

UNIT 5 AS/ A Level Language course – Examination preparation

Recommended Prior Knowledge Skills progression and grammatical knowledge from Units 1, 2, 3 & 4

Context

This Unit builds on the basis of skills and knowledge laid down in previous Units and provides a suggested programme for the approach to examination work, including literary essays for those preparing A Level Component 4.

Outline

The content focuses on the range of topics grouped under Environmental and Scientific issues. Text-type and length are extended and skills developed further. Comparison of texts is extended to bring in examination-type tasks. More extended writing for summary and essay tasks is introduced.

	Learning Outcomes	Suggested Teaching Activities	Resources
1	Acquaintance with lexis and structures using a range of listening and reading texts presenting the Topic focus.	<p><u>Topic focus 4:</u> Environmental and scientific issues (conservation; pollution; scientific and medical advances; technological innovation; contemporary aspects of the country/countries where the language is spoken.)</p> <p><u>Texts</u> (Reading and Listening) Informative, Explanatory, Argumentative, Persuasive. More abstract vocabulary with a variety of tenses and increasing complexity of sentence structure.</p> <p>Presentation of a pair of linked texts totalling some 750 words.</p> <p>Introduction of appropriate lexis and structures for dealing with texts chosen.</p> <p>See Introduction, Section 6, Teaching methods: Stage 1 Encounter with the text .</p>	

	Learning Outcomes	Suggested Teaching Activities	Resources
2	Listening and speaking practice	<p>Teacher questions/student response Student Individual preparation of topic for oral examination presentation</p> <p>Discussion of topic with other students for practice and with teacher.</p> <p>With the approach of the examination, practice for the topic presentation and discussion take centre stage in speaking practice. Students need practice in speaking from short notes and in keeping their presentation to the time required. They also need to be given help in predicting likely questions and further developments in the topic discussion.</p> <p>The language required for the topic discussion provides practice also for the general conversation.</p>	
3	Reading practice and developing grammatical awareness	<p>For reading development see Section 6 (Teaching Methods) of Introduction Stage 2: Collecting information and language.</p> <p>Individual and group tasks for getting to grips with the text. Develop skills of finding equivalents, synonyms, dictionary definitions.</p> <p>Practice with previous examination papers will help to develop the particular skills required by the examination.</p> <p>Grammar awareness and recognition tasks.</p>	
4	Developing writing skills	<p>Grammar practice – manipulation and controlled drills.</p> <p>The work covered so far in the course should lead at this point to more specific grammatical manipulation of the kind encountered by examination candidates in Exercise 2 of the Reading & Writing paper.</p>	

	<p>Written answers to comprehension questions on texts.</p> <p>It is most important that students understand the sort of answers they are required to give to comprehension questions. In the Introduction, the section entitled “What exactly is reading comprehension?” sets out a list of question styles used by examiners. Perhaps the most commonly used type of question is Location where the candidate seeks out information already present in the text. It is important here not to lift chunks of material from the text. Further advice about answering this type of question is given in the Introduction at Teaching Stage 5, Assessment.</p> <p>Summary skills (see notes to Unit 4)</p> <p>Developing more extended writing skills for Essay (250-400 words).</p> <p>Planning and developing argument for essay. Focus on 2 or 3 set topics for essay as set out in examination syllabus.</p> <p>By this stage in the course, the student will have followed a progression from micro-writing through to paragraph writing and to tasks requiring the development of an argument. They will also have developed their language skills at sentence level, so that they should be able to write accurately. Within Component 3, the examination essay, 24 marks are given for quality of language and 16 marks for content and argument. Of course, these two categories go hand in hand. Weak language is unlikely to present a strong and convincing argument. Similarly, if the candidate has little to say, it is not enough to get the words in the right order.</p> <p>At this stage, the most important development will be</p>	
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	<p>to stress that the essay should be constructed as an argument. The essay question is an invitation to debate an issue. An essay title such as: "Is it really possible for women to have equality at work as well as raise a family?" does not ask the candidate to give an instant response, but to marshal arguments for and against. So, an introduction will set out key issues; a main section will look at both sides of the question and test the validity of the various arguments; a conclusion will then draw the threads together, evaluate the arguments and come to a personal conclusion. Students should write a plan giving such a sequence before they start writing.</p>	
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A Level Component 4 (Texts)

Learning Outcomes	Suggested Teaching Activities	Resources
Revision of Set Texts and/or study of further text.	<p>More detailed work on language problems/lexis, context work</p> <p>Further discussion on themes, characters</p>	
Preparation of writing tasks for the examination.	<p>Short answers on selected passages for section 1 responses in examination.</p> <p>Link writing of more extended literary essays with work on general essays (see above).</p>	