

EDEXCEL SPEC. 9ENO
A LEVEL ENGLISH
LANGUAGE

**COMPONENT 3:
INVESTIGATING LANGUAGE**

25%

**‘Developing your own
language specialism’**

**INVESTIGATION GUIDANCE
BOOKLET**

PHASE 1 – SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER – RESEARCH AND INDEPENDENT READING

1. Choose your broad topic from the list. School provides some resources for GENDER REPRESENTATION and POWER (see Reading List in Introductory Booklet)
2. Begin reading and note taking to gain a broad understanding of the topic.
3. Keep notes clear – title, author, page references if appropriate
4. Summarise in your own words where possible. Direct quotes should be indicated as such with “.....”
5. Keep notes on:
 - Key theories and the theorists
 - Leading current research (if applicable)
 - Key ideas and concepts
 - Changes over time
6. Read a range of texts and articles from EMC – do not just rely on one author
7. Range beyond the reading list – can you find additional resources online?

By December you should have clear knowledge of the broad topic as a whole, ready to specialize when the sub-topics are released in January

Phase 2 – Specialised Research and Reading – January to June

In January, the pre-release materials will be issued which will detail the subtopic and additional reading suggestions

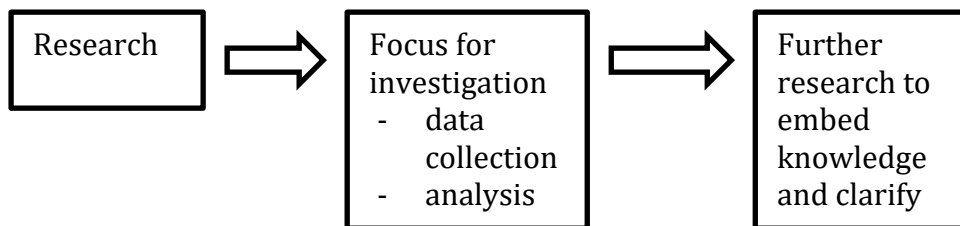
1. Re-read your notes made in the first term – what do you have that is specifically relevant to this sub topic
2. Highlight relevant notes and collate what is relevant
3. Again focus on:
 - Key theories and the theorists
 - Leading current research (if applicable)
 - Key ideas and concepts
 - Changes over time
4. Read the additional suggested texts to gain a specific knowledge of the sub-topic
5. Find additional material on the sub-topic to have as precise a knowledge as possible

The question in the exam will ask you ‘how representative is this data of..... (the sub-topic)’

You need to know what IS representative of that sub topic

Phase 3 – Independent Investigation – focusing on an areas within the sub-topic – January to June

Phases 2 and 3 need to be addressed simultaneously.



1. From research and reading decide on a focus and topic for investigation
2. Create a 'Proposal' to clarify your focus or topic (to be discussed with class teacher)
3. Collect Data
4. Develop hypothesis or relevant questions to test
5. Analyse data closely
6. Write up analysis
7. Apply to exam type questions
8. Evaluate research and investigation – do you need to know more to answer exam questions?
9. Learn key details to use in exam

3a - Investigation – General Principles

ETHICS

- It is not acceptable to undertake an investigation involving the use of offensive or indecent material
- It is not acceptable to undertake any activity that is potentially harmful or illegal
- It is not acceptable to carry out covert surveillance or recording

- When recording speech to transcribe, always obtain permission from those involved BEFORE recording and confirm this with them after
- Assure participants the recording is for academic purposes only
- When transcribing, remove all names, places and other references that would allow them to be identified (replace with numbers or initials)
- With written materials make sure you have the permission of the owner to use and quote from the text
- If investigation children's language, parental permission should be obtained
- You should not infringe copyright in obtaining the data

VALIDITY

(a) The Observer's Paradox

- Applicable to the collection of SPOKEN DATA
- Participants need to know they are being recorded – but that knowledge then impacts on the 'natural' quality of their speech which can invalidate the data

This can be addressed by:

- Making sure you don't participate in the situation. Leave the room with the recording device running (if possible – not always a good idea!)
- Limit yourself to data recorded from reality TV shows, radio or other sources (although much of this may be loosely scripted rather than natural)
- Obtain permission from the volunteers to make recordings at unspecified times and check afterwards that they are happy for the data to stand

- Disregard the first section of any recording and only use material produced when the participant have started to 'forget' they are being recorded

(b) Quality of sample

- It is perfectly valid to use a SELECTION of data
- But, the sample you collect must be reasonably typical
- You must take steps to avoid SELF SELECTION ie looking for data that fits with your theory
- There must be enough data to allow EXTRAPOLATION ie you can reasonably draw relevant, general conclusions
- Avoid too much data that overwhelms the analysis
- If comparing over time, there should be comparable data with similar parameters
- Spoken data will have to be transcribed before analysis

3b - Investigation – Choosing a topic or focus

The topic you choose must clearly link to the sub-topic. The blurb with the subtopic will give you scope to choose a range of options but your investigation must fit within that in order to prepare you for the exam.

EXAMPLE FROM 2017

Main Topic: Language and Gender Identity

Sub – Topic:

*Subtopic: **Gender Representations in Children’s Advertising***

Advertising reflects social and cultural trends of a particular time, and therefore television, radio and written advertisements reflect gender roles and sensibilities of that time. Some researchers argue that despite progress towards gender equality in the adult world, when it comes to the world of children, stereotypes are still defined and enforced.

Your investigation should focus on how language is used to represent gender in children’s advertising.

You should research:

- *the main developments in linguistic theory linked to gender and sexuality*
- *relevant language frameworks used in representing gender in children’s advertising*
- *the influence of social, historical, technological and cultural factors on the representation of gender in children’s advertising.*

Chosen Focus:

Example 1: **Comparison of advertising of GI Joe and Barbie from 1980 to present day**

Example 2: **Has children’s advertising become more gender neutral over time? With specific focus on Lego**

- you must be able to **readily access suitable data**
- it must be **manageable** – you need to be able to learn the details and conclusions for the exam
- it must be **realistic** - think of the time and resources it will take to obtain the data you require for the investigation to be valid
- it must be **ethical**

Possible Areas to Start...

- with your research..... Is there a particular, linked theory that you could test or question?
- Are there issues or debates around the topic that you could investigate?
- With your own experience..... Is there something you have noticed or wondered about in relation to the topic?
- With the data is there something you know you can access easily?

Focus as a HYPOTHESIS

This sets up a statement or expectations that you seek to test against the data

Example: The advertising of GI Joe and Barbie will re-enforce gender stereotypes and representation. There will be no change over time.

- This is particularly appropriate for challenging existing research or testing a stereotype
- You can further structure your analysis by setting more than one hypothesis that 'unpick' the key features of the data

Example:

H1 G.I. Joe's adverts will contain more active lexis with a reference to fighting as a lexical field whereas Barbie's adverts will be more passive with reference to a personal image lexical field

H2 Barbie's adverts will contain only female voiceovers and characters whereas G.I. Joe's adverts will contain male voiceovers and male characters

H3 Barbie's adverts in 1980 will have her in more gender specific roles e.g. cleaner and model whereas in 2015 Barbie's adverts will have her in gender neutral jobs e.g. doctor or scientists

(There were additional Hypothesis that tested other features of advertising)

Your conclusions would reflect on the extent to which the hypothesis is true.

Focus as a QUESTION

This is used to less explicitly test a particular theory but rather to explore actual language use. This approach can also be used to set up a comparison

Example

What differences are there between the advertising of GI Joe and Barbie?

Have those differences altered over time?

- As with the hypothesis you may set more than one question to cover the related areas of enquiry
- The structure of questions helps to structure the analysis and conclusions

3c – Investigation – Submit a proposal

It is a good idea to write up your plan for your investigation – it will help you to be clear in what you are aiming to do

Proposal should include:

1. The FOCUS of the investigation
2. The type of DATA you are planning to collect
3. Where and how you plan to collect your data
4. Hypothesis or question you intend to test
5. Initial ideas on language methods you aim to analyse
6. Key theories that have informed your choices

You are not bound by the proposal – you can change your mind afterwards, but you should be able to answer all the questions if your investigation is going to be viable

3d – Investigation – Collect the Data

- This must be done promptly to give you time to carry out analysis
- Set yourself a clear deadline and plan of action to collect the data
- Be realistic and honest. If you can't collect the data you don't have an investigation

Data can include:

- examples of actual texts
- Surveys and questionnaires
- Interviews
- Corpus analysis
- Ethnographic study
- Transcription of recorded spoken language

3e – Investigation – Analysing the Data

You need to be systematic in your analysis of the data, working through your hypothesis/questions in an ordered fashion or working through relevant methods

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

- Your analysis must be OBJECTIVE and measurable
- It requires that you survey the data comprehensively to establish any patterns or trends or anomalies
- Means that you gather the evidence statistically
- You test specific features

Example (taken from Nelson Thornes A2 English Language - for AQA)

Jenny Cheshire's presentation of the frequency of non-standard grammatical features by the boys and girls she was observing 'Variation in an English dialect: a sociolinguistic study' 1982

Non standard variable	Example of non-standard use	Group A girls %	Group B girls %
Non- standard – s	They calls me all the names under the sun	25.84%	57.27%
Non- standard – has	You just has to do what the teachers tell you	36.36	35.85
Non – standard – Was	You was with me, wasn't you	63.64	80.95

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

- Quantitative statistics can then be used as a starting point for meaningful comparisons
- Qualitative analysis tries to explain and understand the findings revealed by the quantitative statistics – drawing conclusions
- It can bring out individual instances for discussion
- It's the kind of analysis you are more used to writing in an essay

SURVEYING, LISTING, CLASSIFYING AND TABULATION

- Lists and tables are useful ways of grouping your analysis that will be helpful for revising your findings in a form useful for the exam
- Language can then be more easily classified or grouped for further analysis

Example (taken from Nelson Thornes A2 English Language – for AQA)

Overall investigation into the differentiated approach to the marketing of cars to men and women

- all the noun phrases in a text were listed – separating out the pre-modifying adjectives/adjectival phrases alongside the head noun
- These lists were then further categorized and tables created eg factual/subjective; men/women

Factual pre-modification		Subjective pre-modification	
Associated with men	Associated with women	Associated with men	Associated with women
Not seasonal models	Four wheel brakes	Advanced, modern	Ease of handling
Low petrol consumption	Glass windscreen	Robust chassis	Little need of gear changing

This process allowed the differentiation to become clear – advertising to men focuses on economical factors whereas that aimed at women stressed safety or appearance. Language aimed at men concerned strength, toughness and modernity; for women effortlessness, attractiveness and security.

3f – Investigation – Writing up Analysis

- Whilst a full write up isn't necessary for assessment purposes, it is important to write up a full investigation report in order to gather your conclusions and test your knowledge.
- I will allow your teacher to check the detail of your exam preparation and make suggestions for further work.

Your write up should include the following sections

1. INTRODUCTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In this section you should outline the research that you have carried out that informs your investigation • You should reference relevant theories and prior research that may be linked to your hypothesis and/or questions • Cite and reference sources that help explain why this area is an 'issue' or raises a question • Cite and reference similar research that has focused on the topic but may not have covered your precise question
2. HYPOTHESIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline the points you are seeking to test – perhaps indicating what you are expecting to find (based on previous research) • These can be statements or questions • They indicate the steps you are taking to question your data • Helps to give a more precise focus to your investigation
3. METHODOLOGY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline the process you have gone through to undertake the investigation • What steps have you taken to ensure the validity of your data? • What steps have you taken to ensure the ethical provenance of your data? • What steps have to taken to ensure fair parameters and the avoidance of bias or self selection of data? • What steps were involved in the process of analysis?
4. RESULTS AND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mixture of qualitative and

DISCUSSION

quantitative

- Outlines the conclusions reached during the process of analysis
- Can include tables to help tabulate and ensure data is recorded in a concise and useable fashion
- Develops your conclusions and helps to explain possible findings
- Each aspect of the hypothesis or questions should be addressed
- You should also aim to explain your findings in context, reflecting social/historical change or linking back to theory and prior research

If your analysis is detailed enough, you will be in a good position to prepare for the exam

You may be guided to carry out more research or analyse your data more closely in order to have more precise and nuanced details to take into the exam.