your GCSE study of English and encourages you to develop your interest in and appreciation of English, through learning about its structures and its functions, its developments and its variations. The course allows you to develop your ability to express yourself in speech and writing, producing texts for different audiences, purposes and in different genres. In Year 12 the course focuses on written and spoken language and different contexts of language, looking in particular at gender and power. There is also an element of original writing based on a topical language issue, which is assessed by an internal exam in Year 12, with an external exam in Year 13. Topics in Year 13 are child language acquisition, language in the media and language variety and change over time. The A Level exam will test original writing; and there is a coursework element at A Level – independent language research – an investigation into an area of language and a linked production of an academic poster.

Qualifications Required:

Minimum entry requirements apply. Grade 5 or above in both English Language and English Literature.

Aims of the Course:

The study of English Language encourages you to explore language and representation through analytical and creative work. You will have the opportunity to develop your skills through creative and transactional forms of writing, and you will extend your understanding of how language creates meanings in written, spoken and electronic modes. English Language examines the language development of children, and introduces ideas about the importance of cultural sensitivity in language. You consider how the English language has changed since 1600, and how it is changing today; you will examine global, regional and social varieties of English and engage in cultural debates about the nature and significance of language. In addition, you will carry out research on topics of your own choice.

Future Prospects:

English Language is a flexible and adaptable subject so future career opportunities are extensive. The subject combines well with many others in both the Arts and Sciences, and is particularly suited to Modern Foreign Language combinations, Sociology and Psychology. University Admission Tutors and employers look favourably upon students who have studied A Level English Language, knowing they will have good oral and written communication ability and have developed useful skills of analysis and interpretation. Careers which can be entered with an English A level/English degree are many and varied and include management, research, consultancy, publishing, medicine, teaching, journalism, law, media and advertising.

English Language A Level

Features of the Course:

- Exploration of spoken and written language in use
- Consideration of the way purposes, audiences and contexts impact upon language production and reception
- Use of linguistic methods to analyse and investigate a variety of texts
- Analysis and grouping of data sets
- Consideration of cultural values and assumptions with a key focus on language and gender, language and power and language and technology
- Opportunities to develop and reflect upon students' own writing expertise

A Level Units

Component 1: Exploring Language

- Linguistic analysis of authentic texts
- Original writing for a real-world purpose on a topical language issue
- Comparison of texts in spoken and written modes

Component 2: Dimensions of Linguistic Variation

- Analysis of how children acquire language
- Language in the media
- How language changes over time

Component 3: Coursework

Independent language research: investigation and academic poster

Methods of Assessment:

Component 1: 2 hours 30 minutes written paper: 80 marks. 40% of total A Level marks.
Component 2: 2 hours 30 minutes written paper: 80 marks. 40% of total A Level marks.
Coursework: two assignments totalling 3500 words. 20% of total A Level marks.