

**NON-EXAM ASSESSMENT (NEA)**  
**LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY**

**TWENTY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

(Applicable to both **WJEC Unit 5** and **Eduqas Component 4**)

**1. What is NEA?**

NEA gives opportunities for learners to select an aspect of study relating to the theme of **Language and Identity** that interests them culturally, personally and academically. Learners are required to independently conduct a language investigation. This should enable them to develop their methods of language analysis through research, data collection and interpretation using material that they have selected.

**2. What is the weighting for NEA?**

NEA accounts for 20% of the qualification and has 80 marks.

**3. Is there an advisory word count?**

The advisory word count is 2500-3500 words. This word count includes quotations used within a candidate's assignment. References made through footnotes and bibliographies are excluded from the word count. Learners are required to record the total word count on the cover sheet.

**4. What are the Assessment Objectives (AOs) for NEA?**

There are three AOs specified for NEA.

- **AO1:** apply appropriate methods of analysis, using associated terminology and coherent written expression;
- **AO2:** demonstrate critical understanding of concepts and issues relevant to language use;
- **AO3:** analyse and evaluate how contextual factors and language features are associated with the construction of meaning.

**5. Are the AOs equally weighted?**

No. It is important to remember that AO1 has twice the individual weightings of AO2 and AO3.

## 6. What is the link between the AOs and marks?

When assessing NEA it is important to study the assessment grids available in the WJEC/Eduqas specifications. These are designed to present a system that both links the AOs to marks and which helps to discriminate clearly between the varying levels of achievement. Teachers are required to make specific reference to the AOs in their comments both on the work itself and on the coversheets. A summative comment and individual AO comments must be included on the coversheet to show clearly how marks have been awarded by the centre.

## 7. Must candidates choose from a prescribed list when choosing the focus for their language investigation?

Yes. Learners must select **one** of the following four areas for their language investigation.

- **Language and self-representation** e.g. register, communication strategies, accommodation, politeness
- **Language and gender** e.g. representation, attitudes, gender neutral language, linguistic conventions
- **Language and culture** e.g. the arts, sports and entertainment, education, belief systems
- **Language diversity** e.g. geographical and social variation, African American Vernacular English (AAVA), other Englishes, occupational language

It is important that learners are given the freedom to define their own areas of investigation and that they use their knowledge of the language levels, key concepts and issues to explore and interpret their own idiolect **or** gender issues **or** cultural ideologies **or** aspects of diversity.

## 8. Is there a problem if areas overlap within an investigation?

It is highly likely that this will happen. However it is vital that learners are clear regarding the area that provides the main focus of their investigation in order to provide *insightful, accurate, well-argued responses*.

## 9. Is it possible to include both spoken and written data within an investigation?

Learners are encouraged to *synthesise insights developed through the application of linguistic knowledge to the study of speech and writing*. A learner is free to decide the extent to which they use spoken and/or written data as material for their investigation but it is important that they select **appropriate** methods and techniques for exploring this data.

## 10. Must the title of the investigation be worded in a precise way?

There is no specific wording to adhere to but the title must have a clearly defined focus and should not be overly broad. Both the link between language and identity and the chosen language area must be clear. The hypothesis should also be apparent.

### Example 1

*An investigation into how Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump use language to gain votes*

The hypothesis is not really clear here and there is no link to language and identity or the chosen language area. It would be better worded like this:

*Using relevant data, investigate and analyse the ways in which Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump **use different cultural ideologies in their speeches to inspire and motivate voters.***

or

***Does the fact that Hillary Clinton is a woman and Donald Trump is a man make a difference to their political speeches?** Using relevant data, investigate and analyse the ways in which a speaker's **gender** might play a role in inspiring and motivating voters*

### Example 2

*Sports commentators demonstrated inherent bias in their language when commenting on the national side during Euro 2016.*

The link between language and identity is clear here and there is a hypothesis but there is no mention of the language area that is going to provide the focus for the investigation. It would be better worded as follows:

*Using relevant data, investigate and analyse the ways in which **biases within the Euro 2016 football commentary** is a reflection of **cultural ideologies.***

or

*The **racial prejudice and discrimination** seen in the Euro 2016 football commentary **divided rather than united footballing nations** using relevant data, investigate and analyse the ways in which sports commentary reflects **cultural ideologies.***

### Example 3

*An exploration into how an individual uses language in different ways according to context.*

There is a mention of language here but the whole focus is much too broad. There is also no mention of the chosen language area. It would be better worded as follows:

*An individual will need to select different language strategies in order to be a successful communicator. Using relevant data, explore and interpret the ways in which you demonstrate why and how your own **idiolect** changes to fit different contexts effectively.*

or

*An individual uses a range of spoken and written language throughout one day. Using your knowledge of the levels of language and key concepts and issues explore using relevant data, why and how your own **idiolect** changes according to context.*

### 11. How much theory should be included in the investigation?

Learners are encouraged to use appropriate linguistic theory to **inform** their study. However theory should never **lead** the investigation nor should it be forced onto findings. Learners should be encouraged to make themselves familiar with theories relevant to their focus but should always remember to foreground their own data, findings and analysis. There is never a need to recount theories.

### 12. Should a bibliography be included?

In an investigation of between 2500-3500 words it would seem unlikely that learners would make no reference at all to linguistic theory. Accordingly, references to linguists' work or other sources must always be clearly acknowledged: by direct reference if a quotation is used; and by an appended bibliography. If footnotes are used the relevant text must appear in the bibliography. It is important that learners are both accurate and consistent in their approach to referencing and therefore references should be presented in a recognised format such as the Harvard system.

There are numerous guides covering academic referencing available via the Internet. Exeter University has produced a useful guide to Harvard referencing for students as part of their Study Skills series:

([http://education.exeter.ac.uk/dll/studyskills/harvard\\_referencing.htm](http://education.exeter.ac.uk/dll/studyskills/harvard_referencing.htm))

What is **not** required is a class reading list of text books and articles

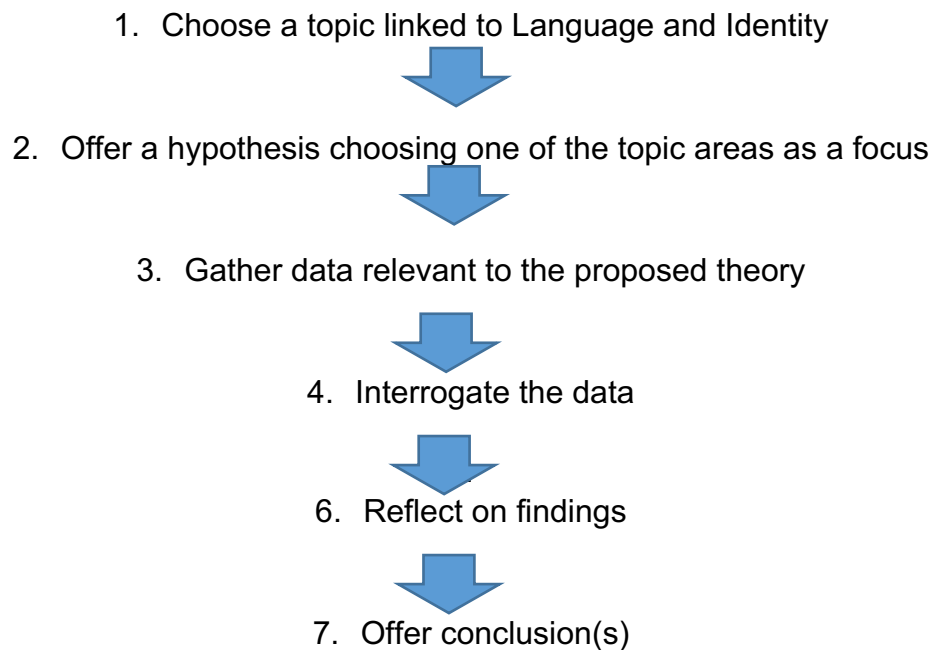
N.B. It is important to remember that the bibliography and footnotes are not included in the word count.

### 13. Should the investigation have a specific format?

There are no specific requirements regarding the format of the investigation. Learners may set out their work in the way that seems best for the topic and particular focus they have chosen. If headings are used, learners must be careful that this does not have a limiting effect on the scope and depth of their analysis. It is important that learners remember that AO1 is worth half the marks available and that therefore **linguistic analysis** should constitute the most important element in the investigation.

### 14. Is there a suggested process?

The following should provide learners with a chronological guide to the investigation process:



### 15. Is it possible to use literary/media texts as data?

It is important that learners should be drawing upon the **language** experiences they have had in their course and that they should be engaging with and evaluating the key **language** features of the data they have chosen to use. Learners should be able *to show how critical understanding of meaning and variation in language is informed by the appropriate use of **linguistic** analyses*. If a learner chooses to use first person narratives as data

for example or extracts from a screen play, the investigation must be linked appropriately to language and identity and have a linguistic focus chosen from the four areas of language and self-representation, language and gender, language and culture or language diversity. Learners must demonstrate that they can select and use their knowledge to argue a case, interrogate data to support their argument and come to a conclusion about the ways in which **language** is used to create and communicate a sense of identity.

### **16. Is writing style important?**

The third element of AO1 is directly tied to writing style. It is therefore vital that learners choose a formal tenor with appropriate lexical choices for academic writing. Learners should **proof read** their work and ensure that:

- both spelling and punctuation are accurate
- informal expressions are avoided
- sentence structure is controlled
- paragraphs have clear topic sentences

### **17. Is it appropriate to re-draft an investigation?**

If a learner wants to re-draft the investigation, a teacher may offer guidance but this must consist of general observations only. Once the investigation is submitted and marked it may not be revised. Fair copies of completed investigations are never acceptable.

### **18. Is it acceptable to use translated texts?**

If a learner decides to investigate an area such as propaganda, for example, the data used must have been produced originally in English. It is not possible to use English translations of foreign texts, as the nuances of the English language will be lost.

### **19. Is it allowable to study acquisition of language?**

Investigations focused on the acquisition of language are not allowed.

### **20. What happens if a case of plagiarism is suspected?**

It is very easy for learners to plagiarise material from the Internet nowadays so centres are required to be vigilant and to refuse to award marks or submit for moderation any work they consider to be not the candidate's own.

