

What are lessons like?

Lessons are spent in a variety of ways with a balance between group discussion, pair-work, whole class and individual study. Sometimes there is teacher-led discussion or analysis of texts. Alternatively, we also read or research theories about language. Other time is spent writing, analysing your own interactions, or conducting independent research.



What about Creative Writing?

The English Area at Varndean College also offers a weekly class for writers run by writer, Rachel Shorer, whose own very distinctive work is gaining acclaim. It is an extra-curricular activity offered as enrichment. During these Wednesday afternoon sessions, she leads workshops on developing students' skills in different aspects of creative writing. Prose, poetry, drama and script writing are all covered. She also offers detailed advice on individual work in progress.



Trips?

Not all our work is done in the classroom and we run trips to enhance learning. Over the past few years, our students have enjoyed the English and Media Centre's annual language conference, free English Language taster days at Sussex and Brighton Universities, visits to Samuel Johnson's house and the British Library.

Beyond A Level?

A Level English Language is a useful and versatile qualification which will improve your control and grasp of spoken and written English. An increasing number of our students go on to study English Language or Linguistics at degree level – there are popular courses at Sussex, Brighton and other universities across the country. Other students have gone on to study speech therapy, journalism, teaching, PR and a wide range of related subjects.

For more information, please contact:

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A Level English Language



What is language?

Is there such a thing as proper or improper English? Do men and women use language differently? What makes some language posh? Why don't we like being interrupted? Why is the small print so hard to read? Do emails have their own language? Where did 'I-pod' come from? Can we think before we can talk? What is a word? Are swear words really Anglo Saxon? Does grammar matter? How do words make meaning?

If you've ever wondered about any of these questions, you might be interested in A Level English Language which explores the science behind language: how it can be used to manipulate others and why we speak and write the way we do!

What will I study?

Much of our work during the year is done through the forensic analysis of a huge range of spoken and written texts: varying from text messages and casual conversations, to legal documents and works of literature. Students also gather samples of language for themselves and learn to make transcripts. There are no set texts on the course, but we encourage you to keep reading a range of fiction and non-fiction as widely as possible, in order to analyse language which is specific to activities that particularly interest you. You can develop work which interests you individually for your own original writing folder and investigation projects in the second year.

Our syllabus at Varndean College is EDEXCEL English Language. During the first year, students learn about how context and identity shape language. You will be encouraged to analyse and write about texts which demonstrate spoken and written communication in a variety of ways. This involves exploring a wide variety of linguistic topics in order to grasp how a writer or speaker might represent either themselves or key issues. These topics range from power/occupation to gender, class and education, as well as technology and accent & dialect.

The A Level is made up of four key components:

Component 1 (Exam): Language Variation

- **Individual variation:** in the first module, students will learn how to look analytically at two unseen texts, which are both contemporary. These are linked by theme, in order to be compared in their use of different types of language, both spoken and written. Texts will demonstrate how people adapt language in different situations and students will be required to make comparisons and links between texts.
- **Variation over time:** the second unit on language change requires you to analyse and compare two thematically linked texts across time, from 1550 to the present day. We explore how and why the English language has altered so dramatically over the last 500 years.

Component 2 (Exam): Child Speech/Children's Literacy

This unit on the acquisition of language will focus on the developing speech of children from age 0 – 8 years, as well as the language that adults use to interact with them and theories surrounding acquisition. Students also explore how children become literate, including reading strategies and early writing.

Component 3 (Exam): Investigating language

This module builds on learning from the first year and involves analysis of unseen data based on one well researched sub-topic, from the choice of five below:

- Global English
- Gender identity
- Power
- Journalism
- Regional identity

A sub-topic is pre-released in Jan of Year 2, providing a steer for research, reading and investigation. With teacher- guidance and a resource-pack focusing on *one* chosen area, learners will analyse unseen data based on research and also provide a discursive response to a statement, arguing for/against the premise, based on their own investigation of the topic.

Component 4 (Coursework): Crafting Language

For this module, students will write two pieces of original writing from the same genre but for different audiences/functions, such as to persuade/entertain/inform/advise. You are encouraged to read and respond to each other's work and offer mutual support in producing a folder of original writing for coursework. You will then explore the techniques employed in your own writing in both creative texts, in order to produce an analytical commentary.

