

A-LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE SUMMER WORK

Some of the terms below are ones that you will use day-to-day in your study of the English Language, although this list is not exhaustive. We suggest that you take advantage of the long summer ahead and begin to learn the meanings of these terms in preparation for your lessons starting in September. If you have any queries about the course or about this work, please feel free to contact me: hhoughton@gwacademy.co.uk.

A GLOSSARY OF BASIC LINGUISTIC TERMS

You will of course be maintaining your own glossary in class; however, use this basic version as a quick reference if you need to check something.

ACCENT

The *pronunciation* characteristic of a particular region and or social group.

ACRONYM

A word formed from the initial letters of other words. (e.g. radar, from 'radio detection and ranging')

ADJACENCY PAIR

Two-part exchanges following a predictable pattern and found in conversation. (e.g. "What's the time?" "Three o'clock")

ALLITERATION

When two or more words begin with the same sound.

ANTONYM

Popularly an antonym is a word that indicates an opposite meaning to a given lexeme, as in DARK> antonym LIGHT.

ASSONANCE

When the vowel sounds in the middle of two words are similar.

BLEND

A word formed by combining parts of other words. (e.g. 'smog' formed from 'smoke' and 'fog')

CLIPPING

A word formed by shortening an existing word. (e.g. 'phone' from 'telephone')

COHERENCE

For a text to be fully satisfactory to a listener or reader, it needs not only appropriate grammatical links between sentences (cohesion) but also the concepts, propositions or events to be related to each other and to be consistent with the overall subject of the text. This semantic and propositional organisation is called coherence. In effect, a coherent text is one that "makes sense".

COLLOCATION

Groups (usually pairs) of words that are commonly found alongside each other.

COMPARATIVE

An adjective that makes a comparison, usually ending in *-er* (e.g. 'colder')

COMPLEX SENTENCE

A sentence containing a main clause and one or more clauses of lesser importance.

COMPOUND SENTENCE

Two or more simple sentences joined together with a coordinating conjunction ('and', 'but' or 'so')

CONNOTATION

The implied or associated meanings of a word or phrase. (E.g. Rose = love, Labour party, Valentine's Day)

CONTEXT

A term used by linguists to refer to the situational aspects of any spoken or written text, e. g:

audience who am I talking/writing to?

purpose why am I talking/writing? (N.B. the term "function" is used with a meaning similar to "purpose".)

CONTRACTION

Occurs when words are combined to form a single, shortened word. (e.g. 'we've' from 'we have')

DECLARATIVE SENTENCE

A sentence that makes a statement. (E.g. "English is fun.")

DEIXIS means pointing or indicating. Common deictic words are the personal pronouns ("I", "you", "she", "he"), the definite article or specific determiner "the" and the demonstratives "this", "that", "these", "those". Deixis operates both situationally by pointing to something or some person(s):

in a shared context: Those children are working really well

and textually: Production of the 2CV ended today. This model has had the longest production life of any post-war car.

DENOTATION

The literal, primary meaning of a word or phrase. (E.g. Rose = thorny flower with petals)

DIALECT

The distinctive vocabulary and grammar of a geographical area.

DYSPHEMISM

A deliberately blunt expression for a delicate subject. (E.g. "I'm going for a dump.")

ELLIPSIS

The omission of one or more grammatical elements from a sentence.

(E.g. "You out tonight?")

EUPHEMISM

A polite or understated reference to a delicate subject. (E.g. "I'm going to the little girl's room.")

EXCLAMATORY SENTENCE

A sentence that ends with an exclamation mark. (E.g. "Ouch!")

FORMALITY/INFORMALITY

Terms in stylistic studies, essentially at either ends of a continuum, used to identify the linguistic features of any text, from those usually identified as appropriate to formal social occasions, to those appropriate to intimate and familiar social occasions. Martin Joos (1961) offers a lively interpretation of this concept.

GRAPHOLOGY ☺

The visual aspects of a text. (layout, headings etc.)

HOMOPHONES

Words that have the same pronunciation but differ in meaning and spelling:

Threw/ through dear/ deer bear/ bare

HOMONYMS

Words which are spelt the same way, are pronounced in the same way, but have different meanings:

bear = animal or carry

HYPONYM

One of a set of specific terms in a relationship of "hyponymy" to some more all-embracing or superordinate word. For example, "oak" and "ash" are hyponyms of "tree".

IDIOLECT

The language of individual speakers - the personal characteristics that identify them as individuals. These characteristics can be identified as:

Phonology - their distinctive pronunciation

Vocabulary- any specific words used

Grammar- similar specific grammatical uses, which other people might also use that identify the individual as an individual.

IMPERATIVE SENTENCE

A sentence that is a command. (E.g. "Read this now.")

INTERROGATIVE SENTENCE

A sentence that is a question. (E.g. "Where are we going?")

JARGON

The specialist vocabulary associated with a particular occupation or activity.

LEXIS

A term used to refer to full words (rather than function or grammatical words) in a language.

MORPHEME

Morphemes are the parts of a word that convey meaning.

MORPHOLOGY

The study of the structure of words (i.e. internal structure) and is usually distinguished from syntax, which refers to the study of how words are combined into meaningful structures (i.e. above word level).

ONOMATOPOEIA

When the sound of a word echoes its meaning. E.g. 'buzz'

ORTHOGRAPHY

The term used of the writing system of a language. It covers spelling and punctuation. Standard British Orthography (SBO) is the conventional system taught in British schools.

PARALINGUISTIC FEATURES

Gestures and accompanying facial expressions that contribute to meanings in speech.

PHONOLOGY

A linguistic term, like its synonym, "phonemics", refers specifically to the study and description of language as a sound system.

PRAGMATICS

The study of the semantics of utterances with an emphasis on the meanings created by speakers and listeners in interpersonal contexts. Students of pragmatics are interested in the contextual functions of language, the intentions and presuppositions of speakers and the effects produced on listeners.

PROSODIC FEATURES

Aspects of the use of the voice. (E.g. intonation, stress, tempo, pitch)

REGISTER

A rather imprecise term which describes the kind of language use appropriate to a particular function in a situational context: for example, a legal register or a register of advertisements. Features of language are selected in accordance with context, purpose, and the relation of the language user to an audience.

SEMANTIC FIELD

A group of words with associated meanings and uses.

SIMPLE SENTENCE

A sentence that contains only one clause.

SLANG

Informal language. (E.g. "getting nicked")

SUPERLATIVE

An adjective indicating the highest degree, usually ending *-est-* (e.g. "biggest")

SYNTAX

This term is used to describe the ways that words may be combined in groups up to the level of the sentence. Syntax and morphology together make up the commonest meaning of the term grammar.

TABOO LANGUAGE

Words that can be considered offensive. (E.g. "They f*ck you up your mum and dad" Phillip Larkin – 'This Be The Verse')

TAG QUESTIONS

In conversation, questions are sometimes given an added orientation by the use of a tag question, which consists of the auxiliary verb and pronoun e.g. "His comments are unpleasant, aren't they?" It is usual for a positive main clause to be followed by a negative tag and vice versa e.g. "His comments are not helpful, are they?"