Lincoln College

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

PRELIMS PAPER 1A: INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

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Summer 2026 for Hilary Term 2027

This half of Paper 1 introduces you to some key concepts and theoretical approaches in the study of the English Language. The aim of this course is to learn how to engage in close linguistic reading of texts, to develop and apply a vocabulary of linguistic terms and concepts, and to understand the history of the English language. Papers 1A and 1B will equip you with linguistic and critical toolkits which are relevant to your entire degree, and so the reading lists for these papers will be particularly useful as you prepare for your first year.

Over the course of Hilary Term, we will critically read 'everyday' and non-literary texts, as found in the media, in politics, in advertising, and so on. We will develop writing skills, including creating bibliographies and appendices, and formatting in citation styles.

Teaching will be through a combination of college classes and tutorials. Attending English Faculty lectures is essential. I will circulate further details in Michaelmas Term. You will be expected to produce a final portfolio for both halves of this course in Trinity Term, including a comparative linguistic commentary which analyses passages of your own choosing.

The Bodleian Library Guides are fantastic – I recommend taking a look at their guides for all of your papers. Relevant here is their Guide to Prelims Paper 1. Some resources here you will only be able to access once you are set up at Oxford, but the exercises are available to all:

https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/english-prelims-paper-1/training

ESSENTIAL SUMMER READING

Crystal, David, *The Stories of English* (2005)

Fairclough, Norman, *Language and Power* (2015, other eds available) – esp. Chapters 2 ('Discourse as Social Practice'), 3 ('Discourse and Power'), 4 ('Discourse, Common Sense and Ideology')

Horobin, Simon, *The English Language: A Very Short Introduction* (2018)

Mugglestone, Lynda, ed., *The Oxford History of English* (2006)

Rubery, Matthew, and Leah Price, eds, *Further Reading* (2020)

Having a solid grasp of English grammar is crucial for linguistic close reading and stylistic analysis, and it will be worth brushing up on this. The following are highly recommended:

Crystal, David, *Rediscover Grammar* (1988)

Crystal, David, *Making Sense of Grammar* (2004)

USEFUL PREPARATORY READING…

Attridge, Derek, *Peculiar Language: Literature as Difference from the Renaissance to James Joyce* (2004)

Baron, Dennis E., *A Better Pencil: Readers, Writers and the Digital Revolution* (2009)

Baron, Naomi S., *Always On: Language in an Online and Mobile World* (2008)

Cameron, Deborah, *The Myth of Mars and Venus: Do Men and Women Really Speak Different Languages?* (2007)Culpeper, Jonathan, *History of English* [3rd edition] (2015)

Cameron, Deborah, and Ivan Panovic, *Working With Written Discourse* (Sage, 2014) – esp. Chapter 6 ('Critical Discourse Analysis')

Carter, Ronald and Walter Nash, *Seeing through Language: A Guide to Styles of English Writing* (1990) – esp. Chapter 1 ('Language and Style')

Fowler, Roger, 'Literature as Discourse', in *Literature as Social Discourse: The Practice of Linguistic Criticism* (1981), pp. 80–95

Horobin, Simon, *Does Spelling Matter?* (2013)

Mooney, Annabelle et.al., *Language, Society, and Power: An Introduction* [4th edition] (2015) – chapter 1, 'Language', is particularly useful

Mugglestone, Lynda, *'Talking Proper': The Rise of Accent as a Social Symbol* [2nd edition] (2007)

Simpson, Paul, *Stylistics: A Resource Book for Students* [2nd edition] (2014)

Simpson, Paul and Andrea Mayr, *Language and Power: A Resource Book for Students* [2nd edition] (2018)Watts, Richard J., *Alternative Histories of English* (2002)

… AND INTERESTING PROVOCATIONS

Achebe, Chinua, 'English and the African Writer', *Transitions* 18 (1965): 342–49

Database of offensive language (Lancaster University and Jonathan Culpeper): https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/projects/impoliteness/

Orwell, George, 'Politics and the English Language', *Horizon*, April 1946: https://www.orwellfoundation.com/the-orwell-foundation/orwell/essays-and-other-works/politics-and-the-english-language/

Taylor, Harry, "'Brain rot": Oxford word of the year 2024 reflects "trivial" use of social media', *The Guardian*, 2 December 2024: https://www.theguardian.com/media/2024/dec/02/brain-rot-oxford-word-of-the-year-2024

KEY RESOURCES

https://www.oed.com/

- Essential, especially for detailed etymologies. Good for understanding development of Old and Middle English

https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/english-prelims-paper-1

- Short exercises and further resources

https://mcl.as.uky.edu/glossary-rhetorical-terms

Glossary of rhetorical techniques

http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~kemmer/Words04/

- Short & readable guide to key terms of language analysis and the history of English

https://glossary.sil.org/term/s

- Formal definitions of linguistic terms

http://rhetoric.byu.edu/

- A searchable glossary of rhetorical terms

http://visual-memory.co.uk/daniel/Documents/S4B/sem-gloss.html

- Semiotics for beginners: a glossary of terms