

Assessment:

- Quiz to recall knowledge (/20)
- Speech on a given topic (one from the box on the reverse)

Unit overview:

A journey through time to discover where the English language has its roots and how it continues to change and evolve today.

Skills needed for the unit:

- ✓ Read and understand texts from a range of time periods
- ✓ Apply contextual knowledge to understanding of how language has changed
- ✓ Develop and express opinion on language change and related issues

Content:

Old English

- People in Britain spoke Celtic before English
- Anglo-Saxons invaded from Northern Europe
- Vikings and their naming of places: places ending –by
- Normans and William the Conqueror - French influence; brought words such as ‘royal’, ‘beautiful’ and ‘beef’
- Latin – language used in church services, introduced words such as ‘interrogate’ and ‘popular’
- Oldest story in English: Beowulf – about a brave warrior called Beowulf who comes to help a Danish village. They are under attack from a monster, Grendel.

Middle English

- Geoffrey Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales – including the Pardoner, the Squire, the Wife of Bath. The Pardoner is a tale about an untrustworthy character who sells people pardons for their sins. This dishonesty and hypocrisy goes against the teachings of the church.

Early modern/Modern English

- William Shakespeare: idioms such as ‘green-eyed monster’ and ‘in a pickle’
- The Great Vowel Shift – sound change affecting the long vowel sounds in the English language
- Dr Samuel Johnson’s dictionary – first English dictionary. At first he thought he could ‘secure’ language from ‘corruption and decay’ by recording it in his dictionary, but he learned that language could not be controlled. He realised he could not ‘embalm’ language but that his job was to record the language of the day
- Caxton invented the printing press which meant that texts could be published widely.

Empire

- British invasion of other countries led to British rule across the world
- Migration from England to other countries
- ‘Other’ English – American, Caribbean, Irish, Australian, Indian, South African
- All of the above led to the spread of the English language around the world

Twentieth century developments

- The British Broadcasting Corporation - 1936
- Technological developments – 1922 - radio meant that people could hear other accents

Etymology – the study of the origins (true facts) of a word

Loan words – words borrowed from another (‘source’) language, e.g., ‘wife’, ‘house’ and ‘father’ are from Old English/German, whereas ‘alphabet’, ‘biology’ and ‘music’ are from Greek.

Debate content:

You should think about what your opinion is on the following. You will be asked to explain your opinion about one of the ideas below.

- The control of language (the idea that there is correct and incorrect language)
- Prescriptivism (language has rules and we should all follow them) vs descriptivism (language is defined by use)
- Accent and dialect (how where you live/the people you have grown up with, affect your speech and language)
- Slang (non-Standard English - should people be able to speak slang? When is it appropriate/inappropriate?)
- Technology's impacts on language (e.g., telephone, radio, television, social media)

Methods:

You could practise writing paragraphs in response to the possible debate content, using some of the techniques below.

- Clear, well-punctuated paragraphs with your ideas explained fully
- Structural features: short and long sentences
- Range of punctuation
- Alliteration
- Repetition
- Direct address
- Rhetorical question
- Triples
- Emotive language
- Opinions/facts
- Statistics