

English Language (AQA) A Level Preparation Work

Welcome to A Level English Language! The tasks below are designed to support and prepare you to start the course.

Learning about Attitudes to Variation (regional varieties of English)

So that you are ready for September, please answer these questions and complete these activities on Varieties of English.

1. Research the terms prescriptivism and descriptivism, and accent and dialect. You should understand exactly what is meant by these terms for your study next term.
2. Read the article: 'Scones and snails help app to map accents and dialects'
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cambridgeshire-35262229>
3. Download the app to complete the questionnaire. What is your language classed as? Did it correctly locate where you are from?
4. Write a 300- 500 word written response to this quote using the questions below to guide your argument: "Everyone has strong views about the pronunciation of this word ['scone'], but, perhaps surprisingly, we know rather little about who uses which pronunciation and where."
 - What views do you think people have about language and varieties?
 - Do you think different accents are preferred over other accents? Why?
 - Do you think dialect phrases like 'Where's that to?' are wrong? Why? Why not?
 - Do you think there are other words which we debate the pronunciation of as much as 'scone' in the UK? What other examples can you think of?
5. Use the terminology you have researched for Question 1.
6. Write a formal letter to Dr Adrian Leemann (linguist at Cambridge University who invented the app) explaining the ways in which you use your own language. Talk about how these factors affect the way in which you use your language: gender, age, social groups, class, and occupation.

Want more?

Check out this BBC documentary on The History of the English Language:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1XQx9pGGd0>

Find out about how we modify our language consciously and subconsciously depending on context:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000ls8x#:~:text=In%20this%20programme%2C%20Lucrece%20reveals,American%20students%20in%20the%201970s.>

Get inspired by listening to some of the many fascinating episodes of Word of Mouth:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qtnz>

Find out how babies learn to speak:

https://www.ted.com/talks/patricia_kuhl_the_linguistic_genius_of_babies

And or, follow Professor of Linguistics David Crystal on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/davcr?lang=en>

If you would like further information about the English Language course, please contact Mr Simpson (Deputy Director of English KS5) on msimpson@wellswayschool.com