**Textercise**

One of the things you will quickly notice about the study of language at A Level is that you don’t just look at serious, weighty books. You might have studied quite a lot of literary fiction on your English courses so far and even when it hasn’t been literature, it has probably been what is broadly termed ‘literary non-fiction’. On an A Level English Language course, you will analyse all sorts of language. This activity gives you a taste of that and asks you to think a bit more about the language around you all the time.

• On the pages that follow, you will find eight ‘texts’. These might not be the kind of texts you’ve analysed before, but they are all worth analysing because they have been created to communicate in some way.

• Have a quick look at each text and think about the following:

o What they are about

o What they might mean – the ideas, messages, opinions, personalities being expressed

o How they use different methods of communication: design, colour, vocabulary choices, structure, style, interaction.

• **Choose three of these texts and use the questions below to make some quick notes about how they compare in their uses of language. At least one of the texts should be one that was originally a spoken text (texts 1 and 7).**

Questions to ask about your choice of texts

• What is the language in each text designed to achieve? Can you identify any words/phrases/sentences constructions that you think are particularly interesting? Do you notice any distinctive or subtle differences between the three you have chosen?

• How have visual elements been used in the texts? Any differences?

• Do you notice anything distinctive about the text(s) that were originally spoken?

As you are analysing and comparing, think about how easy or difficult is it to analyse some of these texts. Does it feel like you can analyse them in the same way as a piece of literature, for example?

While analysing these types of text might be a new experience for you, the ways in which you explore and analyse them will build on things you’ve done before. Some of that will take you back to the work you might have done at Primary school with grammar (verbs, nouns and phrases, for example) and some will build on the work you’ve just been doing for GCSE.

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| On tonight’s show, we’ve got Fontaines DC live in the studio, old session tracks from The Chameleons, Ruthless Rap Assassins and Half Lazy plus all the usual mixture of weird, wonderful and just a bit wonky music from all around the world. Join me after nine tonight for the last of this week’s Evening Shows. | 1. A radio DJ presenting a trailer for a show. |
|  | 2. Part of a recipe for a meal. |
|  | 3. A section of a charity leaflet from Refugee Action. |
|  | 4. A description of the boardgame, Space Cats Fight Fascism (TESA Collective games) on the back of the box. |
|  | 5. The blurb from the back of a book (Akala’s Natives, published by Two Roads). |
|  | 6. A dog food carton. |
| And it’s controlled beautifully by Jack Harrison who beats his man and whips a ball across the face of goal. It’s an inviting ball aaaaand it’s Ben White who gets on the end of it to put it past the keeper’s outstretched hand. First goal of the season for the central defender and what a great team goal that was. | 7. Part of a radio commentary on a football match. |
|  | 8. A tweet from a local record shop on Record Store Day. |

**Comparison table**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| My chosen texts are: | Text: | Text: | Text: |
| What is the language in each text designed to achieve?  Can you identify any words/phrases/sentences constructions that you think are particularly interesting?  Do you notice any distinctive or subtle differences between the three you have chosen? | | | |
| How have visual elements been used in the texts? Any differences? | | | |
| Do you notice anything distinctive about the text(s) that were originally spoken? | | | |

**A Language Diary**

While the A Level English Language course will take you to new places, it also builds on things you’ve studied and read before. That’s because it’s still about English: something you’ve been using and learning about for years. And if you like reading novels, plays, poems and short stories, you don’t have to leave them behind when you’re studying English Language A Level, because all those forms use language in one way or another and they can all be part of what you study. You can also write creatively on this course.

• Think back over the last few months to the various things you might have read, watched or listened to. What have been your favourites recently? For example, you might have enjoyed the latest series of Gogglebox, Killing Eve, an interview between Cardi B and Bernie Sanders, a speech by a scientist taking about public health, a novel about a child entering a parallel universe, a series of articles on a news website about conspiracy theories and fake news, a TikTok of a woman in the USA performing different accents, a stand-up comedy show on YouTube or even a clip of a man trying to chase a bat around his kitchen while a relative shouts ‘He’s making a mockery out of you boy’ in a strong Irish accent.

• Keep a language log where you reflect on what you have read, watched and listened to. Try to identify one or two language angles to these. Was there:

o Something interesting about an accent being used

o A new word or expression you heard that you hadn’t come across before

o A paragraph of writing that you thought was particularly powerful

o An image that you were struck by

o A plot structure or character that interested you?

One of the ways to inspire your own creativity on the course is to think about the things that have inspired you. At some point, you’ll be asked to produce your own creative writing on this course and that might be an article about a language issue, an opening to a short story, a review of a gig, film or restaurant, or even the text of a speech. The more you read, listen to and think about language, the more you’ll have to draw on.

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| --- | --- |
| **Language Log** | |
| What have a read/ watched/ listened to and enjoyed? | Why did you enjoy it? What was interesting about it? For example:  *o Something interesting about an accent being used*  *o A new word or expression you heard that you hadn’t come across before*  *o A paragraph of writing that you thought was particularly powerful*  *o An image that you were struck by*  *o A plot structure or character that interested you?* |
| 1. |  |
| 2. |  |
| 3. |  |

Feel free to add more than 3! Just carry on with the table…