

A Level English Language Transition Tasks

When studying English Language, you will be studying a variety of different aspects of language. Some of these include:

- How people use language
- The different modes in which people communicate
- In depth analysis of the words used and why they are used
- How different groups of people use language differently
- How language has changed over time
- How children learn language

Task 1 – Research

Listen to at least 4 of the following '**Word of Mouth**' podcasts and fill in the reflection sheet attached. Try and completely fill the sheet with your knowledge and opinions. These will prove to be a great talking point when you start the course. Here are some podcasts that will give you a taster of each topic and allow you to 'bring something to the table' when you do eventually start the topic.

Language and Diversity

This is a huge topic of study during the English Language course. You will look at the different ways in which people use language to communicate.

Ethnic Diversity and Multicultural London English

MLE words and their origin - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0004l93>

Language and Gender

Language and gender identity - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b09r4k4l>

Young women as linguistic innovators -

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b05t13jm>

Regional Diversity - Accent and Dialect

The impact of accent and dialect -

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b01s4g7g>

Changing the way you speak to suit your audience -

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b040hx6v>

Language and Occupation

Office jargon - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03phrwl>

Non-standard English

Slang - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b06wd268>

Language Change

This is all about how the English language has changed over time and continues to change (think about all those times you moaned about Shakespeare not being 'English'!)

The Americanisation of English -

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08g5533>

The influence of French on English -

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08lh6r1>

Emojis – the future of language?

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08ffvp6>

Language Evolution - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b06kcbw4>

How English may change in the future -

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04wtzzk>

English and German - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01sdg46>

Shakespearean English - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b06ycr4v>

Modes of Communication

This refers to the different ways in which we choose to communicate with other people.

Typography - punctuation and how it came to exist

- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07bzdbz>

Modes of communication -

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0714nj0>

Non-Verbal Communication - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b05vy6f0>

Textspeak - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01dtvk3>

Child Language Acquisition

This is the study of how human beings learn language.

Parent speak - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b05077ks>

First words - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04v382j>

The use of baby talk - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03mfwjz>

Kids TV - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03mfqm5>

Challenge

Listen to a 'Word of Mouth' episode that interests you. It doesn't have to be related to one of the topics of study.

Topic:	Podcast:
What I've learned:	
What I found interesting:	
Something that surprised me:	
Something I disagreed with:	

Task 2

During the course, you will be asked to analyse texts in detail – not only thinking about what the texts are about but how and why the author has used language in the way that they have.

The following two opinion articles discuss the use of Non-Standard English, or 'slang'. Read the two articles below and fill in the comparison analysis sheet.

If you have the ability to print, printing the article and annotating your thoughts and opinions/ techniques used will be a great practice for the course.

Text A

Twinking, selfie and unlike? Young people

don't speak like that – I should know

It doesn't exactly reflect well on young people that the new additions to the Oxford Dictionaries Online are mostly related to image, reputation and sex, writes 20 year-old Isabelle Kerr, who questions why these slang words have been elevated to a level of permanence and authority.

Some young people, probably libertarians Photo: Alamy

By Isabelle Kerr

4:10PM BST 28 Aug 2013

I'm so gonna unlike that selfie of her twerking. Srsly though, **these words** make me wanna vom.

If you were to look in the **most recent catalogue of the Oxford Dictionary of the English Language online** you would think something appalling had happened. Among some of the greatest and most eloquent words in the English language, an invasion of bizarre, nonsensical and downright pointless words appear to have taken over.

The Oxford Dictionaries Online have announced plans to include a variety of new, shall we say, colloquial words to their online collection, including slang words such as vom, selfie, unlike, digital detox, food baby and more. Sadly these are not misprints, nor has Word accidentally changed misspelt words into a seemingly-foreign language. These are in fact the pitiful

emblems of the current young generation's contribution to language. My generation. I am 20.

Among the new additions, 'twerking' has taken centre stage. I actually had to Google this word yesterday when **investigating why Miley Cyrus was said to have 'twerked' at the MTV video music awards.**

The official definition reads: "Twerk, v.: dance to popular music in a sexually provocative manner involving thrusting hip movements and a low, squatting stance." Right.

Regardless, the future of the English language looks bleak. As a member of the younger generation, partly responsible for these linguistic calamities, I can only apologise. I am embarrassed and ashamed. It doesn't exactly reflect well on young people that the new additions are mostly related to image, reputation and sex. Instead of creating words to improve our ability to communicate and express ourselves, these words simply promulgate an unhealthy culture obsessed with being seen in the right places and knowing who's doing what.

It's already a constant battle for young people to prove we're not all apathetic, ASBO-wielding jobs who can't communicate properly. These recent additions to the dictionary certainly do us no favours. Comments on Twitter and online today have enhanced our image problem. One online user wrote "no wonder there is so much youth unemployment"; whilst another tweeted "it's over. They've won".

To reiterate, I had no idea what twerking involved before all of this kicked off, and I'm still not entirely sure either. And I'm not alone. Some young Twitter users have expressed their rejection of the new words, with one young follower tweeting "what has the world come to?" While it's important to keep up with language developments, these words give out the completely wrong impression. If they are even to remotely reflect that this is how the young generation speaks, then the dictionary needs a reality check.

Words like twerking, unlike and selfie are nothing more than slang which, just like any fashion trend, come and go. After all, when was the last time you heard someone describe something

as "groovy"? Things that are good are no longer "wicked", they're "sick" and if someone doesn't appeal to you they're not "fugly", they're "butters". Aight?

By including them online, the Oxford dictionaries are awarding these dismal words a degree of permanence that is both unrealistic and unnecessary. Now enshrined in the authenticating realm of the dictionaries' online catalogue, these words unfairly represent what can only be described as this generation's feeble etymological contribution to the English language. I, for one, can only hope that my generation is not remembered for being responsible for removing all the vowels from 'seriously'. I can't imagine Countdown is too happy about that decision either.

So while I scroll through the new listings of the online dictionary, I see the unfortunate positioning of twerk. It sits embarrassingly next to 'twere', an archaic word reminiscent of an era of great language and literary triumph. If the only words we can create are unimaginative hybrids of pre-existing words, or worse, shortening of already perfectly good words, then what hope is there? Shakespeare will be turning in his grave.

Isabelle Kerr is an undergraduate student at Bristol University. She can be found tweeting @Isabelle__Kerr

Text B

It's bare sick that the OED cares how young people speak

[Coco Khan](#)

With culture wars raging, it matters that such an institution would reach out to Britain's young for help with slang words

[@cocobyname](#)

Fri 21 Sep 2018 14.47 BST Last modified on Fri 21 Sep 2018 14.48 BST
Anyone's who's played a heated game of Scrabble will know that the dictionary is much more than a simple resource that records and define common words. It is also a place where history and culture is preserved. When a word enters the dictionary, it is "real";

established, bona fide, and must be accepted. It plays an active role in defining not just words but our world.

So I was delighted to find that this week the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) asked the public to help give the dictionary treatment to some common youth slang words. They have asked children and teenagers to send in examples of current slang, and have apparently already been tracking the shifting meaning of words such as “bare” (intensifier, meaning very or a lot). “Peng” (meaning good-looking or of exceptional quality) and “lit” (meaning fun, exciting) can’t be far behind.

On the one hand, is it really cause for celebration? Why celebrate the OED simply doing its job? These are words uttered regularly by huge swaths of the population, albeit almost exclusively younger people. (In the case of bare, which was in circulation when I was a teenager, I’m fairly certain some of the people saying it now are pushing 40). It’s therefore only right they are included, to help others understand the words, and to record their arrival.

But on the other hand, there is a touching symbolism to this story. That such an institution is reaching out to the public to help is a reminder that language is made by us all, and not dictated from ivory towers. It is a bottom-up phenomenon. In a society wrought by intergenerational inequality, it is a wonderful message to the young, to tell them that their daily lives matter and are worthy of recording. Such symbolism is certainly not lost on me. How we speak is the result of thousands of influences, histories and cultures, and some being deemed acceptable and others not speaks to entrenched social hierarchies. How I speak, as a non-white woman from a working-class background, has been regularly policed throughout my life. To take just one example: the university tutor who marked me down on a poetry assignment because I “miscounted the syllables required”. The word hour is two syllables in my accent, but one syllable in the Queen’s English.

Still, that’s probably nothing compared with the experience of people who were born overseas. My mother for example, who can speak English fluently but has a slight accent and looks Asian, was

heavily scrutinised growing up. (There is truly nothing more maddening than someone passive aggressively saying “Sorry, can you speak English?” at a customer service counter because you dared ask for a refund.)

I don’t know yet whether the news about the dictionary means that perhaps the worst of those days might soon be behind us. But it certainly feels like progress, to the benefit of us all. It doesn’t mean we all have to use the slang, but we can if want to. It’s more freedom, and more choice to say more things, such as: “Imagine if they let me write bare slang in the Guardian. It’s gonna be lit, the Opinion section would be looking peng.”

	Text A	Text B
What is the author’s opinion on the topic of ‘slang’?		
What words/ phrases/ devices does the author use to get their opinion across to the reader? <i>Try and be specific where you can - e.g. the ‘verb’...</i>		
How does the author try to persuade the reader to share their opinion?		

What impression does the author create of themselves?		
What is your opinion on the topic?		

Task 3

Produce your own opinion article giving your opinion on a topic of language that you have learned about so far. This could be the topic of slang or something else raised in one of the podcasts that you listened to.

Task 4

Listen to some podcasts on BBC's 6 Minute Grammar.

Task 5

A Way With Words has been a weekly radio show since 1998, and it's got language cred in spades. Speaking of "in spades": much of this podcast is focused on slang, sayings, and common expression origins. It also features language news, quizzes, and the sort of banter between its cohosts that 20 years of broadcasting together provides. **Start with this episode:** "Bun in the Oven" (February 5, 2018)

Challenge Task:

Write a non-fiction piece (review, blog, magazine article, autobiography) on

something you have done or used to alleviate the boredom of 'lockdown'. This could be, social media, photography, computer games, podcasts, films, computer games, blogs, cooking, wildlife, film making, drawing or growing vegetables!