



# The Bridge to Post-16 Summer Work



## English Language AQA A LEVEL

This pack contains a programme of activities and resources to prepare you to embark on your Post-16 course in English Language in September.

It should be completed throughout the remainder of the Summer term and over the Summer Holidays to ensure you are ready to start your course in September.

**You MUST have this pack completed before your first lesson in the subject**

The resources include:

1. Links to three websites where you can research the topics you will be exploring in the course and get a flavour of what you will be learning about in Post-16
2. Research task on key pre-knowledge topics that will help you to be successful in your course.
3. Other relevant revision/questions to help bridge between GCSE and Post-16 courses
4. Suggested therapies to help you if you are struggling with the tasks

Overall we suggest you spend around 3 hours of total work working through the tasks for English Language. We are asking you to focus on one aspect of English Language study: Gender. This will be our first topic at the start of Y12.

Therefore in total, across your 3 subjects you should be completing 9 hours of Summer Work.

### Useful Websites for Language and Gender

<http://www.teachit.co.uk/armoore/lang/gender.htm#lakoff>

[www.drivelikeagirl.com](http://www.drivelikeagirl.com)

[www.sheilaswheels.com](http://www.sheilaswheels.com)

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/oct/01/gender.books>

<http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=TWubtUnSfA0>

[http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=Kl\\_kcwkaNrl](http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=Kl_kcwkaNrl)

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2238435/Swedish-toy-firm-Top-Toy-forced-gender-neutral-Christmas-catalogue.html>

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/35123/35123-h/35123-h.htm>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LsFXHyKEfe4>

<http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=XY-5a0vRzYg>

<http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/womens-blog/2014/apr/25/wives-grandmothers-insidious-sexism-women-newsageism>

## Research Task

### TASK 1:

#### Gender and semantics

The following terms are differentiated by sex but have gained different connotations (and sometimes denotations) over time. Next to each pair, note down what the differences might be between them and what they each connote. Think about whether they imply a different status or have certain values associated with them. Also, consider whether their meaning has changed over time.

Husband/wife	
Dog/bitch	
Mistress/master	
Dame/knight	
Bride/groom	
Madam/sir	
Queen/king	
Mrs, Ms/Mr	
Miss/Master, Mr	
Governess/governor	
Spinster/bachelor	
Tomboy/sissy	
Lady/Lord	
Lady/gentleman	

TASK 2: Examine the claims of language and gender theorists such as Robin Lakoff and Deborah Tannen and source some language data to see how true their claims might be.

You could record a few minutes from a radio broadcast or a TV chat show or listen to a blog and consider what is happening and why.

You can use the following work sheet to help record your data.

These theories are quite dated now, so don't be surprised if you find evidence that goes against them...the world has moved on a little – thankfully! As A Level students, one of your key jobs is to evaluate and critique the theory you encounter!

### *Robin Lakoff*

In 1975, Robin Lakoff published an account of women's language, which is often cited in discussions about language and gender theory. The book is called *Language and Woman's Place* and in an article called *Woman's Language*, Lakoff made a number of claims about the language women use and what makes it different to the language used by men.

She stated that women's language consists of a prevalence of the following:

- **Hedges:** using phrases like "sort of", "kind of".
- **(super) polite forms:** "Would you mind...", "If you don't mind."
- **Tag questions:** "You're going to lunch, aren't you?"
- **Speaking in italics:** Emphasis is placed on certain words such as 'very' and 'so', emulating the written function of italics.
- **Empty adjectives:** 'lovely' and 'adorable'.
- Hypercorrect grammar and pronunciation.
- Whereas women use direct quotations, men paraphrase more often.
- Men and women have special lexicons. Whereas women have more words for colours, men have more words for sports.
- Women speak less frequently than men.
- Women overuse qualifiers in conversation.
- **Apologies:** Women apologise more.
- **Expletives:** Women avoid expletives and taboo lexis.
- **Humour:** Women lack a sense of humour and can't tell jokes.
- **Indirect requests:** Women use more indirect requests.
- **Modal Constructions:** Women use more modal constructions such as "Should we open the door to let in some air?"
- **Intensifiers:** Women use more intensifiers such as "I'm so happy you could make it."
- **Imperatives:** Women use more 'wh' imperatives such as "Why don't we go out to dinner?"

Of course, these statements are open to debate and students may vehemently disagree about some of them. Also, some forty years have passed since this research took place, so it could be deemed outdated (and sexist?). Students should be encouraged to research these claims in class, amongst their peers and at home to see how relevant they are in today's society.

Hedges

Politeness

Tag questions

Emphasis on certain words

Empty adjectives

Hypercorrect grammar

Direct quotations

Special lexicons

'wh' imperatives

Prevalence of apologies

Use of modal constructions (can,  
would, should etc)

Indirect requests

Expletives

Use of intensifiers

Humour

### Deborah Tannen Difference Theory

One oft-cited work when discussing language and gender is *You Just Don't Understand* by Professor Tannen, published in 1990. She summarized her book in an article in which she states that there are a series of contrasts between the ways in which males and females communicate.

#### *Status vs. support*

Tannen claims that men grow up in a world in which conversation is competitive and therefore strive to ensure that others don't dominate them. Women however, use conversation to gain support and confirmation rather than status.

#### *Independence vs. intimacy*

Tannen claims that due to the fact that men are concerned with status, they focus more on independence. Women, on the other hand, think in terms of intimacy, seeking support and closeness from their partner.

#### *Advice vs. understanding*

Men like to find solutions whereas women seek sympathy and understanding. Whilst a man might seek to find a way of solving a problem that their wife or girlfriend might have, Tannen claims that what the wife or girlfriend really wants is sympathy.

#### *Information vs. feelings*

Men exchange information briefly, for example in a telephone conversation to arrange a meeting. However, women will spend an hour on the telephone talking about feelings and emotions.

#### *Orders vs. proposals*

Tannen claims that men make orders by using more direct imperatives whilst women suggest things in more indirect ways.

*Conflict vs. compromise*

Whilst men are more likely to voice their opposition to a suggestion in the workplace or home, according to Tannen, women are less likely to object and assert themselves. They might delay their opposition to the suggestions and complain later.

	Men	Women
Status vs. support		
Independence vs. intimacy		
Advice vs. understanding		
Information vs. feelings		
Orders vs. proposals		
Conflict vs. compromise		

### TASK 3: Creating your own scrapbook of gender material.

Be a magpie and collect small texts that you think are interesting in terms of language and gender. You can collate these as a little scrapbook (either a physical book or an online file) and bring them to your first lesson for discussion.

It may be that the headline of an article sticks out! You may spot an interview in a magazine that you think is interesting in terms of gender. Perhaps you'll see a sign when you are out and about that you photograph because it strikes you as interesting! There are no set rules about 'how many' texts you can put in your scrapbook but there should be a minimum of five.

You do not have to formally analyse these but you do need to say why you included them in your scrapbook and why you think they are interesting.

There are LOTS of ideas about gender in the 'suggested websites' links at the top of this document. We strongly suggest you look through these before starting your scrapbook and you can use some of the texts for your scrapbook if you wish to.

Good luck! We can't wait to see what you've produced.

Mrs Ceney, Miss Cresswell and Mrs Hammond-White.