

**Proposed GCE AS and A Level  
Subject Content for English  
language**

# The criteria

## Introduction

AS and A level subject criteria set out the knowledge, understanding, skills and assessment objectives common to all AS and A level specifications in a given subject. They provide the framework within which the awarding organisation creates the detail of the specification.

## Aims and objectives

1. AS and A level specifications must encourage learners to develop their interest in and enjoyment of English as they:
  - develop and apply their understanding of the concepts and methods appropriate for the analysis and study of language;
  - explore data and examples of language in use;
  - engage creatively and critically with a varied programme for the study of English; and
  - develop their skills as producers and interpreters of language.
2. In addition, A level specifications must encourage learners to develop their interest in and enjoyment of English as they independently investigate language in use.

## Subject content

3. AS and A level specifications in English language must build on the knowledge, understanding and skills established at GCSE level.
4. All AS and A level specifications must introduce learners to the 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.
5. Learners' contextual study of language must be based on sound theoretical knowledge developed through a coherent course of study.

## **Knowledge and understanding**

6. AS and A level specifications must require learners to show broad knowledge and understanding of the language levels, including:
  - Phonetics, phonology and prosodics: how speech sounds and effects are articulated and analysed;
  - Lexis and semantics: the vocabulary of English, including social and historical variation;
  - Grammar and morphology: the structural patterns and shapes of English at sentence, clause, phrase and word level;
  - Pragmatics: the contextual aspects of language use; and
  - Discourse: extended stretches of communication occurring in different genres, modes and contexts.
7. AS level specifications must require learners to show knowledge and understanding of how relevant language levels from paragraph 6 can be applied to a range of contexts for language use, including how texts and discourses are shaped and interpreted.
8. In addition, A level specifications must require learners to show deeper knowledge and understanding of the language levels from paragraph 6 and how these can be applied to a range of contexts for language use, including:
  - Historical, geographical, social and individual varieties of English; and
  - Aspects of language and identity.
9. A level specifications must also enable learners to show understanding of how the different areas of study connect across their course as a whole.

## **Skills**

10. AS and A level specifications must require learners to:
  - apply language concepts and methods of analysis appropriately and systematically to data;
  - apply critical and creative skills in close reading, description, evaluation, analysis, interpretation and production of texts and discourses;
  - use and apply terminology accurately; and
  - make accurate references to texts and sources.

11. In addition, A level specifications must require learners to:

- critically evaluate attitudes towards language and its users;
- undertake independent investigations of language, selecting appropriate methods and techniques; and
- synthesise and reflect on language knowledge and understanding drawn from different areas of their studies of English language.