AS/A LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE

UNDERSTANDING...

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY ENGLISH

**Understanding 21st Century English**

In your studies of 21st century English, you should be developing a broad understanding of:

* mixed mode, e.g. digital communications (written language with identifiable spoken features)
* the significance of informalisation in the 21st century.

As well as investigating how language rules and conventions in different genres of 21st century English are followed, you should also explore how and why they depart from these rules and conventions.

Aim to study the linguistic features of a wide range of 21stcentury texts, which may include:

* [tweets](https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rIid=959)
* [text messages](https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rIid=961)
* [email](https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rIid=960)
* Facebook profiles and posts
* online discussion forums
* Instagram entries and bios
* [YouTube vlogs](https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rIid=962)

The hyperlinks here take you to a range of WJEC A level English Language resources on these topics.

**Independent activities:**

a) Complete a mini investigation of tabloid headlines and how they typically illustrate the trend towards informalisation of standard English.

b) Research a range of tweets written by prominent politicians and compare and contrast the levels of formality with those from popular culture celebrities and “ordinary” people.

c) Analyse how traditional boundaries between speech and writing have been blurred and

eroded with the advent of hybrid texts such as text messaging, tweets, social media

posts and emails. Investigate the characteristics of style used in each, how different generations approach these different forms, and which of them is the most and least formal.

d) Compare a text message you have sent to your best friend with a text message you

have sent to your parents/grandparents and/or an email you have sent to your teacher. How have changes in audience altered the style choices you made?

**Exploring the Register of Text Messaging**

**Activity 1:** Using the corpus of data below, re-write each text using formal standard English. Analyse the two sets of data – the formal and informal versions – to explore what is gained and what is lost in the translation into standard English.

TEXT 1: (unsolicited advertising)

SAVE AN EXTRA 24% for 24 hours only OFF ALL Clothing & Footwear SALE PRICES @ www.special.co.uk HURRY: 24% offer must end 9am Friday. To opt out txt STOP to 77777

TEXT 2: (from husband to wife)

Morr’s?

TEXT 3: (from one friend to another)

SOZ forgot to read this coz was with jack LOL

TEXT 4: (from a mother to her son at university)

Hey you! Hope you’re getting ready for bed and an early night. Sleep tight! xx

TEXT 5: (from parent to teenage daughter)

Here when your ready no hurry : )

TEXT 6: (from student to his mother)

Hahahaha!!!! Quite tired tho. Found 2 of books prof told me abt. gotta email Philip now to make appt with him. btw dont forget to send flash drive!!??!!

TEXT 7: (from one friend to another)

?4U W@ time train to Newport? Can u txt me times TLK2UL8R

TEXT 8: (from one work colleague to another)

Sounds good! Will it be okay if I leave early tonight? I’ve been through everything for tomorrow and the room is booked for ten. Conference packs are already in from the printers and the tech guys have been in. See you tomorrow. Steve.

**Activity 2:** Texting also has distinctive linguistic features. Highlight the ones you can find in this set of data ahead of a class discussion.

**Linguistic features of micro-messaging**

Micro-messaging – such as Twitter (also described as micro-blogging) – in 280 characters is a distinctive form of digital language with recognisable linguistic features.

**Activity 3:** Read the following data which gives examples of tweets about the naming of a royal baby sent from different Twitter accounts. List as many examples of distinctive linguistic features of this form of digital language as you can find in these texts.

**TEXT 1**: (a member of the public)

terri@terrimouse

That little baby has no idea who she is to the world, and how much people already love her. And what her name means. **#RoyalBaby**

**TEXT 2**: (then leader of the Labour party)

Ed Miliband@Ed\_Miliband

Wishing Princess Charlotte Elizabeth Diana a long & happy life. I hope the Duke & Duchess of Cambridge are enjoying their first, special days.

**TEXT 3**: (*The Guardian* web news editor)

Jonathan Haynes@JonathanHaynes

Miliband beats Cameron to **#RoyalBaby** name tweet. The man is so all over social media.

**TEXT 4**: (a cartoonist)

mike stokoe@mikestokoe

AT LAST! The Wait is over…they’re calling her Tracey! **#RoyalBaby**

**TEXT 5**: (an independent news and commentary website)

The Conversation@Conversation

Royal propaganda tries to make hereditary millionaires seem like the rest of us **#RoyalBaby**

**TEXT 6**: (a member of the public)

Leonard@LeoDah93

It’s a good thing that the royals give their children proper names and don’t jump on the celebrities-crazy-baby-name bandwagon. **#RoyalBaby**

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| **Example of linguistic feature** | **Purpose/Effect of linguistic feature** |
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Here are some examples of micro-messaging features that you could have listed:

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| --- | --- |
| **Example of linguistic feature** | **Purpose/Effect of linguistic feature** |
| the @ symbol | an identification marker in account names used by the system to recognise the poster, or to identify someone being talked about |
| the hashtag # | a topic code, added to a word or phrase to mark the theme or sentiment of a tweet—often linked to a current event or news story |
| the initialism RT | ‘retweet’: a means of crediting an original author for a tweet that is reposted, usually accompanied by a comment |
| multi-modal text type: features of both written and spoken language | evidence of the trend towards colloquialism and informalisation in electronic English |
| sentiments expressed / language used | markedly different according to gender and geographical location |
| keywords are often used within distinctive twitter ‘tribes’ | language is used to mark group identity |

When analysing micro-messaging, particularly tweets, it is worth noting that the number of tweets peaks in relation to real world events. The tenor (levels of formality) and style (lexical and grammatical choices) vary according to the source of the tweet (individual or professional account holder; official organisation; brand), the occasion (public or private), the intended audience (private for personal contacts; public for twitter followers) and its purpose (social interaction; sharing information; commenting).

**Activity 4:** **Using your knowledge of 21st century English, analyse and evaluate the ways in which contextual factors affect how writers use language in these tweets.**

Refer to the set of data (Texts 1-6 on the previous page), but you may wish to draw on your own examples. Think about how you could group these texts to make it easier to discuss them, for example, by attitudes they share, from posters with similar status, or other contextual similarities or differences that they may have in common.

You might want to think about the following:

* the medium
* distinctive features
* grammatical structure
* attitudes
* contextual factors.

Now, let’s look at some of the points you could have included:

**Medium**

* the 140 character limit imposes constraints (compressed language)
* the name of the tweeter (e.g. an expert, celebrity, member of the public) and the user name/handle (e.g. actual name, creative tag, serious/humorous, official) frame the way we read and interact with the content
* each single communicative act by a tweeter is stored in a chronological timeline and can be expanded to reveal further details (e.g. interactions and comments)
* images, videos and hyperlinks can be used to extend the message
* use of the hashtag highlights trending topics and connects contributors to threads
* distinctive typography e.g. capitalisation, spacing, punctuation, bold for hashtags, bounding asterisks (for emphasis or to mark an aside—in plain text italics and bold font options are not available)
* situation-dependent language—often based on shared knowledge e.g. use of deixis *That little baby* (demonstrative determiner, Text 1)

**Distinctive features**

* user names e.g. linked directly to name (professional—Texts 2, 3 and 4; private—Texts 1 and 6); linked to official group (expert—Text 5)
* use of hashtag **#RoyalBaby**
* exophoric references (shared knowledge) e.g. noun phrase *That little baby*, determiner *her name* (Text 2), pronoun *her* (Texts 2 and 4)—the actual name is only mentioned in Text 2 (as part of a formal greeting, complete with honorific)
* conversational style e.g. fronted conjunction (Text 1); ellipsis (Text 2); colloquialisms (use of intensifier *so* marking emotional engagement, Text 3); idioms (*jump on the … bandwagon*, Text 6); use of exclamatory (Text 4)
* distinctive punctuation e.g. ampersand (saving characters—compressed language form, Text 2); capitalisation (ironic emphasis, Text 4); initial capitalisation of common noun *Wait* (ironic emphasis, Text 4); stylised use of ellipsis for anti-climax (Text 4); contractions (Texts 4, 6); compounded premodifier (Text 6)
* standard use of commas e.g. Oxford comma before *and* (Text 1); between coordinate adjectives i.e. have equal status (Text 2)

**Grammatical structure**

* frequent use of noun clauses often after an implied comment (e.g*. I hope that the Duke … are enjoying …*, Text 2) *It’s a good thing that the Royals give …*, Text 6)
* varied sentence types—choices reflect contextual factors e.g. writer, purpose, tone, tenor (in the examples given, few adopt non-standard/incomplete grammar)
* some simple (Texts 3 and 4)
* some minor e.g. greetings (*Wishing …*, Text 2) or communicating emotional response (*AT LAST!*, Text 4)
* often complex e.g. relative clauses (*who she is to the world,* Text 1); noun clauses (*how much … love her, what her name means*, Text 1); non-finite (*to make* …., Text 4)

**Attitudes of tweeters**

* mock excitement e.g. capitalisation and suspension marks (Text 4)
* irony e.g. simple noun phrase *The man* to mock Ed Miliband’s need to self-promote (Text 3); proper noun *Tracey* (Text 4)—clearly not the baby’s name
* irreverence towards the institution of the monarchy e.g. simple noun phrase *the royals* (Text 6); premodified noun phrase *Royal propaganda* representing the royal family as a self-marketing machine (Text 5)
* respect for tradition and the institution of monarchy e.g. formal use of title and proper noun *Princess Charlotte Elizabeth Diana*, *Duke & Duchess of Cambridge* (Text 2)
* celebration and joye.g. pre-modified noun phrases *their first special days*; *a long & happy life* (Text 2) and *That little baby* (Text 1)

**Social commentary (Texts 4, 5)**

* use of pronouns to convey class separation and division e.g. third person plural *they’re* (Text 4); first person plural *us* (Text 5)
* use of proper noun *Tracey* to convey shared knowledge of cultural stereotypes (e.g. ‘Essex girl’, Text 4)
* emotive abstract noun *propaganda* (Text 5)
* juxtaposition of noun phrases *hereditary millionaires/the rest of us* to emphasise class differences (irony underpinned by connotations of present tense main clause verb *tries* and copular verb *seem*)
* proper noun user name *The Conversation@Conversation* denotes organisation rather than private/public individual (Text 5)
* political agenda marked by formal lexis e.g. abstract noun *propaganda*; adjective *hereditary*)

**Politics (Texts 2, 3)**

* Miliband represented as a 'man of the people' e.g. abbreviation of name, proper noun *Ed* (Text 2)
* Miliband’s contribution does not follow expected conventions e.g. lack of hashtag (wants to be seen as leading rather than following? not aware of hashtag function?)
* implicit disrespect for political class e.g. lack of first name proper nouns e.g. *Miliband*, *Cameron* (or the effect of compressed language and the need to remain within character limit?)
* naming of royal baby used for political comment (Text 3)
* Labour-Conservative dialectic marked by connotations of dynamic verb *beats*
* disdainful reference to politicians’ need for self-promotion e.g. prepositional phrase *all over social media*
* ironic use of youth sociolect e.g. informal use of adverb *so* to intensify positive clause (implicit criticism of Miliband’s attempts to engage this social demographic)

**Celebrity (Texts 1, 6)**

* connotations of the adjective *little* are set against the writer’s sense of the global significance of the naming (Text 1)
* emotive language e.g. the verb *love* to convey a celebrity culture (implied connectedness amongst strangers)
* use of the prepositional phrase *to the world* is literal and not hyperbolic
* cultural significations of name: *Charlotte* *Elizabeth* *Diana*
* compounding of the modifier in the noun phrase *celebrities-crazy-baby-name bandwagon* mocks the phenomenon of non-traditional celebrity naming (Text 6)
* the pre-modified noun phrase *proper names* represents an implicit criticism of celebrity naming
* informal reference in the noun phrase *the royals* (no capitalisation).

**Activity 5:** Read the following set of data which gives examples from an online comment thread posted on YouTube. The writers are commenting on a clip posted on YouTube from *BBC Stargazing Live* which covered the launch of a rocket carrying the British astronaut Tim Peake and his Russian colleagues to the international Space Station.

**Sort the writers in different groupings according to their contexts and attitudes. How many different ways of grouping them can you think of?**

**TEXT 1**: (astrobollox. conspiracy theorist)

“You can see how hard the acceleration is....” yeah that hard the guy on the right can scribble away on a notepad they are deceiving us with these fake space missions.

**TEXT 2**: (михаил смальков2, a Russian observer)

I am pleased that the achievement of our engineers and scientists has brought so much joy to these children3. From Russia

**TEXT 3**: (lct7192000, student)

Woooooohoooooo! We’re so busy fighting and hating on this earth and THIS is what we should be focusing on!

**TEXT 4**: (christi simpson, parent)

Moments like this i love to see, moments like this wee should be working harder to see more often and its moments like this wee should be leaving for our children, thats our childrens future out there, i’d say it was time to knuckle down an help them grab it

**TEXT 5**: (Power Howard, U.S. citizen)

Yes Tim.. Get in there!! You the Man.. Thumbs up!!

**TEXT 6**: (Lord Fwah Fnah Singeon Smythe Dash Foretescue, political activist)

Nice rocket bro, now how about feeding the children down on earth?

**TEXT 7**: (Ruben Martin, academic)

Seeing things like this makes me realise how insignificant we all are, and how our lives are meaningless.

**Context Groupings**

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| **Shared Contextual Factor** | **Texts** |
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**Attitude Groupings**

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| **Shared Attitude** | **Texts** |
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**Activity 6**:

a) Write down as many features of the YouTube **medium** that you can:

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b) Write down as many **stylistic features** of YouTube that you can:

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c) What are the **purposes** of:

YouTube videos

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YouTube comment threads

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Now, let’s look at some of the points you could have included:

a) **YouTube** **Medium**

• online video-sharing site which has over a billion users (almost one third of internet users)

• to register, users must be at least 13 years old and have a valid email address

• names are designed to be memorable, and are often indicative of the user

• most content is subjective

• YouTubers use titles and descriptions to make the point of their material clear

• you can watch, like/dislike videos, comment, and subscribe to a particular channel

• the number of views is recorded

• comments are based on the posted videos and other comments featured in the thread

• contributors from anywhere in the world can respond at any time after the video is posted

• suggested video links appear at the end of videos to suggest other similar content

• ad clicks enable YouTubers to make money from their channels.

**b) Stylistic Features**

• depends on the contributor: professionals/subject specialists/politicians will probably be formal and standard; members of the public (e.g. parents, students, political activists) may be informal with non-standard features

• tenor is often informal with colloquialisms (e.g. *yeah*, Text 1), vocatives suggesting a close relationship (e.g. *bro*, Text 6), phrasal verbs (e.g. *knuckle down*, Text 4), and idioms (e.g. *Get in there!!*, *Thumbs up!!* Text 5)

• some are elliptical (e.g. *You the Man*, Text 5; *From Russia*, Text 2), and some non-standard (e.g. comma splicing, Text 4 and Text 6), but Standard English is also common (Text 2, Text 3 and Text 7)

• situation-dependent language is common (deixis) e.g. directional noun phrase the guy on the right (Text 1), demonstrative determiner these children (Text 2), demonstrative pronoun this (Text 7)

• punctuation can be minimal e.g. absence of full stops (Text 1/Text 4); no capitalisation for first person singular pronoun *i* (Text 4); inconsistent use of omissive apostrophe (*thats, its, i’d*, Text 4); absence of possessive apostrophe (e.g. *childrens*, Text 4)

• interjections express emotion through onomatopoeia, reduplicated letters (e.g. *Woooooohoooooo*!, Text 3) and exclamation marks (Text 3, Text 5)

• loose syntactical structure in many (mirroring spoken language).

c) **Purposes**

YouTube **videos** can be:

• creative (entertaining and amusing) e.g. cute animal videos

• conative (influencing the behaviour/beliefs of others) e.g. promoting pop artists, film trailers, products, political standpoints

• transactional (communicating information) e.g. documentaries, coverage of live events

o contributors can respond to the programme (BBC Stargazing Live)

o contributors can respond to the event being covered (the shuttle launch)

o contributors can respond to comments made by other contributors.

**Comment threads** can be:

• expressive, allowing users to communicate personal attitudes and opinions

• interactive, allowing users to exchange views.

**Activity 7**:

**Using your knowledge of 21st century English, analyse and evaluate the ways in which contextual factors affect how writers use language in comment threads.**

In your response, you must refer to the set of data (Texts 1-7), but, in addition, you may wish to draw on your own examples.

The notes on the following pages address features of interest that you might have explored in your essay. Look through them when you have finished your essay.

**Overview**

YouTube is an online video-sharing site that allows users to upload, view, share, rate, and comment on content which is mainly put up by individuals. Users can watch, follow and comment on a wider range of content including personal video clips, television and film show clips, music videos, trailers, short documentaries, audio recordings and vlogs. It is an accessible means of building an audience both for individuals and companies. There are rules about acceptable content with prohibitions on material that is sexually explicit, shocking, encourages hate, or that has been uploaded without copyright permissions. There are, however, no limits to the length of a post (although posters will self-limit to ensure that their comments are read by others and that their readers will become followers). Comments give members of the public the opportunity to respond to a particular video, voicing their opinions, pointing out errors, developing an argument in new directions, or providing comedic feedback. Comment threads frequently become negative with comments becoming abusive and personal.

The informal features of the YouTube comments in the set of data are typical of electronic English and the process of informalisation. Although most of the spelling is standard, the comments demonstrate the shift towards spoken features in writing with examples of clipping, reduced punctuation, and colloquial idioms. In spite of the distant relationships, the tenor is often informal, with each poster engaging with the topic and expressing personal opinions. In each example, there is evidence of a distinctive voice emerging in the lexical, grammatical and stylistic choices.

You may have made some of the following points about the corpus of data:

**Conspiracy Theorist (Text 1)**

* YouTube account name: *astrobollox* i.e. blend of the nouns ‘astrophysics’ and ‘bollox’ (slang: nonsense or information deliberately intended to mislead); helps readers to recognise tone of comment (writer is cynical, doesn’t believe the events broadcast are real)
* openly questions the veracity of the images e.g. ironic use of spoken interjection *yeah* and explicit use of premodifier *fake*.
* deictic reference *they* (third person plural pronoun) refers to an unknown, unaccountable body responsible for the deception; set against inclusive plural pronoun *us* (unites writer and reader as victims)
* progressive verb phrase *are deceiving (us)* suggests that people watching are being lied to as events unfold
* direct speech (voiceover quoted from video clip) used as a challenge to the status and credibility of the space programme
* noun clause (*how hard the acceleration is*) is challenged by parallel adjective phrase *that* *hard …* (formal scientific language *acceleration* is set against the colloquial interjection *yeah* and the informal adverb of degree *that*)
* lacks standard punctuation: indicative of spoken language

**Celebratory (Texts 2, 3, 4 and 5)**

* YouTube account name: international user (Russian alphabet, Text 2)—perhaps national identification/pride (Russian astronauts on board flight); signs off with prepositional phrase *From Russia*
* positive lexis to convey support for the launch e.g. complement *pleased* and noun phrase *so much joy to these children* (Text 2)
* use of possessive determiner *our* to signify national pride at the Russian involvement in the mission (Text 2)
* semantic field of science *engineers and scientists* to applaud the technical expertise required to succeed in the field of space flight (e.g. abstract noun *achievement*, Text 2)
* YouTube account name: sequence of letters and numbers; meaningless to general reader, but probably has significance to user (Text 3)
* onomatopoeic interjection *Woooooohooooo!* to indicate student’s enthusiasm (Text 3)
* YouTube account name: shortened first name (familiar), but with family name (quite formal); typical of adult with no particular angle to adopt (expect genuine expression of feelings/attitudes)
* parental role reflected in noun phrase *our childrens future* (emphasis on children and looking to the future is indicative of writer)
* marked theme for emphasis: *Moments like this I love ...* (foregrounded object)
* patterning (sense of power of experience) i.e. repetition of noun phrase *moments like this* to reflect the uniqueness and historic significance of the launch (Text 4)
* extraposition moves object to front of sentence (*its moments like these we should* …, Text 4)
* YouTube account name: rhyming nouns; possibly humorous—general reader does not have shared knowledge to understand context (Text 5)
* vocative *Tim* creates sense of intimacy with the astronaut (Text 5)
* colloquial interjection from sport *Get in there* and elliptical colloquial interjections *You the Man* (Americanism—user is an American) and *Thumbs up* are a form of encouragement (Text 5)
* use of multiple exclamation marks shows excitement/enthusiasm (Text 6)

**Philosophical (Texts 3, 4, 6 and 7)**

* moral point: should be looking at bigger things e.g. juxtaposition of adjective phrases e.g. *so busy fighting and hating on this earth* with capitalised demonstrative pronoun *THIS* (Text 3)
* modal verb *should* marks emphatic support for ideological stance: point of view of student (*should be focusing on,* Text 3) and parent (*should* *be leaving*, Text 4); implies moral obligation
* the possessive determiner *our* refers to personal family relationships and to the wider future of humankind (Text 4)—uniting writer and reader
* colloquialism *knuckle down* uses informal lexis to convey an ethical obligation (Text 4)
* YouTube account name: ironic use of honorific (*Lord*); humorous onomatopoeic names (*Fwah Fnah*) – possibly imitating very formal RP pronunciation; double-barrelled surname extended comically; writer making a political point
* ironic pre-modification (*Nice rocket*) mocks investment in space technology at the expense of children on Earth suffering deprivation (Text 6)
* informal discourse marker *now* emphasises change in direction (Text 6)
* informal adverb *how about* to make suggestion i.e. money would be better spent solving the problem of world hunger than in funding expensive space missions (rhetorical question, Text 6)
* emotive non-finite clause *feeding the children* and prepositional phrase *down to earth* set against infinite nature of space exploration (Text 6)
* YouTube account name: formal, indicative of role as educator (comment has formal style with standard orthography, syntax and punctuation—compound-complex sentence, Text 7)
* noun clauses *how insignificant …* and *how our lives are meaningless* emphasise the cosmic insignificance of mankind in the face of a space mission
* epiphany experienced by the writer: *makes me realise* (Text 7) → verb ‘to make’ followed by object + bare infinitive = to cause, or compel to do/feel something.

**Interactive Learning Resources**

On the WJEC Digital Resources site, you will find a range of material written to help you develop your understanding of 21st Century English. Below are links to these resources for you to work through:

1. [21st Century English Terminology](https://resources.wjec.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rIid=2341): to support the use and application of a range of terms relevant to 21st Century language.
2. [21st Century English Websites](https://resources.wjec.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rIid=2340): a range of resources on the issues and concepts related to spoken and written language used on websites, particularly blogs and vlogs. These cover analysis of purpose, intended audience and context and exploration of how 21st Century language has influenced the way we communicate in blogs and vlogs.
3. [21st Century English Email](https://resources.wjec.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rIid=2339): a range of resources on the lexis, grammar and structural patterns of emails. These cover analysis of emails, questions and interactive materials to focus on evaluating the ways this medium affects communication.
4. [21st Century English Memes](https://resources.wjec.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rIid=2342): a range of resources to explore the changes in structural patterns of 21st Century language through the analysis of memes. These materials provide opportunities to analyse the purpose of memes and the language features used.
5. [21st Century English Twitter](https://resources.wjec.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rIid=2338): a range of resources on the issues and concepts related to tweets and consideration of context and the language used. These cover analysis of purpose, intended audience and context; analysis of how language is used to suit the form of a tweet; and to explain how the purpose of Twitter has changed over time.
6. [21st Century English Internet Dating](https://resources.wjec.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rIid=2331): a range of resources to support the exploration of pragmatic and semantic issues with the language used in internet dating. These materials will provide opportunities to analyse and adapt language to suit a specific purpose, audience and format.
7. [21st Century English Code Switching](https://resources.wjec.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rIid=2330): a range of resources on the issues and concepts related to code switching. These materials provide opportunities to explain and identify examples of code switching and the reasons why code switching is necessary/desirable in different contexts.

**Top Tips from the Principal Examiner**

1. Read the italicised information at the top of the page so you know **what kind of electronic language** the set of data will contain. Use your **wider knowledge** to think about key features of the genre.

2. Read the data paying particular attention to the **contextual information in brackets**—this will help you to analyse and evaluate the language choices in each example.

3. The question requires you to focus on **contextual factors** (e.g. the location and occasion; the status, age and gender of the producer and intended recipient(s); the purpose; the subject). You should reference contextual factors explicitly when you analyse the data.

4. Spend around **10 minutes reading the data** carefully. Underline examples (words, phrases, clauses) that will help you make analytical points, and jot down notes in the margins.

5. Look for examples with **similar contextual factors**. Consider them together so that you can address key features of the genre/context.

6. You must **answer the question**. When you start to write, use your topic sentences to address relevant contextual factors. The structure of your paragraphs is very important—this is the way to develop an argument and engage your reader.

7. in your response, you need to:

1. analyse the data using a **range of linguistic terminology** selected from the different levels of language
2. discuss **key concepts** (e.g. medium, genre, tenor)
3. apply your wider knowledge to explore **issues** (e.g. informalisation; colloquialisation), and **attitudes** (e.g. prescriptive/descriptive)— reference specific commentators if you can
4. select appropriate **short quotations** from the data (and from your wider knowledge) to support the points you make, and use carefully selected terminology to analyse them.
5. write about the different **contexts** and analyse the way they shape linguistic choices
6. explore **meaning** explicitly, making references to specific details and interpreting their significance using appropriate terminology
7. include some **evaluation** of the linguistic choices, considering their effect and the way different people may respond to them.

8. Things to avoid:

1. broad comments which are not tied to the data
2. a general approach with little evidence of linguistic study
3. rewriting a ‘prepared’ essay and forgetting to engage with the data on the paper.
4. making comparisons—it makes sense in managing your time in the exam to group examples from similar contexts. You don’t need to make connections between different contexts as there are no marks for making comparisons, but this will allow you to make comments about shared features.

**Engage! Analyse! Interpret!**

**KEY 21st Century English TERMS AND THEIR DEFINITIONS GLOSSARY – Traffic Lights (add a date to each of the right-hand columns to show when you are developing your understanding)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **TERM** | **DESCRIPTION** | **DON’T KNOW Worried face with no fill** | **THINK I KNOWNeutral face with no fill** | **CONFIDENT USING Smiling face with no fill** |
| acronym | An abbreviation formed by taking letters from a series of words, which is pronounced as a word e.g. *radar, NATO, LOL*. |  |  |  |
| blend | A word formed by combining two or more words to create a new word combining the meaning of the originals (also called portmanteau words) e.g. *webinar → web + seminar.* |  |  |  |
| borrowing | Introducing a loan word from one language into another. |  |  |  |
| clipping | The creation of a new word with the same word class and denotation by dropping a syllable (also called truncation) e.g. *Thurs, spec, flu, phone*. |  |  |  |
| code shifting | When speakers switch between more than one language or variety in a situation. |  |  |  |
| coinage | The construction and addition of new words to the word stock. |  |  |  |
| collocation | A recognisable group of words that frequently occur together e.g. *there you go*. |  |  |  |
| colloquialism | An informal word, phrase or pronunciation, often associated with informal speech. |  |  |  |
| deixis | A term describing expressions that rely on the context for interpretation e.g. *there, over here, that high*. |  |  |  |
| derivation | A term to describe words that are formed by adding affixes to create new words e.g. *slow + ness, arriv(e) + al, simpl(e) + ify*. |  |  |  |
| double negative | A structure in which more than one negative particle is used in a single verb phrase e.g. *He didn’t never tell lies*. |  |  |  |
| ellipsis | The omission of part of a sentence that can be understood by the context. e.g. *The sprinter had broken the world record, Ø reached a new PB and Ø charmed the crowds*. |  |  |  |
| euphemism | A word that replaces another which is seen as taboo or socially unacceptable. |  |  |  |
| exclamation | The tone communicated by the use of an exclamation mark e.g. *We were only joking!* |  |  |  |
| **TERM** | **DESCRIPTION** | **DON’T KNOW Worried face with no fill** | **THINK I KNOWNeutral face with no fill** | **CONFIDENT USING Smiling face with no fill** |
| exclamative | A sentence beginning with how or what in the initial position to communicate strong feelings e.g. *what an insult!; how unbelievable is that!* |  |  |  |
| filler | Words, usually with no semantic value, which are inserted into speech either from habit or to give a participant thinking time as they search for a word e.g. *er, um, ah*. |  |  |  |
| idiolect | A term used to describe the characteristic speech of an individual, including distinctive features of pronunciation, lexis, and grammar. |  |  |  |
| idiom | A distinctive expression in which the meaning is not a literal interpretation of the individual words e.g. *She jumped the gun when she sent in that complaint yesterday*. i.e. ‘acted too fast’. |  |  |  |
| initialism | A word formed from the first letters of a sequence of words pronounced e.g. *BBC, GCSE.* |  |  |  |
| logogram | When graphic units are associated with words/actions e.g. emoticons, *x*. |  |  |  |
| neologism | The creation of a word from existing lexical items e.g. *electracy*—the skills and facility needed to make full use of the communicative potential of new electronic media (modelled on ‘literacy’). |  |  |  |
| non-standard | Language that does not conform to the standard prestige form which is used as a linguistic norm. |  |  |  |
| obsolete words | Words that are no longer in use e.g. *jargogle*: to confuse or jumble; *scuppet*: a spade used for making ditches. |  |  |  |
| register | A style of language used in a particular context defined in terms of mode, tenor and field. |  |  |  |
| semantic change | Changes in word meaning over time. |  |  |  |