



# Cambridge International AS & A Level

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

9093/42

Paper 4 Language Topics

October/November 2022

2 hours 15 minutes



You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

## INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **all** questions.
- Follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.
- Dictionaries are **not** allowed.

## INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is 50.
- The number of marks for each question or part question is shown in brackets [ ].

This document has **8** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

**Section A: English in the world****Question 1**

Read the following two texts. **Text A** is an extract from an article published on the website of the British newspaper *The Guardian* in 2018. **Text B** is an extract from an article published on the news website *Byline Times* in 2020.

Discuss what you feel are the most important issues raised in the texts relating to the causes and effects of the expansion of English around the world. You should refer to specific details from the texts as well as to ideas and examples from your wider study of English in the world. [25]

**Text A****Behemoth<sup>1</sup>, bully, thief: how the English language is taking over the planet**

*No language in history has dominated the world quite like English does today. Is there any point in resisting?*

A century of immigration has done little to dislodge the status of English in North America.

**Content removed due to copyright restrictions.**

And everywhere it goes, it leaves behind a trail of dead: dialects crushed, languages forgotten, literatures mangled.

**Text B****Why Are We So Quiet About Language Death?**

We humans are an odd species. As individuals, our generosity is endless when applied to conservation of national environments or endangered animals, but we seem peculiarly uninterested in the plight of human cultures.

Here are some basic facts.

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Of the 7011 languages currently spoken, 2895 (41%) are now endangered, each with less than 1000 speakers remaining. A language goes extinct every 3.5 months. By 2050, some estimate that 90% of the currently spoken languages will have gone forever. And, rather like climate change, this isn't an inevitable erosion over time. Of the 420 language families known to have existed, a quarter have already gone – 90% of those in the past 60 years. To put that in perspective, if a language extinction is akin to the loss of a species, the loss of a language family is like losing *all* the whales or big cats.

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Nor is language death restricted to the developing world. The depredations of imperial expansion and global capitalism, and the genocides and diseases that travel in their wake, sometimes blind us to the slow ebbing away of cultures on our own doorstep.

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So why should we worry about languages dying? Are we really impoverished if everyone speaks versions of English, Mandarin, Hindi or Spanish? Again, the biodiversity argument seems relevant.

Languages are the ultimate museums of culture. They preserve information about land management, kinship, social relationships, local customs, cosmology and even information about the natural world that might yet prove useful: an estimated 75% of plant-derived pharmaceuticals were discovered through traditional medicines.

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## Section B: Language and the self

### Question 2

Read the following text, which is an extract from an article posted on the *Colorado Public Radio* website in 2019.

Discuss what you feel are the most important issues raised in the text relating to the ways in which language can shape and reflect personal and social identity. You should refer to specific details from the text as well as to ideas and examples from your wider study of Language and the self. [25]

#### Teens Aren't Breaking Language, They're Adding To It

Ok.

It's a simple enough affirmative response to something – or it used to be. But if one teenager texted that one-word sentence, period<sup>1</sup> included, to another teenager, it'd be fighting words. 5

The OK, period, means you're mad. The most neutral affirmative response would be 'ok' – and that's it. There's also 'ok!' 'okkkkk' or 'ok ...'

When your social life relies on texting and social media, punctuation is everything. Add in timing – the modern versions of rules like 'wait three days to call him' – and emoji, which do more work than you might think, and you've got a whole new way of communicating. 10

And it's not just a teen thing. While there's some fear amongst older generations that Generation Z isn't *really* communicating, effective communication via text is everyone's problem – and teens might be better at it.

As Kira Hall, a professor of linguistics at the University of Colorado Boulder, points out, 96% of American adults have cell phones and 81% have smart phones. Cell phone use is ubiquitous. 15

'It is communication,' she said. 'There's no going back.'

#### It all changes so fast, but there's no reason to panic

Moral panic about the way young people communicate in texts and online started in the early 2000s, Hall said. But what we have and what we're still developing isn't a new language, it's just our usual language adapted to modern life. 20

What sets these changes apart from past evolutions in language is the rate at which they're happening, and the fact that that rate is accelerating, thanks to the number of people contributing – and to the global scale of the change.

'What's so unique about what's happening now is it's broken down so the whole mass of people are contributing to language change,' as opposed to just scholars and prominent writers, Hall said. 'It's a participatory contribution. It's not from the top down as it was in the past.' 25

That means that now more than ever, teenagers are driving language change. It also means that the way teens communicate is more visible to adults – it's not just in person and in texts, it's all over the internet – and its prominence in our culture creates more waves, more fear. 30

'I think even now what I see happening is it's no longer the moral panic,' Hall said. 'It's more about a fear that our kids aren't learning literacy, they don't know how to use standard language and punctuate and spell. And a fear that they're socially backward, that they're kind of hiding from social life.'

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'I think on both accounts the literature really shows something a lot more complex. Young people are writing now more than ever before,' Hall continued. 'They're writing all the time. I think they have a really good sense of what a text message is versus an email you send to your professor versus a blog post you want to sound intelligent. They know how to code-switch between formality and informality.'

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<sup>1</sup>*period*: full stop





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