AQA English Language A Level

Vision statement - The English Faculty sets its vision as making: 'Independent and curious readers, writers and thinkers.'

Intent: Curriculum Intent – AQA A Level English Language

Our AQA A Level English Language curriculum is designed to develop inquisitive, analytical and independent linguists who explore the richness, diversity and power of language. Through the study of authentic spoken, written and multimodal texts, students investigate how language constructs meaning, shapes identities and reflects the social, cultural and political contexts in which it is used.

The curriculum is carefully sequenced to build secure knowledge of AQA's core language frameworks—lexis and semantics, grammar, phonetics, phonology and prosodics, graphology, discourse and pragmatics—enabling students to apply increasingly sophisticated linguistic analysis to a wide range of texts. Students develop the confidence to use precise linguistic terminology while engaging critically with established theories and debates.

In line with the AQA specification, students explore language diversity and change, considering how English varies according to region, social group, occupation, age, gender, ethnicity, audience, purpose and mode. They investigate the evolution of English and examine contemporary issues surrounding language, encouraging them to challenge assumptions through evidence-based enquiry rather than anecdotal opinion.

The curriculum promotes independent thinking through the completion of the Language Investigation (NEA), where students formulate research questions, collect authentic data and apply linguistic methods to produce original academic research. Alongside this, the Original Writing and Commentary component enables students to demonstrate creativity, adaptability and metalinguistic awareness by crafting texts for specific audiences and purposes before critically reflecting on their language choices.

Reading, discussion and extended analytical writing are embedded throughout the course to develop students' ability to construct coherent, evidence-based arguments. Retrieval practice, explicit vocabulary instruction and regular engagement with unseen texts ensure that knowledge is retained and applied confidently across all areas of the specification. Students who take this subject and are successful are well positioned to study sociology, business, linguistics, or education at university level.

Why study English Language at The Sixth Form at Ridgewood?

- Ridgewood Sixth Form has a passionate and supportive English faculty led by dedicated teachers who work to bring the best out of their students.
- A level English Language study offers students a challenging course with a diverse range of topics that enables you to broaden your knowledge of the subject.
- Students who have studied English Language at Ridgewood in recent years have used their enthusiasm and experiences to undertake a variety of courses at university: primary/secondary teaching, journalism, speech and language therapy, educational and child psychology.

- The course offers you the opportunity to increase your knowledge and understanding of social and economic issues and enhance your awareness of historical influences on language and milestones over time that have affected the way we use the English language.
- The 20% coursework element provides you with the opportunity to take ownership of your learning by creating an original piece of writing and conducting a language investigation on topics that are of interest to you.

What topics will I study in this subject?

Topic	What this means
Textual Variations and Representations	You will study a wide range of different spoken and written texts such as adverts, articles, speeches and transcripts to examine how and why text producers use language in different ways to create meaning. You will explore the importance of considering not just the way texts are presented but also the contextual factors behind language use across pre- and post-1950 texts.
Child Language Development	You will study how the language children use is acquired and developed, exploring how children learn language and how they are able to understand and express themselves through language. You will learn about the theoretical approaches and technical terminology we can apply to this complex and intriguing stage of language evolution and explore how this is presented in written and spoken texts.
Language and Diversity	You will explore how and why people from different regions and social groups use language differently, and how factors such as occupation, age, gender, sexuality and ethnicity also affect language usage.
Language Change	You will focus on the extensive history of the English language and how this has evolved over time. You will explore how and why words are created, what factors influence the growth of language and examine different attitudes to how language use has changed over time.
Language Discourses	You will apply various language terminology acquired over the course and analyse and compare how text producers present their views on different language topics you have studied across the course. You will also use your study of different language focused articles to create your own opinion article which is engaging and demonstrates the knowledge and understanding you have learnt on the course.

What skills will I need in this subject?

Skill	What this skill involves in this subject
Comparison and Analysis	In English Language, your lessons and independent work will involve analysis. This means you will read a wide range of different texts, and unpick them in lots and lots of detail, commenting on the text itself and the context of its production. You will be required to write at length about your findings and give detailed explanations.
Evaluation	You will study a range of texts, theorists and language case studies and use this information to weigh up different viewpoints on a particular issue before forming a conclusion.
Extended essay writing	Due to the high marks assigned to single questions across the two exam papers (lowest is 20 and highest 40), you need to be able to articulate your knowledge and understanding across a range of detailed responses. A regular requirement for success in lessons, independent study and exams will be the writing of lengthy responses in timed conditions, ranging from 30 minutes to 1 hour for individual questions. This reflects a significant change from GCSE English Language where the highest reading section question is worth 16 marks and it is important you are prepared to accept and rise to the challenge.

What will my lessons involve?

- Organisation and preparation: you will always be expected to bring your subject folders to enable to refer to prior learning and access previous teacher feedback. You may also be required to complete independent learning activities such as research or text annotations prior to the lesson.
- Independence: you will need to be able to have the assurance to undertake activities on your own in lesson and have the confidence to offer ideas and feedback that enhance class interaction.
- Collaboration: you will work with other students on activities to develop the way you can learn a variety of information and progress your knowledge and understanding in a supportive capacity.
- Deeper thinking and reflection: teachers will use questioning to extend your knowledge and understanding as well as asking you to consider key information you have learnt and reflect on how effectively you have acquired knowledge and how successfully you have reached particular goals and objectives.
- Resources: teachers will provide model answers, supportive planning and essay writing sheets and student friendly success criteria to enable you to effectively access the learning and aim high in your studies.

What will my independent study involve?

- You will need to be disciplined with time management so that you can receive effective feedback on work completed in timed conditions to reflect the requirements and challenge of an exam.
- To achieve success, you will need to be proactive in collating different texts from a range of genres and practise reinforcing knowledge from lessons by applying to the analysis of texts in different contexts.
- You will need to be proactive in creating flashcards that you then use to regularly self-quiz on key terminology and theory.
- You will need to consistently attempt exam style responses and self/peer assess using criteria provided by your teacher to reinforce and build on the expectations of different questions.
- You will be expected to keep up to date with current high profile social issues by engaging with news formats.
- You will be expected to access useful podcasts (such as BBC Sounds) and online articles to engage with language topics, linguistic changes and wider-ranging views which go beyond the requirements of the exam specification.

How will I be assessed?

Percentage exam assessment: 80%	Percentage coursework assessment: 20%

Assessment	**Details of assessment**
English Language Paper 1: Language, the individual and society.	• 2 hours 30 minutes • 100 marks • 40% of overall grade • Three essays on language analysis and comparison in section A • One essay response on child language development in section B • Extended answers across four questions in total with time spent ranging from 30-45 minutes per question • Exam taken in summer of Year 13

English Language Paper 2: Language Diversity and Change	• 2 hours 30 minutes • 100 marks • 40% of overall grade • One essay evaluating either language varieties or language change • One essay analysing and comparing language choices and presentation of viewpoints • One creative writing opinion article on a language issue
Non-Exam Assessment: Original Writing and Commentary	• 50 marks • 10% of overall grade • 750 word creative writing piece produced in a genre and on a topic of the student's choice • 750 word analysis and comparison of own text and another text
Non-Exam Assessment: Language Investigation	• 50 marks • 2500 words • 10% of overall grade • Research and investigation (analysis and conclusion on findings) into language use on a topic of the student's choice

How do I know this is the right course for me?

- If you are someone who is interested in the diverse ways we learn, apply and evolve the English language and passionate about enhancing your knowledge of the intricacies of the lexis we use then this course is something you would enjoy.
- You must have a strong work ethic and be prepared to rise to the challenge of learning and recalling a vast amount of linguistic terminology and theory very quickly.
- Certain aspects of your study will build on creative writing, analysis, comparison and evaluation of texts at GCSE but you need to be prepared for the significantly more rigorous nature of the subject to make your studies a success: diversity of texts and topics, acquisition of extensive terminology and theory and the requirements of large quantities of extended writing.