

## English Language A Level Transition Task

The A Level English Language course is all about language use in the real world. We explore a range of fascinating topics such as:

- How do children learn to speak, read and write?
- How has the English language changed over time, and what is its future?
- How has the internet and modern technology impacted our language use?
- Do men and women, or people from different social groups and professions use language differently?
- Does your accent reveal something about your identity?

Alongside this, we also analyse examples of non-fiction and evaluate how the author represents the topic, and themselves, through their language use. This is what you will be practising for this task.

**Step 1:** Write a short definition for each of the following terms in the glossary below. You may need to research the meanings of some of these terms.

Term	Definition
Accent	
Dialect	
Phoneme	
Synonym	
Antonym	
Hypernym	
Register	
Semantic change	
Abstract noun	
Concrete noun	
Dynamic verb	
Stative verb	
Adjective	
Adverb	
Determiner	
Clause	
Passive voice	
Main clause	
Subordinate clause	
Deixis	
Discourse marker	
Orthography	

**Step 2:** For part of the examination, you will be asked to analyse a text, thinking about how the language and layout presents the author and the topic of the text. Read through the example annotations below.

**A:** Use of interrogative presupposes Britain \*is\* rude.

**B:** Standfirst and by-line both have focus on writer's 'manners' credentials.

**C:** Choice of images shows a strong contrast between rudeness now (picture 1 in colour) and respect, order and the past (picture 2 in black and white).

**D:** 1<sup>st</sup> person plural address in 1<sup>st</sup> sentence suggests writer is trying to strike up a rapport with the reader about shared experiences.

**E:** grammar choices (especially around tense) in this paragraph suggest the present is a time of chaos and stress

**F:** Much of this paragraph is in the past tense, offering a contrast with the paragraphs about the present

**G:** The focus on social structure and change (often through key noun phrases) is significant here.

**Step 3:** Read the article below from The Washington Post, January 7<sup>th</sup> 2021, then annotate it with anything you notice about how the language presents the event. You can use the tips in the box below:

Think about how language is used to present:	Tips:
January 6 <sup>th</sup> 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What type of language is used to describe what the public expected the day to be like?</li> <li>• What was the reality of what happened?</li> <li>• What semantic field is used to describe the violence?</li> <li>• How are verbs and verbs phrases used?</li> <li>• How would you describe the register (tone) in this article?</li> </ul>
Donald Trump	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are Trump and his actions described?</li> <li>• How does the writer use language to persuade the reader of Trump's involvement?</li> <li>• How does the structure of the article impact how Trump is presented?</li> </ul>

# A day for ceremony descends into anarchy on Capitol Hill

Jan. 6, 2021, will be remembered as one of the darkest days in the history of the United States.

Instead of a day designed to symbolize the peaceful transfer of power, Wednesday will be remembered as the day when a mob, encouraged and incited by President Trump, breached the Capitol, smashed windows on a door into the House chamber, creating an armed standoff, and in one case mounted the dais in the Senate chamber to protest the election of President-elect Joe Biden.

Instead of an orderly and normally pro forma procedure to ascertain the results of the electoral college, it will be remembered as the day Capitol Hill security collapsed, when members of the House and Senate were forced into lockdown, when Vice President Pence and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and others had to be escorted to safety, when House members were told to prepare to don gas masks.

Instead of a moment of celebration of free and fair elections in the world's greatest democracy, Wednesday will be remembered as a day that brought a frightening and predictable culmination to two months of lies by the president that the election had been stolen by Biden and the Democrats, when in fact it had not.

It was a day in which Trump was aided and abetted by many members of his party, who were preparing to object to the electoral college counts and thereby give moral support to Trump's false claims of a stolen election and who then decried the lawbreaking and violence of the people in whose names they claimed to be representing.

As the process of counting the election of Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala D. Harris was getting underway, democracy suddenly gave way to political anarchy. It was a clarifying moment. When the protesters stormed the Capitol, it was no longer possible to conclude anything other than that there are connections between the dangerous and inflammatory words of political leaders and how the people who trust them respond — and consequences.

Could there be any other conclusion? Trump had urged people to assemble on Wednesday to show their support for him. In the hour before the joint session of Congress convened in the House chamber, the president was exhorting a mass of supporters with one more recitation of his baseless claims of a stolen election and much else.

It was the president who urged them, their flags and banners snapping in the cold wind, to march to the Capitol, and they did, and immediately the Capitol complex became a scene of chaos and clashes between protesters and police, with Trump supporters hurling insults and vulgarities at law enforcement officials in riot gear and behind barriers designed to protect buildings and people. Then the protesters turned into a mob, breaching the barriers.

The scenes that unfolded in the afternoon were unlike anything anyone could remember, with rioters marching unencumbered through Statuary Hall near the House chamber, clogging the steps and balconies on the East Front, and the mob assembling in even bigger numbers on the Capitol's West Front, where the inaugural ceremonies will take place in two weeks.

There were scenes of violence and reports of injuries, tear gas used and flash grenades set off, with all the images hurtling around the globe via television and the Internet.

To the [rest of the world](#), America, long the beacon of democracy, stood as a nation besieged, its long-standing divisions starker and more threatening than ever, its electoral system challenged by the insecurities of a president unwilling to accept what even many of those elected officials raising objections to the electoral college counts knew to be true, which is that the election was carried out fairly and that Trump lost.

**Step 4: Write an essay answering the question: How does the writer use language to present Donald Trump and the attack on Capitol Hill as irresponsible?**

Use a range of quotations to back up your points and use accurate terms where possible *e.g. the adjectives 'frightening' and 'predictable' suggest that...* You should spend between 1 hour and 1 hour and a half on this essay. You could write about:

- How America and January 6<sup>th</sup> are presented in a positive light before the attack
- How verbs / nouns are used to create violent imagery when describing the attack
- Language used to suggest Trump is responsible

## English Language a Level Transition Key Topics

Below is a list of key skills and topics covered in the English Language A Level course.

**GREEN:** The topics in green are areas you should already be familiar with, and may want to revise to ensure you have a strong knowledge base from GCSE

**YELLOW:** The topics in yellow are areas that you will cover as part of the course, that you will be unfamiliar with. The activities will give you a taste of what you will be learning and will give you a head-start.

Key Skills and Topics	Activities for Independent Work
Understanding grammatical terms: word classes, clauses, phrases, and sentence types.	Complete the Seneca Course titled 'English Language: A Level Preparation – Summer 2021'. There is a GCSE refresher course and an A Level Taster course. <a href="https://senecalearning.com/en-GB/">https://senecalearning.com/en-GB/</a>
Language and Occupation and the Language of Persuasion	Read a range of political speeches and identify how the language has been used to convey or reinforce certain ideologies. You could choose one of Boris Johnson's speeches, or an historical one. You could also read this article on how Boris used language to describe the COVID19 pandemic.
Children's Language Development	This module looks at how children learn to speak, read, and write. This includes their social development. Watch an episode of 'Secret Lives of 4 Year Olds and make notes about anything you learn about how children develop their language and social skills. After watching, have a conversation with someone who has known you since you were 5 years or younger, and ask them about anything they can remember about your language development. <a href="https://www.channel4.com/programmes/the-secret-life-of-4-and-5-year-olds/on-demand/63592-005">https://www.channel4.com/programmes/the-secret-life-of-4-and-5-year-olds/on-demand/63592-005</a>
Language and Technology	Watch the following clip from the TV show 'It's Only a Theory' <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h79V_qUp91M">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h79V_qUp91M</a> List examples of ways that you adapt your language when texting e.g. What emojis do you use and why? Do you use standard spelling, is not, why not? How do you use punctuation differently from when you are writing? Now write a short guide about the social rules of texting. Are there any specific things you should do? What should you avoid?
Language and Gender	Research a range of texts that are aimed at young girls and boys and make notes on how the language supports stereotypes of how girls and boys should behave. You might want to present your notes in a grid. <b>Suggestions for texts:</b> · Adverts for toys aimed at girls and boys; · Birthday cards for male and female toddlers; <b>In your notes, include:</b> · What adjectives are used to describe the different genders? What connotations do these have? · What nouns are used to describe boys and girls? E.g. 'angel', 'princess' · What semantic fields do you find in texts for boys and texts for girls? E.g. war, sport · How are colours, fonts and images used to stereotype the genders?
Accent and Dialect	Explore different attitudes to British accents and dialects using this website: <a href="https://www.bl.uk/british-accent-and-dialects">https://www.bl.uk/british-accent-and-dialects</a>  Make notes on: - What is Received Pronunciation? - How are accents changing in England over time? - What are the features of the Geordie accent and dialect? - Write a short paragraph about what your accent and dialect is, and how you feel about it. Would you want to change your accent? Why