

Bridging Work - A Level English Language

Work through the activities below to give you a taste of what to expect in A Level English Language

Gender

Language and gender is one of the topics we study and it's important to read widely around the topic. Professor Deborah Cameron is a linguist who also blogs about language and gender.

Research the linguist Professor Deborah Cameron

You could look into:

- Her publications
- Her employment
- Her current research


Make notes about your findings

Read the following blogpost

Summarise the main points of the post.

[Gender, communication and Trump v. Musk – language: a feminist guide](#)

Neologism Project


 **neologism**
/niˈɒlədʒɪz(ə)m/

noun

a newly coined word or expression.

Similar: new word new expression new term new phrase coinage ▼

- the coining or use of new words.

 Translations, word origin and more definitions

New words appear all the time and become a part of our vocabularies. In the past few years, we've seen the emergence of "selfies", "bougie", "rizz" and "screen time".

What might contribute to neologisms being created?

Over the next few weeks, I would like you to collect as many neologisms as possible and keep a record of them here.

For each neologism I would like you to consider its longevity. Will it stick around in our vocabulary? Will we only use them for a short while?

I've created an example below:

Covid-19 *noun*

Definition: An infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus.

Etymology: a blend of Coronavirus Disease and then the year it was discovered in - 2019.

Longevity: We might not use this word once the pandemic is over as we tend to use the more generalised term "Coronavirus" even now. If in years to come there is a Covid-30 we might start using this term to differentiate between the two.

Definition:

Etymology:

Longevity:

Definition:

Etymology:

Longevity:

Read the blog post by Tony Thorne about some recent neologisms to help with this task

[LEVITY - OR LEVY-T? | tony thorne \(language-and-innovation.com\)](https://www.language-and-innovation.com/2020/04/LEVITY-OR-LEVY-T2-1.html)

Writing in the style of



iconoclasm

/ɪˈkɒnəklaɪz(ə)m/

noun

1. the action of attacking or assertively rejecting cherished beliefs and institutions or established values and practices.
2. the rejection or destruction of religious images as heretical; the doctrine of iconoclasts.



Translations, word origin and more definitions

We're going to be looking at the first definition.

Task One

What are some cherished beliefs that we hold onto in England?

Example: That tea is the BEST drink there is!

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Do you agree with all of these beliefs?

Task 2

Read the article. Clarify any words you're unsure of.

Joel Golby uses humour to argue that tea is actually pretty rubbish.

Tea is a national disgrace

[Joel Golby](#)

Britain's favourite beverage is a boring, beige relic of our colonial past. But if we admit that to ourselves, what else are we going to start doubting?

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Go into any house in England and you will be offered some tea. Barge in. Just walk in to a nana's house. "Oh, sorry," the nana will say. "Can I get you a cup of tea?"

The nana will walk slowly to the kitchen. She will boil a fresh kettle of water and warm a teapot first. She has a complex hierarchy of doilies. Six different biscuits on the same ornate plate. "Sorry about the biscuit selection," the nana will say. "Only I wasn't really expecting visitors."

It is a crime that you don't go and see your nana more, but that's a conversation for a different day. [Tea](#) is the thing now. Turn to the nana. She has Countdown on in the background but she has it on mute. Turn to her. "Nana, old lady, whatever your name is: tea –" you are making very intense eye contact with the nana now – "tea is shit."

Tea is shit. We don't examine this enough in England. We just putter along, thinking tea is good; but it's not good. It's a lukewarm mug of leaf water, presented as a cure-all for life's ills. "Nice cup of tea," people say, when you've watched a vivid car accident or been given a terminal diagnosis, or gone for a walk and it's started raining. Whether the mafia has kidnapped you and made you kill a man with a gun to win your freedom or if you've done quite badly in an exam, someone will say: "Let me get you a nice cup of tea."

We argue about [how best to make tea](#). "Milk first!" some people say, wrongly. "No," others say. "Milk after." People are basically willing to raise fists over this. They are ready to duel to the death over how long a bag should be left in a mug, or whether a bag should even see a mug in the first place, whether a bag should be locked in the prison of a teapot and squeezed of its blood through a spout. "No sugar!" people shout, as you waddle off to make another interminable cup of tea for them. Another will chime in: "A hundred sugars!"

Academics have recently uncovered [the oldest tea](#) in Britain, proving once and for all that we have been tea bores for more than 300 years. If you do not think we are collectively boring about tea, offer to do an office tea run right now. Someone will hold up one single finger while they rootle about in a desk drawer for a bag of green tea. Someone else will pass you a tiny carton of sweeteners or some agave. You'll have to carry all of this to the kitchen, where there is someone you vaguely remember from the Christmas party waiting to make small talk with you. You have to go down to reception and ask if they've seen "the tray". I don't think it's hyperbole to say that doing the tea run in the office is one of the worst punishments that can be inflicted on a human being.

How did we get like this? Liking tea has its roots [in colonialism](#), but making a big thing of enjoying it now is somehow worse. Because it's morphed, over the ages, from that fragrant hay box academics unearthed this week, which we used to brew and drink like normal people, into something else. It is now at once the twee height of Englishness but also the most basic solution to any problem, a coddle in a mug.

And through it all, nobody has thought to go: hang on, it's just hot brown slop you dip biscuits in. Because this is the fear, isn't it? Once we examine tea, once we put that central tenet of British culture under the microscope, what else will we start to doubt? Gin? The royal family? Dancing dogs on TV talent shows? Black pudding? An inherent hatred of the French?

Once those old cultural keystones are gone, there is nothing but collapse. Sans tea, the concept of Englishness can be distilled down to nothing more than a poster reading: "Keep calm and carry on thinking Wayne Rooney is a slightly better striker than he is". Without tea, the only thing that demarcates us from the rest of the world are dads who wear fancy dress to international cricket games.

And this is it. This is our reality – big, stewing pots of the stuff; types of tea named after earls; chipped mugs with steam rising out of them; some dickhead saying "It's a bit tannin-y, isn't it?"; special little teapot-shaped dishes on the side piled high with old, cold teabags; special rectangular biscuits designed for dunking. This is our world, awash with a liquid more overrated than oil.

Is tea good? We never ask. It is not good. It is exactly fine. And liking it is the worst possible English trait, up there with colonialism and the class system and thinking dentistry is bad.

Next time you have a cup of tea – and look around you, you are probably surrounded by it, three or four mugs of the stuff at various degrees of room temperature, biscuit crumbs down your cardigan – next time you have a cup of tea, as you lift the heavy mug to your mouth, think: is this actually good? Zoom out. Analyse. Is this nice, or do I just have Stockholm syndrome?

Task 3

Have a go at writing your own iconoclastic article in the style of Golby.

You could write it about anything from football to reality TV to William Shakespeare. The main goal is to verbally attack something that most people think is wonderful.

Things to include:

Opinions expressed as facts

Short, fragmented sentences e.g. "We never ask. It's not good. It's exactly fine."

Colloquial, informal language e.g. "barge in", "putter along", "Nanna"

Rhetorical Questions

Hyperbole

Humour

[illegible]

Task 4

Annotate your writing, labelling the features you mimicked.

Do you think it was effective?

Did you like writing in this style?

We're looking forward to seeing you in September and hope you'll grow to love linguistics as much as we do.