



GCE English Language

For teaching from 2015

First AS Award: Summer 2016
First A Level Award: Summer 2017

The following pages feature an outline summary and content of new AS and A level specifications that are currently being developed for Wales. These details will be developed further before they are submitted to the regulators for accreditation.

Summary of assessment page 2

Subject content page 3

July 2014

GCE ENGLISH LANGUAGE (Wales)

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT

This specification is divided into a total of 5 units, 2 AS units and 3 A2 units. Weightings noted below are expressed in terms of the full A level qualification.

AS (2 units)

AS Unit 1 Exploring Language Written examination: 1 hour 45 minutes 20% of qualification
Section A: Analysing language Section B: Evaluating language in use One question in each section based on unseen material.
AS Unit 2 Language Issues and Original Writing Written examination: 1 hour 45 minutes 20% of qualification
One question in two parts: one essay on a language issue and one original writing task linked to the language issue selected.

A Level (the above plus a further 3 units)

A2 Unit 3 Language over Time Written examination: 2 hours 15 minutes 20% of qualification
Section A: Language change over time Two questions based on three unseen texts. Section B: Contemporary English One question based on unseen material.
A2 Unit 4 Spoken Texts and Creative Re-casting Written examination: 2 hours 20% of qualification
Section A: Analysing spoken language One question based on unseen transcripts. Section B: Creative re-casting One creative writing task using a Section A transcript as stimulus.
A2 Unit 5 Language and Identity Non-examination assessment: 2500-3500 words 20% of qualification
An investigation based on one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• language and self-representation• language and gender• language and culture• language diversity.

SUBJECT CONTENT

This specification provides a framework for learners to develop their appreciation of the interconnectedness of the different areas of language study. As learners progress, they are given the opportunity to hone their skills of interrogating data, interpretation, analysis, evaluation, synthesis and reflection. Across all units, they are introduced to concepts and methods of the disciplines of English language/linguistics in relation to a wide range of spoken and written forms of English, including electronic and multimodal forms.

Learners will be required to show knowledge and understanding of the different language levels, and to show how these can be applied to language use in a range of contexts, including how texts and discourses are shaped and interpreted. Learners' contextual study will be based on sound theoretical knowledge relevant to the respective units.

Knowledge, understanding and accurate application of the language levels below underpin this specification:

- phonetics, phonology, prosodics: how speech sounds and effects are articulated and analysed
- lexis and semantics: the vocabulary of English, including historical, geographical, social and individual varieties of English
- grammar including morphology: the structural patterns and shapes of English at sentence, clause, phrase and word level
- pragmatics: the contextual aspects of language use
- discourse: extended stretches of communication occurring in different genres, modes and contexts.

Unit 1

Exploring Language

Written examination: 1¾ hours

This unit encourages learners to engage with language use in different situations. It gives them the opportunity to apply their critical skills and their language knowledge.

There are two sections, each containing **one** compulsory question. Section A accounts for three fifths of the available marks for this unit and Section B accounts for two fifths of the marks. Candidates must answer **both** questions.

Section A: Analysing language

Candidates are required to answer one question. Section A is based on the study of spoken and written texts, and covers a range of different contexts. It is designed to introduce learners to the ways in which speakers and writers use language to shape meaning in the light of different audiences, purposes and contexts.

In this section, there will be at least two texts linked in some way, usually by theme or genre. The question will require candidates to analyse and interpret the effects created by the speakers' or writers' use of language, and to make connections between the texts.

In preparation for this question, learners will need to have studied a range of examples of spoken and written texts, and to be familiar with key features of spoken and written language. Any spoken texts will not be transcripts.

Candidates will need to demonstrate that they can:

- explore how language features shape meaning
- analyse relevant contextual factors
- use appropriate terminology and methods of analysis accurately
- support points with apt quotation
- organise their response effectively using clear written expression
- explore connections between the texts.

Section B: Evaluating language in use

Section B is based on the study of language used for different purposes and in different contexts. It is designed to encourage learners to use their knowledge of relevant concepts and issues to evaluate examples of spoken and written language, some of which may have a Welsh focus.

There will be either a single text or a corpus of data linked by genre and/or topic. These may be spoken or written. Any spoken texts will not be transcripts.

This section will require candidates to analyse and evaluate the text(s) in the light of a focused question, which will draw attention to a particular feature or aspect.

In preparation for this section, learners should study a wide range of text types and approaches to language analysis.

Candidates will need to demonstrate that they can:

- analyse key contextual factors and language features
- demonstrate an understanding of how meaning is created
- evaluate the effects of writers' and speakers' linguistic and semantic choices
- show critical understanding of concepts and issues relevant to language use.

Unit 2

Language Issues and Original Writing

Written examination: 1¾ hours

This unit encourages learners to engage with language issues and to use language creatively.

Candidates are required to answer one question in two parts. Candidates must choose to complete **either** Question 1 **or** Question 2. In each question, there are three parts: part (a) is compulsory and candidates must choose **either** part (b) **or** part (c). Each question carries equal weight.

Part (a): Language issues

Part (a) is based on the study of two language topic areas: language and power, and language and situation. It is designed to introduce learners to the ways in which language affects our everyday lives.

Candidates are required to choose **either** Question 1(a) **or** Question 2 (a). Each question requires an extended response in which candidates show their knowledge and understanding of language issues, using associated terminology to explore how meaning is constructed. In preparation for this section, learners should study both topic areas.

Candidates will need to demonstrate that they can:

- show critical understanding of concepts and issues relevant to language use
- provide appropriate examples to support the points they make
- use and apply terminology accurately in analysis
- evaluate how contextual factors and language features shape meaning
- organise their response effectively using clear written expression.

Parts (b) and (c): Original writing

Parts (b) and (c) require candidates to produce original writing linked to the language topic area they have considered in part (a). The tasks are designed to give them the opportunity to demonstrate their creativity and expertise in the use of English.

Candidates will choose **one** question from a choice of two. The tasks could be literary or non-literary. In preparation for this writing, learners will need to have studied a range of literary and non-literary texts and practised producing writing in a variety of genres.

Candidates will need to demonstrate that they can:

- produce engaging writing in response to the language topic area they have selected in part (a)
- write an accurate and controlled piece with an awareness of audience, form and purpose
- show understanding of relevant concepts and issues.

Unit 3

Language over Time

Written examination: 2¼ hours

This unit encourages learners to engage with language across time. It gives them the opportunity to apply their analytical skills and their knowledge of language change.

There are two sections. Section A accounts for three quarters of the available marks for this unit and Section B accounts for one quarter of the marks. Candidates must answer **all** questions.

Section A: Language change over time

Section A is based on the study of unseen written texts from different periods, linked by genre. It is designed to introduce learners to orthography, etymology, and to lexical, semantic and grammatical changes in context.

There will be three texts, none earlier than 1500. There will be two questions. Question one will require candidates to answer several short questions based on archaic language features taken from the texts. Question two will require learners to write an extended response in which they explore and make connections across the texts in the light of a given focus.

In preparation for this question, candidates should study a wide range of written texts from different periods, and understand the key features of language from the Middle English period onwards.

Candidates will need to demonstrate that they can:

- apply critical skills in close reading
- describe and analyse key features of language change, using associated terminology accurately
- analyse and evaluate contextual factors
- explore connections between the texts
- support points with apt quotation
- organise their response effectively using coherent written expression.

Section B: Contemporary English

Section B is based on the study of the ways in which language is used distinctively in the twenty-first century. It is designed to introduce learners to the ways in which language is evolving to meet the needs of its users.

There will be a single text or a set of data with a focused question. There may be a Welsh focus. This section requires candidates to write an extended response in which they show their understanding of contemporary language concepts and issues. They must consider the effect of contextual factors (pragmatics), and analyse the way language is used to construct meaning.

In preparation for this section, learners should be familiar with concepts such as new channels of communication, code shifting, changes in vocabulary linked to technological, social or regional influences, and the structural patterns of twenty-first century English.

Candidates will need to demonstrate that they can:

- show critical understanding of concepts and issues underpinning language use
- provide appropriate examples to support their argument
- critically evaluate how contextual factors affect form and structure
- analyse how language features shape meaning.

Unit 4

Spoken Language and Creative Re-casting

Written examination: 2 hours

This unit encourages learners to engage with spoken language and to produce an original piece of writing. It is designed to give them opportunities to apply their analytical skills and to communicate creatively in different ways.

There are two sections of equal weight, each comprising **one** compulsory question. Candidates must answer **both** questions.

Section A: Analysing spoken language

Section A is based on the study of spoken language and covers a range of situations and genres. It is designed to introduce learners to the ways in which speakers use language and interact. The texts will be in the form of transcripts. For reference, a list of phonemic symbols will be printed on the question paper.

There will be two or more transcripts. The question requires candidates to write an extended analytical response in which they explore the effects created by key language features.

In preparation for this question, candidates must study a range of examples, and should be familiar with the features of spoken language, with distinctive spoken genres and with relevant theoretical perspectives.

Candidates will need to demonstrate that they can:

- apply critical skills in close reading
- describe spoken features using associated terminology accurately
- apply appropriate linguistic concepts such as, but not limited to, register, genre and variation
- evaluate how contextual factors and language features shape meaning
- support points made with apt quotation
- organise their response effectively using coherent written expression.

Section B: Creative re-casting

Section B will require candidates to produce a creative piece of writing linked to one of the transcripts in Section A. It is designed to engage candidates in the creative process, giving them the opportunity to demonstrate their expertise in presenting material in a different form and for a different audience and purpose. They will be required to produce original writing in any genre.

There will be **one** compulsory question. The task could be literary or non-literary.

In preparation for this question, learners should study a range of literary and non-literary texts, and should practise recasting stimulus texts in a variety of genres.

Candidates will need to demonstrate that they can:

- apply creative skills in the production of engaging writing
- recognise the importance of key concepts such as audience, form and purpose
- show expertise in their use of English to communicate in different ways.

Unit 5

Language and Identity

Non-examination assessment: 2500-3500 words

This unit gives opportunities for language research which has a personal relevance. It is designed to engage learners with the theme of language and identity.

Learners are required to conduct a language investigation **independently** and to develop their methods of language analysis through research, data collection and interpretation. The material they select should be culturally, personally and academically of interest to them.

Learners must select **one** of the following four areas for the language investigation.

1. Language and self-representation

A study of how context affects the learner's own language choices.

This topic would allow learners to use their knowledge of the levels of language, and of key concepts and issues, to explore and interpret their own idiolect. Learners are free to define their own area(s) of investigation, but possible topics could include:

- register
- communication strategies
- accommodation
- politeness.

2. Language and gender

A study of how gender might affect language choices.

This topic would allow learners to use their knowledge of the levels of language, and of key concepts and issues, to explore and interpret the relationship between language and gender. Learners are free to define their own area(s) of investigation, but possible topics could include:

- representation
- attitudes
- gender neutral language
- linguistic conventions.

3. Language and culture

A study of how language reflects cultural diversity.

This topic would allow learners to use their knowledge of the levels of language, and of key concepts and issues, to explore and interpret cultural ideologies. Learners are free to define their own area(s) of investigation, but possible areas could include:

- the arts
- sports and entertainment
- education
- belief systems.

4. Language diversity

A study of how a distinctive variety of English differs from Standard English.

This topic would allow learners to use their knowledge of the levels of language, and of key concepts and issues, to explore and interpret aspects of diversity. Learners are free to define their own area(s) of investigation, but possible areas could include:

- geographical and social variation
- African American Vernacular English (AAVE)
- other Englishes
- occupational language.

This unit provides key opportunities for research, investigation and independent study. It encourages learners to:

- undertake independent investigations of language, selecting appropriate methods and techniques for exploring data
- show critical understanding of meaning and variation in language, informed by the appropriate use of linguistic analysis and associated terminology
- synthesise insights developed through the application of linguistic knowledge to the study of speech and writing
- critically evaluate attitudes to language and its users
- explore connections informed by linguistic concepts and methods
- write insightful, accurate and well-argued responses making accurate references to texts and sources.

Refer to Section 3.2 for further details regarding 'Arrangements for Non-exam Assessment'.