

UNIT 1: Introduction to the AS Language course

Recommended prior knowledge: A reasonable standard of written English at O/GCSE level

Context: This Unit is the introduction to the course and gives an overview of the skills needed to analyse texts, both written and spoken, and to write them. It should be the first Unit studied, but the first few sections of it will not take long as they revise and extend familiar concepts.

Outline: This Unit addresses the development from O level or GCSE to AS level; types of possible texts and a framework for analysis - of purpose, audience, context, form and style

Learning Outcomes	Suggested teaching/learning activities	Resources
<p>1 <u>Moving on from O level/GCSE:</u></p> <p>The AS syllabus pre-supposes some development in knowledge about language, powers of analysis and a more sophisticated personal style by the time the examination is taken. However, students have already gained experience and confidence from O level or GCSE that will stand them in good stead for the new 8693 syllabus.</p>	<p>Revision of some language features Class discussion Working with a partner or in a group Revision of gathering of types of text, both written and spoken, should be undertaken.</p> <p>A reminder that a text can be a few words or a whole novel, that it can be in prose or verse, that it can be in dialogue, speech or writing, is a useful introductory point.</p>	<p>Useful general websites:</p> <p>www.topmarks.co.uk has a large directory of educational sites. Go to secondary; post-16; English</p> <p>http://school.discovery.com/homeworkhelp/bjpinchbeck/index.html is good for students</p> <p>www.channel4.com Learning (Amazing Grades) gives a free 14-day trial before subscription</p> <p>An AS Language/Literature textbook specially written for this syllabus is being published by CUP early in 2003 (Authors Toner and Whittome)</p> <p>Exploring Language and Literature (Croft and Myers) Oxford ISBN 0-19-83147-4</p> <p>Working with Texts (Routledge) by Carter, Goddard, Reah, Sanger and Bowring ISBN 0-415-14597-X is a very useful textbook with many helpful exercises</p>

<p><u>2 Types of Written text</u></p> <p>There are many types of written text, far more than might at first be considered. Although not all will feature in an exam paper, knowledge of the varieties will underpin later work.</p>	<p>Brainstorm the different types of written text experienced in an average week (shopping list, letter, diary, advert, menu, newspaper article, novel and so on)</p> <p>Review the kinds of written discourse that students undertook for their previous courses and which they found easiest to write, or most enjoyable. All the work they have done in the past is a firm foundation for the new course.</p>	<p>Encourage students to bring in examples of different kinds of written text and see how many can be accumulated.</p>
<p><u>3Types of spoken text</u></p> <p>There are similarly many kinds of spoken text; and both dialogue and speeches for analysis and personal writing feature in exam papers for this syllabus.</p> <p>Planned speeches include rhetorical devices such as: emotive language, and patterning devices such as repetition, lists, questions, use of opposites and figurative language, such as metaphors</p>	<p>Once again, brainstorm types of speech, starting with the obvious speech activities that denote our interactions with each other. (Others will include speeches, radio interviews and news reports, telephone conversations, including answerphone messages left)</p> <p>Write some dialogues based on the language of everyday speech. Ask students to try to write them as people really speak, not 'improved'. Speakers commonly repeat themselves, leave words out, interrupt and leave sentences unfinished.</p> <p>Tape some conversations and transcribe them exactly – this can be an eye opener to those who think everyone speaks like characters in a play by George Bernard Shaw.</p> <p>Transcribe the dialogue from the students' favourite soap opera. How similar is it to the real conversations they hear around them?</p> <p>Transcribe or read the transcription of a political speech as an example of rhetoric.</p>	<p><u>Exploring Language and Literature</u> has a chapter devoted to the difference between speech and written language</p> <p>Other resources for speech are shown in Units 2 and 3</p>

<p><u>4 Purpose</u></p> <p>The purpose of the text, what it is trying to do, should be considered in more detail. The different texts gathered should be categorised as generally formal/informal; information-based or argument-based; written to persuade or entertain and so on. All the different possible purposes should be established. Being aware of a writer's purpose (why apparently s/he wrote what s/he did) will help students to analyse and evaluate both what was written (the content) and how it was written (the style) It will also help to focus on the individual student's writing skills and his/her own purposes in writing</p>	<p>Take the different texts gathered previously, both written and spoken, and discuss their purposes. What is each text trying to do? How successful is each? (Advertisements are useful here)</p> <p>Consider the purpose of particular poems or stories.</p> <p>Discuss ways in which the writer's purpose may not be the only outcome of analysis of a piece of writing. (Hint: purpose may be conscious, but there may also be unconscious impulses that the discerning reader can identify in a piece of writing or in the tone of a speech)</p>	<p>Research : students should try to find examples of writers discussing their work and saying what they were trying to do. Are there other effects that the writers were not consciously aware of?</p>
<p><u>5 Audience</u></p> <p>Any communication is a two way process, from writer or speaker to audience or reader. It is helpful to consider who is being communicated to by any given text.</p>	<p>Students should each bring in five texts, including one advert, and make a case for what audience is being appealed to in each one.</p> <p>Follow up work should include the presentation in speech and writing of the same piece of information tailored for three different audiences (The student has had an accident in his mother's car, for example. How would this be communicated to a) his mother b) his friends and c) the insurance company? How do these communications differ?)</p>	<p>Research on advertising methods is given as an internet resource in Unit 2</p>

<p><u>6 Context</u></p> <p>In what context, or surroundings, will the piece of text appear? Often we can guess by the kinds of words used, or content expressed, what kind of speech or writing it is.</p>	<p>Readers make assumptions all the time when they are reading an extract, picking up cues from the text about the wider whole.</p> <p>Construct a set of short extracts to see whether their contexts can be identified. What features of topic, language, tone and form have led to these conclusions? Discussion arising from such exercises can prove very helpful as a focus for development of close critical reading.</p>	
<p><u>7 Form</u></p> <p>The way in which a text is presented – its layout on the page, the way it is heard, its format – give immediate clues to the kind of text it is, even before reading in detail. An advert, a poem, a list: these can all be identified by their shapes and layout.</p>	<p>Find some concrete poems and discuss their visual impact</p> <p>Consider other forms, e.g. newspaper articles, lists.</p>	<p>For example the works of George Herbert</p>

<p><u>8 Style</u></p> <p>Analysis of style is a daunting task to some students, but systematic checklists and a great deal of practice both written and oral will work wonders with even the most unconfident student.</p> <p>Considering how a text is constructed, the following should be considered, so that deconstruction can take place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Diction, sometimes called semantic field. Individual words form vocabulary or lexis b) Figures of speech, such as metaphor, simile, personification, climax, antithesis or contrast c) Structure or cohesion – how the text fits together d) Syntax – types of phrase and sentence construction e) Sound effects, such as alliteration and other rhetorical devices f) Tone – what sort of tone does the writer adopt? Is it persuasive, angry, playful, sad, reflective? This can have an important impact on the effect of the whole text. g) Mood or atmosphere is created by a combination of these stylistic effects 	<p>Do a great deal of analysis/deconstruction, covering a wide range of different types of text.</p> <p>Encourage students to write consciously, making choices of form, structure and language.</p> <p>Read and comment on each others' work.</p>	<p><u>Ways of Reading</u> by Montgomery, Durant, Fabb, Furniss and Mills (Routledge) ISBN 0 415 05320- X</p> <p>This is an excellent teacher's book, full of inspiring and useful exercises</p> <p><u>Student Handbook for English</u>: Durran and Stewart (Pearson Publishing) ISBN 1 85749 585 3</p> <p>Is very accessible for students, and useful</p>
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