

AS Level English Language



Lady Pipi Gigi (1782-1818)

LaDy PiPi GiGi

This mnemonic helps us to remember the six linguistic methods that we use to analyse the English language at A Level:

Lexis and Semantics: the linguistic method that deals with words and their meanings

Discourse Structure: the linguistic method that deals with how language is organised

Phonology and Phonetics: the linguistic method that deals with how language sounds

Pragmatics: the linguistic method that deals with how language is interpreted in context

Grammar and Syntax: the linguistic method that deals with how words are adapted and ordered to make sense

Graphology: the linguistic method that deals with the visual presentation of language

Questions Focusing On The Linguistic Methods:

1. **Lexis and Semantics:** *why do you think Kellogg's might have changed their coco pops slogan from 'they turn the milk brown' to 'they turn the milk chocolatey'?*
2. **Discourse Structure:** *how many conventions can you think of that you might follow when writing a postcard?*
3. **Phonology and Phonetics:** *when the Great War poet Wilfred Owen wrote "Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle/Can patter out their hasty orisons," how was he being clever?*
4. **Pragmatics:** *what would you do in Steve's position and why?*

Steve: Do you want a glass of wine?
Daisy: Oh, I'm driving.
5. **Grammar and Syntax:** *can you explain the differences between these two headlines?*
 - RAF Bomb Hospital
 - Hospital Bombed
6. **Graphology:** *what is wrong with this?*

Robertson & Sons' Funeral Directors

More on Linguistic Methods: Can you explain how the following jokes create humour?

Lexis and Semantics

Why are rock stars so cool?

They're always surrounded by fans.

The joke uses the different semantic denotations of the words "cool" (impressive/chilly) and "fans" (admirers/air blowers)

Discourse Structure

Knock knock!

Who's there?

Interrupting cow.

Interrupting –

- MOOOO!

The joke relies on the listener's understanding of the knock knock joke structure. The listener has to cooperate if the joke is to work (and then the joker subverts the structure).

Pragmatics

News Headline: "Cameron Diaz tells women to keep pubic hair in her new book."

This news headline was ambiguous: the adverbial phrase "in her new book" clearly matches the verb "tells." However, a more comic interpretation can be made with a less likely inference: pairing the phrase with "keep."

Phonology

What do you call a deer with no eyes?

No idea.

This joke doesn't really work very well when written down because it relies on the phonological similarity of "no idea" and "no-eye deer." The joke is better in spoken mode.

Grammar

Time flies like an arrow; fruit flies like a banana.

This epithet puts two sentences next to each other. Initially, they seem similar in structure. However, while "time flies" is a subject followed by a verb, "fruit flies" is a noun phrase. The subtle shift of "like" from adverb to verb gives meaning to something apparently nonsensical.

Graphology



Here, the ironic inference (that the writer has failed to plan his own PLAN AHEAD sign) is not made from the language alone: it is a visual joke.

Standard Paper 1 Questions:

1. How does Text A create meanings and representations?
2. How does Text B create meanings and representations?
3. Compare and contrast the two texts.

Text A

Chelsea 1-1 Leicester - Claudio Ranieri Post Match Interview, May 2016

INTERVIEWER well Claudio nice finish to the season against your old club

RANIERI yes it was um a warm welcome uh for me it was fantastic at the beginning at the end and also I enjoyed during the match because both teams wanted to win (.) without something special but we tried to do our best it was (.) a a warm day today at Stamford bridge temperature was very very high and uh (.) i think they they uh Chelsea had a very good chance at the beginning but Kasper Schmeichel made a very good save but also we had some very good chances to score a goal at the end a draw is okay because we lost only three times this season and it was an amazing achievement

INTERVIEWER that is a fantastic record isn't it um (.) one of my highlights was watching you on the pitch with the um with the opera singer last Saturday against Everton uh that was a nice touch with Borelli* what were you thinking when you were standing there?

RANIERI no I don't know it was an amazing ceremony uh (.) Andrea wanted to come uh (.) he called me and said there is a fantastic atmosphere out there I want to feel what happened and uh when we came on the pitch he told me it's amazing it's amazing

INTERVIEWER amazing for you too this season isn't it Claudio

RANIERI yes unforgettable

INTERVIEWER where will you go from here with Leicester now is it a matter of keeping the players

RANIERI we try (.) we try to keep everybody I suggest to them it's much better if they stay with us one year more

INTERVIEWER and play in the Champions' League

RANIERI yes for this reason and then they can improve their experience with us

*here, the interviewer is referring to the opera singer *Andrea Bocelli*

Text B

Andrea Bocelli: Leicester's title winners are an inspiration to everyone

- Opera singer will perform at King Power Stadium on Saturday
- 'They are a lesson in life: where there is a will there is a way'



Andrea Bocelli will also appear at the Champions League final between Real Madrid and Atlético Madrid at the end of May.

Guardian sport

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Andrea Bocelli has revealed he asked Claudio Ranieri if he could perform at Leicester's coronation as Premier League champions on Saturday because their story is "a lesson in life".

The Italian opera singer will provide the soundtrack at the King Power Stadium when the captain, Wes Morgan, is presented with the trophy by

the supporter Steve Worthy after the match against Everton. Bocelli, a lifelong Internazionale fan who lost his sight following an accident during a football game when he was 12, said he had been inspired by their story.

“To be honest, I was the one who called. It kicked off over a month ago,” he told La Gazzetta dello Sport. “I got Ranieri’s number off [Javier] Zanetti, so I called him and said: ‘Look Ranieri, it’s Bocelli, I would love to do this thing.’ He was very happy; he is a man with an innate elegance. Next, everything was arranged through my manager and the club.

“My passion for football has no limits and comes from when I was a child in college. I followed everything then. Then, this Leicester season has really caught my eye. I think it has garnered attention from everyone as they are an extraordinary example of clean football, a small team becoming great thanks to the strength of the group spirit.

“They are a lesson in life: where there is a will there is a way. And then, there’s an Italian driving the whole thing. There’s the story of [Jamie] Vardy, from a factory worker to a champion, who realises his dream. How do you tell me not to get caught [up in all of this]?”

Bocelli has previously performed at the 2009 Champions League final in Rome, when Barcelona defeated Manchester United 2-0, with the 57-year-old also set to appear with Alicia Keys before this year’s edition between Real Madrid and Atlético Madrid at the end of this month.

However, he admitted he is yet to decide which song will serenade Leicester’s players and supporters on Saturday, although Bocelli drew comparisons with the club’s manager and legendary Italian singer Domenico Modugno.

“We have not decided anything, we’ll see. What is certain is that the fans of Leicester will sing painted blue and that Ranieri is Mister Volare,” he said.

Taken from <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2016/may/06/andrea-bocelli-leicester-inspiration-everyone-title-winners>

The perils of jargon: a plea to speak in plain English

Celia Walden examines how social workers, hospitals and others eschew straight-talking in favour of language they think makes them sound more intelligent

The road sign blocking my route across west London last week simply read: "Reinstatement." Of what or whom was anyone's guess; as with all government notices, customs forms or indeed anything penned by petty bureaucrats, it made about as much sense as a box of hair. Willfully ambiguous, the sign was also pompous enough to be amusing. And if the writing of it made some grey-faced, grey-suited little jobsworth puff out his chest at his grey Formica desk, bully for him.

Our increasing tendency towards linguistic obfuscation becomes distinctly unamusing, however, when critical, life-changing documents like social workers' reports are so badly and bombastically written as to be incomprehensible to all concerned.

So when family court judge Jeremy Lea expressed fury this week over the lack of plain English in one such social worker's report – which was key in deciding the fate of two children – he highlighted a very real British problem.

Reading out passages of the document at a family court hearing in Nottingham, he criticised it for being so poorly written it might as well have been "in a foreign language". That said, it seems unlikely that even Tina Pugh, the social worker who wrote the report, could translate phrases like "imbued with ambivalence", "having many commonalities emanating from their histories," and "issues had a significant interplay on (her) ability" into plain English, given the sum total of their significance is, at best, white noise.

Jargon may have its place in pop music and contemporary art, where it can at least pretend to give meaning and gravitas to something fundamentally lightweight. It may also have its place in business and advertising, where phrases like "run up the flagpole" (find out what other people think of a new idea), "opening the kimono" (revealing information) and "blue skying" (brainstorming) will lighten boardroom vocabulary. But it has no place in any arena that directly affects ordinary peoples' lives – politics being the prime example. And yet just last month, the Prime Minister was forced to issue a letter to every civil servant in Whitehall and around the country calling on officials to simplify the language used in ministerial submissions and urging them not to "hide bad news in complexities".

Hiding bad news in complexities is irksome enough on British Rail, when a carriage full of commuters are left scratching their heads at the laboriously announced reason for their delay (instead of asking the train driver to bungle his way through "poor railhead adhesion", why not let him say "there's snow on the tracks"?)

But it becomes downright irresponsible when used by health professionals or teachers. One friend told in a school report that her son was "struggling to successfully co-exist" with his classmates wrote an angry letter back to the teacher demanding assurance that similar jargon wasn't being used in the classroom. But of course it will be across Britain. Only

yesterday the headmaster of Bohunt – the Hampshire school where five Chinese teachers applied their country’s famously strict methods for a BBC documentary – hit back at claims that his pupils were disruptive by saying that Chinese schools use “didactic teaching” methods. He might want to look up “didactic” in the Oxford English Dictionary – and check out “tautologies” while he’s there.

It’s no coincidence that the most jargon-filled arenas are also the most insecure. Desperate to belong to a particular clique, teenagers will pepper their conversations with argot and revel in the sense of superiority not being widely understood gives them. Which is all very sweet until they turn into adults so fraught with intellectual insecurity (thanks to our failing education system) that, like Russell Brand, they resort to cloaking their shortcomings in long words plucked at random from the online thesaurus. Again, this wouldn’t matter if the bilge-speakers were figures of fun and not somehow elevated to positions of authority.

The situation becomes very grave indeed when social workers like Tina Pugh get so high on their own circumlocutions that they forget their real purpose: to give a clear picture of often murky domestic scenarios. When any social worker recommends that a child “be extracted from their familial context”, for example (and these are my words, not Pugh’s), they shouldn’t be allowed to forget for a second that they are recommending a child be taken away from his or her parents - in marginally less bleak language.

Reading out the final paragraph of Pugh’s report – “Due to SH’s apparent difficulties identifying the concerns, I asked her to convey a narrative about her observations” – Judge Lea asked what would be so wrong in saying, “I asked her to tell me?” and inquired whether Pugh had even attempted to discuss issues with the mother in question “in a language she would understand? SH is, and I am sure she will forgive me for saying so, a simple soul.” He stopped short of pointing out that Pugh herself was also probably a simple soul, which might explain her need to buoy herself up with jargonese.

No one was suggesting that she should have talked down to her charge, but by talking herself up, she will only have made an desperate situation still more painful.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/personal-view/11782337/The-perils-of-jargon.html>

Prep Work For The AS English Language Course

1. Learn the six linguistic methods, using LaDy PiPi GiGi to help you.
2. Source two texts from different genres, linked by a common theme, like the two Leicester City texts. One of them must be an example of spontaneous speech (like the Ranieri interview - observe the transcript conventions). You may have to record it and you will definitely transcribe it yourself. This will take some time.
3. Celia Walden takes the topic of jargon and explores it in her article. Pick an aspect of the English Language that interests (or annoys) you and do what Walden did: write an article of between 500-1,000 words.

Make sure the work is ready to hand in at the start of your AS level course.