

Get off to a 'Flying Start' in **English Language A Level**

Welcome to Flying Start with North Devon College. We hope that you are excited to join us at North Devon College. We want to help you to focus on your skills for your course with us and so below you will find questions to consider, tasks to complete and some background research to undertake before enrolment. We also have a welcome video from Claire Scott with more details about the course, so please watch it.

<https://app.screencastify.com/watch/p0orWUbAw2ScxsWoNkZj>

Please then read the instructions below and have a go at the activities, don't worry too much; just have a go! If you get stuck, please see the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) at the end of this document for more help.

A quick hello and introduction to the course

Welcome to A Level English Language, and congratulations on a great decision to study this course here with us. We are confident that you'll love exploring communication in more depth and considering a wide range of factors that affect how and why we use language in the way we do.

The Flying Start activity is split into **different tasks** and is designed to get to know more about you, as well as one of the main topics of the course: **identity**. Therefore, give it your best go, and we look forward to seeing what you've come up with when we meet you properly.

To get you started...

An introduction to the study of personal and social identity.

Please ensure that you attempt all of the following tasks.

Part of your first exam paper will look at **individual language variation** linked to differing **personal and social identities**. There are many ways in which individuals may choose to categorise themselves (**personal identities** such as funny, kind, creative, sporty, cat-lover, etc.). There are also many ways in which society may try to categorise individuals (**social identities** such as gender, class, region, age, occupation and ethnicity). We will discuss some of the reasons behind this and some of the associated concepts and issues during the first few weeks of the course.

Task 1: Who am I?

In order to effectively **study the identity of others**, we must first **explore our own identities** in more detail. Below are **five different options** which will encourage a deeper look at some of your own personal identity traits.

Choose one of the following activities to complete, then produce a **written summary** of no fewer than 50 words to explain why you feel this is reflective of your identity:

1. Draw a picture that represents you.
2. What are your 3 favourite films, books, songs or video games?
3. Insert a meme that feels like your personality.
4. Choose 3 emojis that represent you.
5. Name a person that inspires you.



In no fewer than 50 words, **explain why** this is reflective of your identity?

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Task 2: Describe yourself

An important aspect of the study of A Level English Language is an understanding of **key linguistic terminology**. This helps us to learn how and why certain types of language are used in different contexts but also enables us to explain why these particular language choices have been made.

Describe yourself using the following key word classes. Think carefully about why you have chosen these specific words. If you are not sure about which types of words fall into each word class, **please do look it up!**

1. Pronoun (x1):

-

2. Noun (x3):

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-
-

3. Adjective (x5):

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4. In no fewer than 100 words, **explain why** you chose this language to describe yourself. You could consider some of the following questions: How important are these things to your own sense of identity? How would you like others to perceive you? How do you think that society might perceive you? If you would

rather not write about yourself, then consider the reasons why other individuals might choose specific language to describe themselves.

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Task 3: Spot the difference

While personal and social identities are closely connected, they are not the same thing. **We will use the below definitions regularly** throughout the A Level.

- **A personal identity trait** reflects elements of an individual's character that are specific to them – things that make them unique and different from those around them (such as funny, kind, creative, sporty or cat-lover).
- **A social identity trait** reflects elements of an individual that can be categorised within a society – things that make them similar to those around them or a way of placing the individual into a group (such as gender, age, occupation or ethnicity).

Place your **chosen words from Task 2** into the personal and social identity categories below. **Fill in the gaps** with further words to describe your **personal and social identity**.

Personal		Social	
Appearance		Age	
Beliefs/morals/ethics		Education	
Feelings		Ethnicity	
Hobbies/interests		Gender	
Personality		Occupation	
Talents		Power	
Other		Region (accent or dialect)	
		Religion	
		Social class	

Task 4: Who is Sayeeda Warsi?

One of the main skills that you will be required to learn for A Level English Language is how to extract relevant information from a text and then use it to discuss a point. Your ideas must always be accompanied by a **quotation** and **relevant linguistic terminology** – this shows that you are knowledgeable and that your thoughts are well researched.

The text on the following page is an extract from '*The Enemy Within, A Tale of Muslim Britain*' by politician Sayeeda Warsi.

1. **Read** the extract.
2. **Highlight any language** which has been used by Sayeeda Warsi to reflect her **personal identity**.
3. In a **different colour**, **highlight any language** which has been used by Sayeeda Warsi to reflect her **social identity**. **Use the information from the previous tasks to help you.**
4. Write a response to the following question: **How does Sayeeda Warsi use language to convey her personal and social identity?** You must include quotations as evidence and try to include any terminology that you know (word classes, etc.). This should be between ½ and 1 side of A4 in length. You could use the space below to plan your response:

Text D

Text D is an extract from 'The Enemy Within, A Tale of Muslim Britain' by Sayeeda Warsi. Sayeeda Warsi is a member of the House of Lords and served in the government as the first Muslim Cabinet member from 2010 to 2014. In the book she talks about her experience of growing up in a Pakistani family in West Yorkshire in the 1970s.

Whether it was the Pakistan visit, the Savile Town upbringing or the all-female family, I was acutely aware of difference from an early age: different from the Asian community in which we lived, because we were all female; different from the Muslim community that surrounded us, because we were of Pakistani not Indian origin; and different from the broader English community in which we lived, because we did not have a greenhouse and a caravan. But I also learned that these differences didn't have to be limiting. Differences could be ignored, different environments could be accommodated in short bursts, differences could be simply kept secret, and differences could be overcome over time through success.

What I did, however, sense both from my parents and my own experience growing up was a desire to try and fit in.

An example was a childish game that my sisters and I would play in which we would try and convince Sarah Goodlad that we, like her, dressed in a nighty for bed. None of us had nighties or shop-bought pjs as children. My mother had stitched us little cotton trousers and tunics which were effectively our night clothes. Sarah, on the other hand, had a proper nighty. On an evening before we went to bed we would sometimes wave to Sarah from our toilet window which overlooked the two drives and faced their toilet window. On occasions Sarah would ask my elder sister and me if we were ready for bed, and we would say we were not if we were in our Asian night clothes. But to keep the façade of fitting in alive, my sister and I would occasionally raid our mum's wardrobe, find one or two nighties that she possessed, which we never really saw Mum wear but we always saw her pack when she went into hospital to have a baby, pull the nighties over our heads and pop our heads through the window to show that we too had 'English' night clothes. I am sure that I looked odd and I am sure that it didn't fit, but it seemed to work. It made me feel like I fitted in.

As a child I needed to belong, to fit in, to be a part of the world and experiences of my friends and neighbours. I wanted to belong in all the different parts that made up the sum of my world: the Pakistani bit, the Savile Town bit, the English bit, the Asian bit, the western bit, the female bit and the many versions of the Islam bit. As an adult I wanted not just to belong in each one but also for each bit to belong in the others. By my early twenties I'd done with keeping differences neatly compartmentalized; the famous double life that many young Asians lived was tiresome, and I'd managed to grow comfortable in my own skin, flaws and all. We were staying, Britain was home, it's where I belonged, it's where I wanted to matter.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal dotted lines.

For those who want a bit more...

Optional Extension Task: How language shapes our thinking

Watch the following Ted Talk by Lera Boroditsky on how language shapes the way we think.

Which new ideas have you learned from this talk?

[How language shapes the way we think | Lera Boroditsky | TED](#)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: Will this work be marked and when is it due?

A: This work won't be formally graded but will be discussed and taken in during your first classes with us in September. Please bring along what you have completed with you to your first timetabled sessions. We will then use the feedback from this task to support you with your first tracked assessment.

Q: I am not sure if I have got the answers right, what should I do?

A: Don't worry. Just have a go at getting something down and bring it along to the lesson where we can talk it through. There is no need to get anxious about the tasks. We are not expecting you to know everything before you arrive, but are interested in your ideas and what you have found easy or difficult as it helps us support you right from the beginning.

Q: Do I have to do it?

A: Flying Start is not compulsory, but many students find it useful for getting them used to thinking about subjects at the next level. Early classroom sessions will reflect on some of the Flying Start activities.

Q: How long should I spend on the tasks?

A: You should spend a maximum of **2 hours** on the tasks. However, if you do choose to have a go at the extension task then it may take you slightly longer. Please be aware that the extension task is an optional extra – if you do choose to complete the extension then your lecturer will collect it in and provide some initial feedback, so it's definitely worth having a go!

Q: Can I produce the work by hand or does it need to be completed on a word processor?

A: It's absolutely fine for you to complete the work by hand, on a word processor, or a combination of both. The most important thing is that you remember to bring a hard copy with you to your first A Level English Language lesson as we will be using it during the lesson. But we would ask you not to use any AI, but to put your own ideas, in your own words please.

Q: Is there any recommended reading for A Level English Language?

A: We would recommend the book linked below, as it has some great chapters on theorists and concepts connected with the English Language, but there is no need to purchase this before you start the course. We also have a copy in our LRC (or Learning Resources Centre)

[Language Handbook \(2nd edition\) – Key Thinkers on Key Topics \(Hard copy\) | English & Media Centre.](#)

But the most important thing you can do over summer is reading - anything and everything - whether online, in magazines or in books, it is an excellent starting point - the more you read, the more you understand language. Just think about these 3 things: who is the ideal reader? What is the author hoping to achieve with the text? What type of text is this?

If you have any questions, you can access further information on this course by emailing our friendly admin team.