

UNIT 4 AS/A Level Language course – Progression and start of examination preparation

Recommended Prior Knowledge Skills progression and grammatical knowledge from Units 1, 2 & 3

Context

This Unit builds on the basis of skills and knowledge laid down in Units 1, 2 & 3. In A Level Component 4, work proceeds with Set Texts and a start is made to literary essay writing.

Outline

The content focuses on the range of topics grouped under International issues. Text-type and length are extended and skills developed further. Comparison of texts is introduced. More extended writing and summary is introduced.

| | Learning Outcomes | Suggested Teaching Activities | Resources |
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| 1 | Acquaintance with lexis and structures of a range of listening and reading texts presenting the Topic focus. | <p><u>Topic focus</u> 4: International Issues (War and peace; problems of the developing world; ethnic, religious and ideological conflicts; contemporary aspects of the country/countries where the language is spoken.)</p> <p><u>Texts</u> (Reading and Listening) Informative, Explanatory, Argumentative. More abstract vocabulary with a variety of tenses and increasing complexity of sentence structure.</p> <p>Presentation of a pair of linked texts totalling some 400 words.</p> <p>Introduction of appropriate lexis and structures for dealing with texts chosen.</p> <p>See Introduction, Section 6, Teaching methods: Stage 1 Encounter with the text .</p> | |

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| 2 | Listening and speaking practice | <p>Teacher questions/student response Student role plays Student discussions on a given task (see Introduction Section 7)</p> <p><u>Simulation</u> Further development takes place in this Unit along the lines already described.</p> <p>Role-play and group discussion might develop still further into Simulation. In this exercise, a task is first defined. Within the topic for this Unit there are many possibilities, e.g. a group of policy makers deciding how to allocate funds for particular projects in a region. The role of each participant is clearly defined, and each student must first remain within the point of view defined for them. They may later amend their position, if persuaded by others. Students first have the chance to read their role and decide on the language they need to express their point of view. They do not see the role descriptions of other participants, so must be prepared to react to the unexpected. The simulation begins with each student stating their position, and the debate goes on from there.</p> <p>Student preparation and delivery of short topic presentation (3 minutes). Individual preparation.</p> <p>The process begun in Unit 3 continues here. Students still receive a clear framework of questions from the teacher but now work individually to prepare a set of notes and deliver a 3 minute presentation.</p> | |
| 3 | Reading practice and developing grammatical awareness | <p>For reading development see Section 6 (Teaching Method) of Introduction Stage 2 Collecting information and language. Individual and group tasks for getting to grips with the text. Develop skills of finding equivalents, synonyms, dictionary definitions.</p> <p>Further work takes place on developing dictionary skills and recognising synonyms. Students should be encouraged to chase up synonyms and meanings as important preparation for the examination. It is not only in a question where they are required to find equivalents that they need synonyms. Also when answering comprehension questions on a text, they need a range of vocabulary to avoid lifting chunks of the passage in their answer. (See also the note on answering questions in the Introduction, Section 6, stage 5 of the proposed teaching sequence relating to Assessment.)</p> <p>Grammar awareness and recognition tasks</p> | |

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| 4 | Developing writing skills | <p>Grammar practice – manipulation and controlled drills. Guided, meaningful grammar practice Free sentence composition (see Unit 3) More extended writing (up to 120 words) – structure-based discourse composition (see Section 7 of Introduction and Unit 3)</p> <p>Summary skills</p> <p>Summary is, of course, a form of extended writing, and requires just the same attention to quality of language and expression as the essay.</p> <p>But the summary also requires specific reference to the stimulus text or texts. It will be clear from marking schemes that the rubric for a summary is very precise, and students are required to respond by drawing significant points from the text within the terms of the rubric.</p> <p>It may be worth repeating here the comment by a Principal Examiner in a report : <i>Two general points should be made about this question (summary). Firstly, it is essential that candidates read the rubric with care and write on each of the categories mentioned. The mark-scheme in this case was constructed to take note of three elements required in an answer, (i) the changing world of work; (ii) the skills required by employees (iii) ways of organising time at work. Secondly, keeping below the maximum word count of 140 is regarded as part of this writing task. It would be wrong to allow candidates to make all necessary points in 250 words when others have confined themselves to 140 words. Therefore, examiners mark to the end of the sentence following the completed 140 words and disregard the remainder. This is a clear penalty for those who write at too great length.</i></p> <p>So students must practise being brief, being specific and referring to each item required by the question.</p> | |
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A Level Component 4 (Texts)

| Learning Outcomes | Suggested Teaching Activities | Resources |
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| <p>Reading and understanding of two further set texts.</p> | <p>Preliminary class work discussing author, themes, student experience of themes in other reading.</p> <p>Preliminary class work on language problems/lexis.</p> <p>Students prepare selected extract before lesson. One student “takes the lesson”. Focus is on discussing action, characters.</p> <p>Individual students present aspects of themes, characters</p> <p>Further close reading including short sections for translation and context work.</p> | |
| <p>Further development of writing skills applicable to literary texts.</p> | <p>Summary skills (see above) extended to work on set texts.</p> <p>Short essays (120 words) focused on specific features, e.g. role of a character, significance of an episode.</p> <p>Practice in writing short answers on selected passages from text. (See Syllabus requirements)</p> | |