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# THE ULTIMATE METALANGUAGE BANK

VCE English Language

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# METALANGUAGE FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE

What a sword is to a knight, or what a smartphone is to *Homo sapiens* of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, is what metalanguage is to a linguist. It is through metalanguage that we give order to and make concrete the dynamic world of language, that we describe its structure and purpose, and that we communicate to other linguists what language itself communicates.

Whilst that's great and all, it doesn't make the task of learning all the prescribed metalanguage for VCE any less daunting. That's why we're here to help: with definitions, examples, and sample analyses, this metalanguage bank is your ultimate reference to building an arsenal of linguistic jargon, with which to impress your teacher and examiner.

But first, let's start with some tips for doing well in English Language overall:

- **Wide reading is key**

We English Language students might not have to study novels, but that doesn't exempt us from reading in general. Reading linguistic texts is one of the best ways to expose yourself to the style of analysis you'll be doing in English Language. Start off by reading and summarising content from the textbook your school uses – “Living Lingo” by Kate Burridge is a commonly used textbook by schools, which is filled with insightful commentary about language by one of Australia's most well-known linguists. While sound knowledge of grammar isn't crucial to doing well on the exam, it does provide you with a solid foundation to approach linguistic studies. Good resources to consult are “Mastering Advanced English Language” by Sara Thorne, and David Crystal's textbooks on grammar. In addition, get into the habit of searching the internet every fortnight for an article on language – look out for Australian articles, in particular!

- **Read past assessor reports early in the year**

Not only do the past examiner reports contain information about areas in which students can improve their performance, they also include examples of high-scoring student responses. This is one of the best ways of learning how to structure your own short-answers, analytical commentaries, and essays. Read through these early in the year so that you can begin incorporating high-achieving students' techniques in your work.

- **Keep a sentence-stem bank**

While reading through your textbook and sample responses, write down useful expressions that you come across in a sentence-stem bank. You'll find that by having a collection of expressions, it'll be much easier to word your own responses. Remembering many various ways of explaining and wording things will also dramatically increase your writing speed in SACs and the exam.

- **Collect contemporary examples in a scrapbook**

Contemporary examples – two words that often fill English Language students' minds with confusion and dread. What are they? Contemporary examples are just ways you've observed language being used in society over the year. When looking for examples, always think to yourself whether you could use them in an essay. If you're unsure, open up some past VCAA exams and have a look at the essay prompts!

Some handy examples to have up your sleeve include ones to do with:

- informal language being employed in formal domains or by people of authority (such as politicians), which demonstrates the popularity of informal language in Australia;
- the use of euphemisms to discuss a sensitive issue or conceal someone's liability;
- the use of dysphemism to deliberately antagonise a group of people in society and propagate a certain prejudiced opinion; and
- language that causes outrage, which will demonstrate to you what topics are currently considered to be taboo in our society.

You can look for contemporary examples in newspapers, on TV, on radio, and on the internet. You may find it particularly useful to follow some politicians, linguists, and The Age newspaper on Twitter – this will help you observe the language that representatives of our country are using, read about the latest research being conducted by linguists, and stay in the loop with current affairs.

Print off important bits and pieces (note-worthy quotes and analyses) and paste them in a scrapbook. You'll find it useful to write a few sentences about each of your examples, relating them to an Area of Study or essay topic. The question you should always ask yourself when analysing your examples is: "Why has this language been used by this person in this context?" Answering this question will help you explore the deeper purpose and motivations behind linguistic choices, which is what English Language is all about! 😊

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Like the entire Connect Team, **Renata Galiamov** achieved an amazing ATAR (99.95), as well as a top score in English Language. She's one of the top-tier lecturers at a company that is trusted by innovative schools (such as Balwyn High School, Haileybury and Monash University) and savvy students across the state.

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# PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY

## Prosodic features (prosody)

Refer to pitch, stress, volume, tempo and intonation, which are used to draw attention to key elements of spoken language and colour spoken discourses.

### Pitch

Refers to how high the voice is. The faster the vocal cords vibrate, the higher the pitch will be. In transcripts, high-pitch is annotated by HP.

**e.g.** *The rise in pitch in line 3 (“\_”) indicates an increased level of excitement.*

**e.g.** *A topic change occurs in line 10 (“\_”), where the participants shift to a more serious topic, evidenced by the lowered pitch and use of more formal language.*

### Stress

The degree of force with which we articulate a syllable. Syllables may be stressed or unstressed. Emphatic stress is used to lend prominence to particular lexemes in a spoken discourse or to convey astonishment/disbelief/amazement.

**e.g.** *Emphatic stress is strategically used by the interlocutor throughout the discourse to draw listeners’ attention to lexemes of particular importance, such as “\_” (line 3), “\_” (line 4) and “\_” (line 5). In line 7, emphatic stress serves the additional function of conveying disbelief: “I can’t believe it was Simon of all people who decided to drink and drive.”*

### Volume

Refers to the loudness of the voice. Annotated by P (piano, soft), F (forte, loud), FF (fortissimo, very loud) and CRE (crescendo, getting louder).

**e.g.** *When a topic shift occurs in line 8, where the issue of whale-hunting is raised, an elevated volume is used by Amanda in line 9, which demonstrates her passion in the matter.*

### Tempo

The speed at which one speaks. Annotated by L (lento, slow), A (allegro, fast) and AC (accelerando, getting faster).

**e.g.** *A parenthetical side-note may be signalled by a quicker tempo: “That cake I bought – you know the one with the cherries – is so good!”*

### Intonation

The pattern of pitch changes in an utterance (intonation contour). These may be rising, falling, rising-falling or falling-rising.

**e.g.** *A salient feature of Australian English is the high-rising terminal, which tends to be more prevalent in young women, according to studies by Horvath.*

**e.g.** *Continuing or rising intonation signals further development of an idea or further items on a list (“\_” line 6), whereas falling intonation is used at the end of syntactic units and to indicate a relinquishment of the floor (“\_” line 8).*

### Vocal effects

Refer to non-linguistic sounds we make, such as laughter, coughs, crying and breaths.

**e.g.** *The use of vocal effects, such as laughter, lend the piece an informal register and contribute to its entertainment value.*

### Assimilation

The process by which the sounds of a word may change to become more like neighbouring sounds. This aids fluency and articulation.

**e.g.** *Assimilation is evident when X says ‘grampa’ rather than ‘grandpa’, which contributes to the informal register and the fluidity of X’s expression (line 6).*

### Elision

The omission of phonemes in connected speech, which aids fluency and articulation.

**e.g.** *Elision contributes to the informal register of the text and is evident when X says “ol’ man” instead of “old man” (line 6).*

### Insertion

The inclusion of extra phonemes for ease of articulation.

**e.g.** *Insertion is used by X in line 6 (‘cudduly’ instead of ‘cuddly’), which conveys a sense of cuteness and immaturity as he describes the security blanket he used to own.*

## Reduction

When the total number of phonemes in a lexeme is reduced by means of elision, assimilation and insertion. Contributes to informal register and economy of expression.

**e.g.** The use of the reduction “gonna” (line 6) in the e-conversation contributes mirrors spoken mode, thus contributing to its informal register.

## Vowel reduction

Refers to changes to the acoustic quality of vowels. Unstressed vowels are often replaced with weak central vowels such as the schwa sound [ʌ] (uh).

**e.g.** The *unstressed vowels* in ‘*standard*’, ‘*harmony*’, ‘*water*’, ‘*about*’ and ‘*synthesis*’ are often pronounced using the *schwa sound* [ʌ].

**e.g.** *Vowel reduction* is a salient feature of Broad and often General accent, but not the Cultivated accent.

## General Australian accent

The accent with which most Australians speak. After the establishment of Australia’s national identity in the 1970s, Australians began to take pride in their distinctive accent, resulting in a shift away from the Cultivated accent, which was associated with the Received Pronunciation in England. Most Australians use the General accent, which is characterised by neutral vowel qualities, lacking the stigma attached to the Broad and the pretentiousness associated with the Cultivated accent.

## Broad Australian accent

This is the more extreme Australian accent associated with country and working class folk, and which is often considered the stereotypical Australian accent. Being furthest from British Received Pronunciation on the sociolectal continuum, speakers of the Broad accent are often disparaged and perceived to be uneducated; thus, they are often socially disadvantaged.

## Cultivated Australian accent

A ‘prestigious’ Australian accent that is associated with the British Received Pronunciation. In olden times, only the wealthy (who spoke with RP) attended school, so RP became associated with respectability, good education and high social status. Nowadays, everyone has the opportunity to go to school, so social judgements about regional accents have become less dogmatic. Ultimately, the use of Standard English nowadays is socially more important than the use of RP. In Australia, many are actually

opposed the use of RP, seeing as it represents wealth and superiority, which clashes with the cherished Australian ideals of egalitarianism and anti-authoritarianism. To many Australians, the Cultivated accent is pretentious, phony and excessively genteel.

## Phonological patterning

This refers to the various ways sounds are deliberately paired to achieve special effects.

### Alliteration

The repetition of a consonant at the beginning of nearby words. This literary device helps make phrases more memorable and contributes to the fluency of the text, creating a sonorous effect.

**e.g.** *Phonological patterning* such as *alliteration* (“*fame and fortune*” line 8; “*reduce, reuse, recycle*” line 9) is used to enhance meaning, make the text more memorable, and create a *sonorous effect*.

### Assonance

The repetition of identical or similar stressed vowel sounds. Fluidity is enhanced through use of assonance, as is memorability of the text.

**e.g.** The use of *assonance* in the Hoover vacuum cleaner advertisement helps the discourse reinforce its message and make the slogan more memorable: “*It beats as it sweeps as it cleans!*”.

### Consonance

The repetition of consonants in nearby words. Adds balance to the text and creates a sonorous effect.

**e.g.** *chuck, fickle and kick* (mutual ‘ck’).

**e.g.** *Consonance* is evident in the advertisement in the repetition of the ‘nz’ *phonemes* in “*Beanz Meanz Heinz*”, which helps make the slogan more memorable.

### Onomatopoeia

The use of words whose sounds imitate a natural thing. This makes descriptions more interesting and expressive.

**e.g.** The use of *onomatopoeia* in “*the gushing stream flows through the forest*” enhances the meaning of the statement through the *connotations* of rush and speed brought about by the lexeme ‘*gushing*’, thus helping the reader better visualise the stream.

### Rhyme

The recurring pattern of identical or similar sounds at the ends of words.

**e.g.** The use of *phonological patterning* such as *rhyme* in “*Good, better, best – never let it rest!*” contributes to the *balance and rhythm* of the text, as well as making the slogan more memorable.

### Rhythm

The pattern of stressed and unstressed syllable in language. This is often used to create a monotonous or insistent mood/tone.

**e.g.** *Parallelism* appears frequently throughout the discourse to add emphasis, build up to climaxes and to create a sense of *rhythm*: “we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills...” (lines 4-7).

# MORPHOLOGY

## Roots (of words)

Single lexical morphemes (i.e. they have meaning and are usually free). They are the core of words, to which affixes may attach.

**e.g.** 'cat', 'jump' and 'red' are all roots, as is 'stup' found in the words *stupid*, *stupefy*, *stupendous* and *stupor*.

## Stems (of words)

May also be roots (if the root has meaning on its own) or a root with affixes. Stems differ from roots in that they must have lexical meaning on their own.

**e.g.** 'cat', 'jump' and 'red' are all roots and stems (they have meaning on their own). 'Stup' is not a stem; however, 'stupid', 'stupefy', 'stupendous' and 'stupor' are all stems.

## Free morphemes

The smallest meaningful unit of language that can stand on its own.

**e.g.** 'cat' and 'jump' are free morphemes.

## Bound morphemes

A morpheme that can only occur when attached to another morpheme.

**e.g.** 'ing' and 'ed' are bound morphemes (*baking*, *baked*).

## Derivational morphemes

Morphemes that change the word class or meaning of a lexeme.

**e.g.** The derivational suffix 'er' changes the verb 'run' to the noun 'runner'. The prefix 'un' in 'unhappy' changes the meaning of 'happy' to a negative one.

## Inflectional morphemes

Morphemes that serve a grammatical information. In English, they are all suffixes.

**e.g.** Adding 's' to 'cat' changes it to a plural. It does not change its word class, so is not a derivational morpheme.

## Affixation

The process of adding bound morphemes to word stems.

### Prefix

Affix (bound morpheme) that precedes the root.

**e.g.** *im-*, *un-* and *ir-* in *impossible*, *unsatisfactory* and *irresistible*.

### Infix

Affix that occurs inside the root. (In English, they are non-standard intensifiers.)

**e.g.** the 'bloody' in *abso-bloody-lutely* or *fan-bloody-tastic*.

### Suffix

Affix (bound morpheme) that follows the root.

**e.g.** *-ed*, *-ing* and *-s* in *cooked*, *cycling* and *goats*.

## Diminutive/Hypocorism

A suffix added to a common or proper noun that indicates smallness or affection. Diminutives are prominent features of Australian English, where the endings are usually '-o' or '-y/ie'. Diminutives and hypocorisms reflect cherished Australian ideals of friendliness and casualness.

**e.g.** *barbie*, *Salvos*, *Jackie*, *Tassie*, *prezzies*, *Christie*

# LEXICOLOGY

## Lexical field

A specific topic or category that a group of lexemes belong to.

**e.g.** *Cholera, typhoid fever and measles* all belong to the same lexical field of diseases.

Note: the lexemes do not necessarily have the same meaning, but they all belong to the same topic. The lexical field is comparable to the 'hypernym' or 'superordinate' (see cohesion, located in the discourse section).

## Content words (open-class words)

Words with a clearly definable meaning. They include nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. They are called 'open-class' because new words can be created and added to these word classes as society's needs change.

## Function words (closed-class words)

These words serve a grammatical purpose. They include pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, and determiners. They are called 'closed-class' because these word classes have a fixed, limited number of words; new words are rarely added because grammar tends to remain stable, while vocabulary (content words) changes. However, due to political correctness, some people believe gender-neutral pronouns such as 'zee' and 'zer' should be invented to replace the generic 'he'. Gender-neutral pronouns would avoid people making judgements about a person's gender, thus promoting acceptance of transgender individuals.

## Word classes (parts of speech)

### Nouns

Have a naming function; can act as the subject or object in a clause.

- **Common nouns:** general name for the item
- **Proper nouns:** specific name for the item
- **Concrete nouns:** tangible item
- **Abstract nouns:** intangible item
- **Collective nouns:** refer to a group of people, animals or things
- **Count nouns:** able to be counted; have a plural form

- **Mass nouns:** cannot be counted; have no plural form

**e.g.** *apple* (common, concrete and count), *herd* (collective, count), *Harry Potter* (proper, concrete), *love* (abstract, mass noun).

## Verbs

Words that denote actions, states or processes.

- **Main verbs:** express the meaning in a verb phrase.  
**e.g.** The frog *leaped*. The girls *danced*.
- **Auxiliary verbs:** supporting verbs for non-finite main verbs; they add information about tense, person and number.  
**e.g.** I *am* eating. She *was* eating. They *were* eating.
- **Modal verbs:** convey a range of attitudes and moods about the likelihood of an event taking place.
  - *can* – indicates ability (*I can read*) or possibility (*it can cause a rash*)
  - *will* – implies intent and conveys certainty (*I will call you*)
  - *may* – indicates permission (*you may leave*); can be cautionary (*may result in fines*)
  - *must* – indicates obligation and that an action is compulsory (*you must not write during reading time*); may convey certainty (*you must be tired*)
  - *shall* – implies intent (*I shall call you tonight*); often used to make suggestions and offers or ask for advice (*Shall we dance? What shall I do?*)
  - *should* – indicates obligation, but implies a sense of volition; often used to give advice (*you should see a doctor; you should refrain from swearing*)
  - *would* – used to describe a result (*this would result in...*); used to express desire (*I would love to meet up*)
  - *could* – implies possibility (*it could end badly*); also used to express ability in the past (*I could when I was younger*)
  - *might* – indicates possibility (*I might go*) or polite permission (*might I suggest an idea?*)
  - *need not* – absence of obligation/necessity (*you need not study this*)
  - *ought to* – indicates some obligation; used to give advice (*you ought to see a doctor*).

- *had better* – some obligation; used to give advice (*you'd better study*).
- **Stative verbs:** express states of being or processes in which there is no obvious action.  
**e.g.** *to know, to believe, to realise.*
- **Dynamic verbs:** express actions.  
**e.g.** *read, jump, hear, follow, swim, cook.*
- **Transitive verbs:** must be followed by an object to make sense.  
**e.g.** I *carried* the shopping. She *made* the cake. He *found* her.
- **Intransitive verbs:** do not require an object to complete their meaning.  
**e.g.** They *laughed*. The victim *died*. He *left*.
  - Some verbs can be both transitive and intransitive.  
**e.g.** She *wrote*. She *wrote a story*. He *baked*. He *baked a cake*.
- **Copula verbs:** linking verbs that connect clause elements.  
**e.g.** The sky *became* cloudy. She *seems* tired.
- All verbs have a finite and non-finite form.
  - Finite verbs: change their form to show contrasts of number (he/they), tense (past, present) and person (1<sup>st</sup> – I, we; 2<sup>nd</sup> – you, 3<sup>rd</sup> – he/she/they).  
**e.g.** Contrast of tense: *she lives in Europe; she lived in Europe.*  
**e.g.** Contrast of number: *he eats, they eat.*  
**e.g.** Contrast of person: *I am, you are, he is.*
  - Non-finite verbs: never change their form.  
**e.g.** base form: *live, love, jump, fly, learn.*  
**e.g.** infinitive: *to live, to love, to jump, to fly, to learn.*  
**e.g.** present participles: *she was living; they were living.*  
**e.g.** past participles: *he has lived, they had lived, she will have lived.*
- **Tense:** changes to the structure of a verb to signal timescale changes.
  - Present tense: used to describe events that take place regularly. There are two forms: verb with no ending or with an '-s' ending.  
**e.g.** I *study* often. He *studies* often.
  - Past tense: used to describe events that have taken place in the past. Regular verbs have the ending '-ed' to denote past tense.  
**e.g.** I *loved* the show. He *played* tennis. It *became* cloudy.
  - Future time: verbs are not inflected to signal future time, so linguists often do not refer to 'future tense'. There are many ways of creating a

sense of future time, including the use of modal verbs.

**e.g.** *I will study* (modal verb + base form verb)

- **Aspect:** establishes whether the verb is complete or in progress. The progressive/continuous form implies the task is/was/will be ongoing, whereas the perfective aspect implies the task is complete.
  - Present (simple) – I study; he studies.
  - Past (simple) – I studied; he studied.
  - Future (simple) – I will study; he will study.
  - Present progressive – I am studying; he is studying.
  - Past progressive – I was studying; he was studying.
  - Future progressive – I will be studying; he will be studying.
  - Present perfect – I have studied; he has studied.
  - Past perfect – I had studied; he had studied.
  - Future perfect – I will have studied; he will have studied.
  - Present perfect progressive – I have been studying; he has been studying.
  - Past perfect progressive – I had been studying; he had been studying.
  - Future perfect progressive – I will have been studying.
  
- **Active voice:** expresses the action of the verb and directly links it to the agent (person or thing carrying out the action). (*See also:* syntax)  
**e.g.** *I broke the window. The police will prosecute trespassers.*
  
- **Passive voice:** the original subject-verb-object sentence is remodelled so the agent is moved to the end of the sentence into an optional relative clause (i.e. “by...”); the patient is moved to the front and becomes the subject, thus placing emphasis on the patient and action, rather than the agent.  
(*See also:* syntax)  
**e.g.** *The window was broken. Trespassers will be prosecuted [by police].*

## Adjectives

Describe qualities and attributes of nouns and are usually gradable. They specify a noun's field of reference; i.e. they narrow the range of meaning of the noun by providing specific detail.

**e.g.** 'The wall' vs. 'The old, ivy-covered limestone wall'

They may also describe other adjectives.

**e.g.** *most* handsome

- **Attributive adj:** occurs before the noun (a.k.a. modifier)  
**e.g.** the *tall* man, those *fluffy* ducks
- **Predicative adj:** occurs after the verb (a.k.a. complement)  
**e.g.** the man is *tall*, those ducks are *fluffy*
- **Degree:** the base adjective simply describes a quality (e.g. tall). Comparative adjectives suggest that the qualities occurs to a greater extent (e.g. he is taller than she is). Superlatives describe the noun that has the greatest magnitude of a quality (e.g. he is the tallest).  
**e.g.** *fluffy – fluffier – fluffiest, grateful – more grateful – most grateful*  
**e.g.** *Superlatives*, such as "that was the *most* fun I've ever had" (line 6) are employed to make the text more dramatic, having a hyperbolic effect that contributes to the text's entertainment value.

## Adverbs

Lexemes that modify verbs, adjectives, other adverbs, and sentences.

- **Circumstance adverbs:** modify verbs, giving details of circumstances such as manner, time, frequency, place, reason, and concession.
  - Adverb of manner: (how?)  
**e.g.** he slept *well*.
  - Adverb of time: (when?)  
**e.g.** go get it *now!* (a.k.a. temporal adverb)
  - Adverb of frequency: (how often?)  
**e.g.** I *sometimes* see her.
  - Adverb of place: (where?)  
**e.g.** I live *nearby*. I looked *everywhere*.
  - Adverb of reason: (why?)  
**e.g.** Bob, *tired of lies*, demanded answers.
  - Adverb of concession: (even though... what did she/he/it do?)  
**e.g.** *even though he has retired*, he is still seen working around here.
- **Degree adverbs (modifiers/intensifiers):** modify adjectives or adverbs.  
**e.g.** I am *very* disappointed. It is *really* good to see you!
- **Conjuncts:** adverbs that can be used to link sentences together.  
**e.g.** *Firstly*, I would like to say... but *most importantly*...
- **Disjuncts:** express speakers' or writers' attitudes.  
**e.g.** I could *perhaps* do it, but *surely* someone else could.
- **Comparatives** are formed using 'er' or 'more', while **superlatives** are formed using 'est' or 'most'.  
**e.g.** early – earlier – earliest, loudly – more loudly – most loudly.  
**e.g.** Speak *loudly*. She came the *earliest*.

## Pronouns

Used instead of nouns, noun phrases or noun clauses. 7 main types are:

- **Personal pronouns:** used in place of the actor (subject pronoun) or in place of the object (object pronoun).  
1<sup>st</sup> person – I, we  
2<sup>nd</sup> person – you  
3<sup>rd</sup> person – he/she/it, they  
**e.g.** Harry left → *He* left. Give the book to Sally → Give *it* to *her*.
- **Possessive pronouns:** used to show possession of something.  
1<sup>st</sup> person – mine, ours  
2<sup>nd</sup> person – yours  
3<sup>rd</sup> person – his/hers/its, theirs  
**e.g.** It is my book → It is *mine*. This is your book → This is *yours*.
- **Reflexive pronouns:** used when the actor (subject) is the same person receiving the action (object) in a sentence. Also used for emphasis.  
1<sup>st</sup> person – myself, ourselves  
2<sup>nd</sup> person – yourself, yourselves  
3<sup>rd</sup> person – himself/herself/itself, themselves  
**e.g.** I will do it *myself*. You *yourself* know how dangerous it is.
- **Demonstrative pronouns:** used to ‘point’ to the relationship between the speaker and a person or thing; have a ‘deictic’ function. There are only four demonstrative pronouns: this, these, that, those.  
**e.g.** I enjoyed *these* CDs. Can you grab *that* bag?
- **Interrogative pronouns:** used to ask questions. There are five types of interrogative pronouns: what, which, who, whom and whose.  
**e.g.** With *whom* were you speaking? *Who’s* that? *Whose* are these?
- **Relative pronouns:** directly follow the nouns they describe and introduce relative clauses. Five types: that, which, who, whom, and whose.  
**e.g.** The artwork *that* was hanging in the foyer was stolen.  
**e.g.** Bob, *who* lived nearby, went to my school.
- **Indefinite pronouns:** have a broader reference point than other pronouns.  
*‘Of’ pronouns* include *all of, both, neither of, each of* and *some of*.  
**e.g.** I want to eat *all of* the cake. I’ll take *some of* those cookies.  
*Compound pronouns* join *every-, no-, any-, some-* + *-body, -thing, -one*.  
**e.g.** Does *anybody* know first-aid? *Nobody* will ask me out to prom!

## Prepositions

Words that describe the relationship between elements in a sentence. They can describe place (at, on, by, opposite), direction (to, towards, past, through), comparison (as...as, like), time (at, before, in, on), source (from, out of), and purpose (for).

**e.g.** He went *into* (direction) the room, put his bag *on* (place) the table and took his lunch box *out of* (source) the bag.

**e.g.** I went *to* (direction) Woolies *for* (purpose) some milk *before* (time) going home.

## Conjunctions

Words that join other lexemes, phrases, or clauses together.

- **Co-ordinating conjunction:** joins lexical units of equal value (FANBOYS).  
**e.g.** We can watch a movie *or* we can go for a run.
- **Subordinating conjunction:** joins a subordinate clause to a main clause.  
**e.g.** *Although* I had a test, I stayed at home *because* I was sick.  
Note: here, the main clause is “*I stayed at home*” and the subordinate clauses are “*Although I had a test*” and “*because I was sick*”.  
The subordinate clauses cannot stand on their own, whereas the main clause can.

## Determiners

Words, such as articles, demonstratives, possessives, quantifiers and numbers, that provide clarification about a noun. Possessives, quantifiers, and numbers can also be described as adjectives.

- **Articles:** the definite article ‘the’ refers to something specific, while the indefinite articles ‘a’ and ‘an’ refer to something general.  
**e.g.** Look at *the* cat (specific cat). I want *a* cat (any cat).
- **Possessives:** used to suggest ownership (a.k.a. possessive adjective).  
These include: *my, your, his, her, its, our, their*.  
**e.g.** *their* house, *my* lunch, *your* coffee, *his* moustache

Note: do not confuse these with possessive pronouns (mine, hers, theirs).  
Possessive pronouns REPLACE a noun phrase (e.g. “that is my book” becomes “that is *mine*”), whereas possessive adjectives DESCRIBE the noun (e.g. *my* book).

- **Demonstratives:** communicate whether an object is close or distant. They 'point' to different nouns and have a deictic function.  
**e.g.** *this* topic is interesting; *those* apples; *that* book.
- **Quantifiers:** indicate the number of nouns to which reference is made.  
**e.g.** *every* adult, *several* children, *all* residents, *some* tea, a *few* pears.
- **Numbers:** both cardinal numbers (one, two, three...) and ordinal numbers (first, second, third...) that precede a noun are acting as determiners.  
**e.g.** *seven* turtles were seen for the *first* time; *second* place goes to Jack.

### Interjections

These are lexemes that express emotion and are capable of standing alone. Presence of interjections in writing personalises the piece and contributes to informal register.

**e.g.** *Wow!* Look! It's a dolphin! *Oh no!* I dropped my camera!

## Formation of words

New words are constantly created in order to keep up with technological advances and society's ever-changing needs.

### Neologism

A newly formed lexeme (also called 'coinage')

**e.g.** Neologisms, such as "*chillax*" and "*fleek*", coined by teenagers, are one way in which in-group solidarity is established amongst youth.

### Blending

Act of composing a word out of parts of different words.

**e.g.** guess + estimate = guesstimate; gigantic + enormous = ginormous

### Acronym

Pronounceable word formed from the first letters of a string of words.

**e.g.** *scuba* = Self-Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus

### Abbreviation/Initialism

When a string of words is shortened by pronouncing the first letters.

**e.g.** *RSPCA* – Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

**e.g.** *USB* – Universal Serial Bus

**e.g.** The presence of *jargonistic initialisms*, such as "ASX" (line 1) and "FX" (line 3), contribute to the formal register of the text and make it less accessible, since these *abbreviations* rely on readers' abilities to *infer*.

### Shortening

Act of dropping off one or more syllables from a word to create a shorter word with the same meaning.

**e.g.** perambulator → pram, telephone → phone, examination → exam

### Compounding

Process of combining two lexemes to create a new lexeme.

**e.g.** bed + room = bedroom; lunch + box = lunchbox

### Commonisation

The process whereby proper nouns become common nouns.

**e.g.** coke, esky, iPhone (to refer to all smartphones), biro

### Affixation

Adding bound morphemes to existing lexemes to create new ones, often changing their word class. Do not confuse with 'conversion' (see below)

**e.g.** couple → coupling → uncoupling (breaking up)

### Conversion

Act of changing a word into a different word class without the use of affixes.

**e.g.** Just *google* it if you don't know the answer.

- **Nominalisation** is a special type of conversion, where the lexeme (usually a verb) is turned into a noun, which may or may not require the use of affixes. It is a salient feature of formal language, since converting verbs to nouns removes the need for agents; this depersonalises the text, thus increasing social distance and making the text more abstract.

**e.g.** I like *wrapping* presents (verb) → the *wrapping* of presents is fun (noun).

### Borrowing

Act of using words from other languages.

**e.g.** pizza (Italy), kimono (Japan), shampoo (India)

# SYNTAX

## Form vs. Function

Form refers to the word class of a lexeme, while function refers to the role it fulfils. It is important to consider both form and function when analysing words because lexemes from one word class may actually perform the function of another word class.

**e.g.** "...one of the biggest *floating* book shops in the world".

*Floating* has the form of a verb, but the function of an adjective. It is unusual to associate *floating* with a book shop; thus, it attracts readers' attentions as a result of the novelty of its juxtaposition.

## Phrase

A single word or group of words that act together. It does not usually contain a finite verb. The **head word** is the main word of the phrase. Words that come before the head word and modify it in some way are called **pre-modifiers**. Words that provide extra information after the head word are called **post-modifiers** or **qualifiers**.

### Noun phrase

Usually begins with a determiner. Normally has a noun or pronoun as the head word. Can function as the subject, object, or complement in a clause.

**e.g.** *The beautiful sky of blue* (subject noun phrase; head word 'sky') rose above *the glimmering sea of green* (object noun phrase; head word 'sea').

Sometimes an adjective can be the head word in a noun phrase.

**e.g.** *The old* are often neglected (subject noun phrase).

### Adjective phrase (complement)

Adjective phrases contain a predicative adjective as the head word. Attributive adjectives do not form adjective phrases because their function is to modify the noun in a noun phrase.

**e.g.** I was *very glad to meet him* on that cold winter's day.  
(*very* – pre-modifier, *glad* – head word, *to meet him* – qualifier)

### Verb phrase

Generally has a main verb as its head word, and may have auxiliary verbs, modal verbs, adverbs, and/or prepositions.

**e.g.** I *should have watched* the film (modal + auxiliary + main verb).

**e.g.** I *gave away* my tickets (main verb + adverb).

**e.g.** I *looked at* the advertisement (main verb + preposition).

### Prepositional phrase

The head word is a preposition and is normally followed by a noun phrase. It adds extra information, so it can be omitted without changing the meaning. It often post-modifies or qualifies another phrase.

**e.g.** Julia saw the boys *from the town*.  
(*from* – preposition, *the town* – noun phrase)

### Adverb phrase

An adverb is the head word. It adds extra information, so does not have to be included for the sentence to make sense.

**e.g.** I visit the museum *quite regularly* (adverb + adverb)

## Clauses

These are the main structures used to compose sentences. Sentences will be composed of at least one **main clause** (a clause that makes sense on its own and is independent); it may also contain one or more **subordinate clauses** (clauses that cannot stand alone and are dependent on main clauses).

### Finite clause

Contains a verb that is marked for tense, number, and person.

**e.g.** She *eats*. They *eat*. (finite verb inflected for number)

### Non-finite clause

Contains a non-finite verb; i.e. a present participle, past participle or an infinitive.

**e.g.** We *are going to visit* Russia next year ('be going' + infinitive 'to visit')

## Parts of clauses include:

### Subject

The person or thing carrying out the action (the actor).

**e.g.** *She* baked brownies. (Subject is a pronoun.)

**e.g.** *What I look forward to* is graduating high school. (Subject is a clause.)

### Object

Something that is affected by the verb.

- **Direct object:** the thing being acted upon by the verb.

Answers the question, “Who or what is affected?”

**e.g.** Sally gave *a present*. Harry played *the guitar*.

- **Indirect object:** tells to whom or for whom the action was done. If it precedes the direct object, you can check if it is the indirect object by placing it after the direct object and putting *to* before it.

**e.g.** Sally gave *her friend* a present. Sally gave a present *to her friend*.

Here, ‘a present’ is the *direct* object, while ‘her friend’ is the *indirect* object.

### Complement

Gives extra information about the subject or object. The complement can be an adjective phrase, a noun phrase, a pronoun, a numeral, or a clause.

**e.g.** The music was *superb* (adjective phrase).

**e.g.** The dress was *a bargain* (noun phrase).

**e.g.** That cup is *his* (pronoun).

**e.g.** The old man was *eighty* (numeral).

**e.g.** This street is *where the brawl took place* (clause).

### Adverbial

Provides information about time, manner and place. Adverbials can be found by asking questions like *how?*, *when?*, *where?* and *how often?*

**e.g.** He went to the city [*by train*] [*last week*]. (how, when)

## Predicate

Part of the sentence or clause that tells us what the subject does. In other words, the predicate is everything excluding the subject noun phrase.

**e.g.** Someone *stole my bike last week*.

**e.g.** The man from the shop *is a monster*.

## Sentence

A construction that makes sense on its own. It starts with a capital letter and ends with a full stop, exclamation mark, or question mark.

### Sentence structures

These refer to the grammatical construction of the sentence.

- **Simple:** contains just one clause (main clause) and one finite verb.  
**e.g.** *The young boy kicked the football into the goal.*  
Can suggest an innocence or naivety of style, reminiscent of a child.  
**e.g.** *I used to have a friend. His name was Fred. He was my best friend.*
- **Compound:** contains two or more main clauses linked by co-ordinating conjunctions (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so). To avoid repetition of the subject, ellipsis (omission of words) or substitution is used (pronoun replaces the noun or noun phrase).  
**e.g.** *The girl weeded the garden and [the girl] swept up the leaves.*  
**e.g.** *My brother went to school, but I stayed home.*
- **Complex:** consists of a main clause and one or more subordinate clauses.  
**e.g.** *Because I left late, I missed the train.*
- **Compound-complex:** consists of two main clauses and one or more subordinate clauses.  
**e.g.** *The lorry left [main clause] when it had been loaded [subordinate clause] and returned [main clause] after it had delivered its load [subordinate clause].*
- **Sentence fragment (minor sentence):** lacks essential clause elements. Often used in posters, advertisements, and slogans for emphasis and impact, and in speech and netspeak for economy of expression.  
**e.g.** *Nearly there. Congratulations! Wish you were here.*

## Sentence types

These refer to function of the sentence.

- **Declarative sentence:** refers to statements. Identifiable by checking that the main clause begins with a subject and is followed by a verb. Has an informative/descriptive function.  
**e.g.** The article features many declarative sentence types, including *“The musical will be at the Regent Theatre until June 5”* (line 60), which enable information to be conveyed, thus achieving the text’s primary purpose.
- **Imperative sentence:** refers to commands or orders. Identifiable by checking that the subject is omitted and seeing if the sentence begins with a verb in the base form.  
**e.g.** Imperatives, such as *“Collect your free beauty sample today!”* (line 20), are used to call readers to action, helping fulfil the discourse’s primary purpose, which is to generate new clients.

Sometimes a **vocative** is used – words used to name people or refer to people in order to gain their attention or to address them.

**e.g.** *Billy*, help yourself to the food.

**e.g.** *Waiter*, come here!

- **Interrogative sentence:** refers to questions.  
**e.g.** Interrogatives, including *“Did you have a good time at the party?”* (line 2), are used to invite the other interlocutor to seize the floor and share their experiences, thus aiding rapport-building between the two acquaintances.
- **Exclamative sentence:** refers to an utterance said with lots of emotion.  
**e.g.** The presence of exclamative sentence types, such as *“That’s terrific!”* (line 5), contributes to the informal register of the text, as well as enabling X to express his excitement and approval, thereby building rapport between the two interlocutors.

## Coordination

The joining of two or more main clauses that are equal in function and status. This is done with coordinating conjunctions: *for, and, nor, but, or, yet* and *so*. You can remember these with the acronym, FANBOYS.

**e.g.** *Jamie bought an icecream and Tommy bought a Freddo.*

### Subordination

The combination of clauses that are syntactically non-equivalent. That is, the combination of a main clause with a subordinate (dependent) clause that cannot stand by itself. This is done with subordinating conjunctions (*although, because, while, however, therefore*) or relative pronouns (*that, which, who, whom, whose*). Subordination is especially prevalent in formal discourses, since they enable more detail to be conveyed, and create more sophisticated complex sentences.

**e.g.** *Although* I was sick, I still went to school.

### Ellipsis

Refers to the omission of clause elements because they appear elsewhere, or can be inferred from the context. Ellipsis is frequently observed in both informal and formal discourses; it enables repetition to be avoided, thus contributing to an economy of expression, and making the text more interesting.

**e.g.** [I will] *See you at six!*

Here, the “I will” is ellipited because the subject is redundant; it can be inferred from the context that the subject is “I” – the person uttering the exclamative.

**e.g.** *I washed the dishes and [I] swept the floor.*

Here, the subject “I” in the second main clause is ellipited to avoid repetition.

### Nominalisation

The process of turning verbs into nouns. Removing verbs removes the need for agents (who ‘perform’ verbs) – this depersonalises the text and makes it more abstract, thus creating a formal register. It is often used when creating passive sentences, allowing writers and speakers to be non-committal about who is doing what to whom. This is handy when the identity of the agent is unknown, or when we want to deliberately conceal them (for instance, to avoid blame).

**e.g.** *The PM decided to close schools* [active sentence]

→ *A decision was made to close schools* [passive sentence & nominalisation]

The use of the nominalisation “*decision*” in the passive construction “*A decision was made...*” (line 3) removes the need for and conceals the identity of the agent, the “PM”, thereby removing his liability for the school closure.

## Active vs. Passive Voice (inc. Agentless Passives)

**Active voice** is the most common grammatical voice, where the agent carrying out the action is the subject, and the patient receiving the action is the direct object.

To create the **passive voice**, the patient is promoted to a subject, while the agent is demoted to a relative clause (a clause usually beginning with *by...*), or is left out altogether (creating an agentless passive construction).

The active verb is replaced by a verb in the passive form: *to be + past participle*  
OR *have + to be + past participle*.

**e.g.** Active: *I will not tolerate rudeness in the classroom.*

**e.g.** Passive: *Rudeness will not be tolerated by me in the classroom.*

**e.g.** Agentless passive: *Rudeness will not be tolerated in the classroom.*

The agentless passive enables the agent, the person or object responsible for the action, to be omitted. This is often exploited by politicians and companies, who try to avoid any mention of their accountability for an unpopular action. In agentless passive constructions, patients and actions are given focus due to being fronted.

**e.g.** Passive: *The beds were made by the boys, while the food was prepared and cooked by the girls.* (Focus is placed on boys and girls; this is useful if we are aiming to contrast their roles.)

**e.g.** Agentless passive: *The beds were made, while the food was prepared and cooked.* (Focus is placed on events; there's no mention of agents, so no one can be held accountable for the events.)

The passive voice also gives an air of authority to a text; it can suggest that the content is beyond debate, and can make spurious claims appear undisputable.

**e.g.** Active: *We found that 93% of the iron contained in eggs is in the yolk.* (Here, the agent "we" is doing the action of finding the iron content; however, this personalises the sentence and can cause people to question the reliability of the researchers' findings, because all humans inevitably make errors.)

**e.g.** Agentless passive: *It was found that 93% of the iron contained in eggs is in the yolk.* (Here, there is no mention of who found the data. A sense of detached objectivity is created through the lack of an agent, making the sentence seem more clinical and lacking human error. This makes the data appear more concrete and undisputable.)

## Syntactic patterning in texts

### Parallelism

The use of similar sounds, words, or grammatical constructions to create a sense of balance and rhythm, which aids fluency. It also enables a development of ideas, leading to a climax where the most important point is revealed.

Often, the structure is repeated three times – this is known as a **three-part list**, or a **trptych**.

**e.g.** Alice ran *into* the room, *into* the garden, and *into* our hearts.

**e.g.** “*I believe* you are special. *I believe* I understand special. And *I believe* that, after everything you’ve been through, to then stand up there, is so inspiring.” – Delta Goodrem, The Voice Australia Season 2 (2013)

### Antithesis

A type of parallelism which involves the juxtaposition of contrasting phrases. That is, it is the use of similarly structured phrases that contain opposing ideas. This draws attention to the contrast by juxtaposing antithetical words and phrases.

**e.g.** “*It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness.*” (Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*)

### Parenthesis

The use of brackets, dashes, or commas to mark out an optional element of a sentence. Parenthesis can be used for humour, to communicate the speaker’s or writer’s thoughts, or to provide clarification.

**e.g.** He finally answered (*after taking five minutes to think*) that he would have rice with his chicken, not macaroni.

### Listing

Involves drawing out a list of items, which has an accumulative effect that creates a sense of chaos, confusion, logic, or reason, depending on the context. It may lead to a climax, or defy expectations by revealing an anti-climax. The list is **syndetic** if coordinating conjunctions are used, and **asyndetic** if commas are employed.

**e.g.** The use of syndetic listing in “*We had scones and muffins and jams and fruits and sandwiches and biscuits and teas and quiches and pastries and everything else that was required for the perfect traditional English high-tea*” (lines 2-5) has an accumulative effect which creates a sense of abundance and indulgence.

# DISCOURSE

## Coherence

Coherence refers to the **semantic** connections that exist within a text to make it meaningful. If a text is coherent, it makes sense and is logical.

A tip for remembering the definition of coherence is that a coheRent text is Rational.

### Implicature/Inference

Writers/speakers may assume readers/listeners have prior knowledge on a topic so use **implicature**; that is, they make a reference to something and assume the reader will understand what they mean from the context and using their previous knowledge. **Inference** is the reader's/listener's ability to make a connection between what was said/written and what was meant. A reader's or listener's ability to infer is a factor that contributes to a text's coherence.

**e.g.** Tom: "*There's someone at the door.*"

Mary: "*I'm in the shower.*"

(Mary implies that she cannot get the door. Tom goes to the door because he has inferred that Mary cannot. If Tom had not been able to infer, the dialogue would have been incoherent and a break-down in the flow would have occurred.)

### Logical ordering

A reasonable or sensible way of sequencing elements. For instance, if telling a story, you would start with the first event, then the second event and so on.

**e.g.** The *logical ordering* of a fictional story would be: introduction, hook/lead, rising action, climax, and resolution.

**e.g.** The *logical ordering of the discourse* is a factor that contributes to its coherence. The text begins with an overview of the subject, then progresses to explain some concepts in detail, and finishes with a summary.

### Formatting

Refers to how the text is set out. For instance, it would be poor formatting to have titles and subheadings in a smaller font than running text.

**e.g.** Having the instructions set out in numerical steps is an *effective formatting technique* that contributes to the text's coherence, aiding readers in following the procedure.

**e.g.** The use of a *diagram aids the coherence* of the text by providing readers with a visualisation of the instructions given.

**e.g.** The use of *subtitles* within the report formats information into categories, contributing to the text's coherence and helping *orient* readers in the text.

### Conventions

Refer to the standards or rules that you expect a discourse to follow. For instance, you expect recipes to have a list of ingredients, followed by a method. Similarly, you expect someone who picks up a phone-call to answer with a greeting. If conventions were not followed, you would feel confused; in other words, the text would be incoherent.

**e.g.** One way in which the discourse achieves coherence is through the use of *conventions* that are typical of a letter. The text begins with a *salutation* ("*Dear Madam*" – *line 1*), followed by well-structured paragraphs, and ends with a *formulaic closing* from the writer ("*Kind regards, Mr B. Smith*" – *line 60*).

### Consistency

Refers to formatting and conventions being used in a reasonably predictable manner, so that features are not inserted in such a way that they interrupt information flow or appear illogical. It also involves using the same style of writing, tone, and register throughout the discourse.

**e.g.** It would be expected that all the recipes in a particular book would be written in the *same format*, using the *same conventions*, in order to maintain *consistency*.

## Cohesion

Cohesion refers to linguistic connections that exist between words and sentences to give structure to a text. A cohesive text flows well and follows grammatical rules.

A tip for remembering the definition of cohesion is to remember that a cohesive text is adhesive – it sticks together well!

### Information-flow

Refers to how information is sequenced in a sentence. It is customary to place given (known/old) information before new information. Given information is often replaced with pronouns or ellipsed to avoid repeating details that the reader/listener is already aware of.

**e.g.** The star pupil of the class is Harry. *He* received straight A's last semester. (The pupil has already been identified as Harry, so in the second sentence he is referred to using the 3rd-person pronoun 'he', which is placed at the start of the sentence where given information is placed. The details about his report is new information, so are placed at the end of the sentence, lending them end-focus.)

### Principle of end-weight

This is the tendency for syntactically complex constituents (i.e. with many modifiers) to be placed late in a sentence. This arrangement may delay mention of the subject, which builds up suspense. If principle of end-weight is not followed, sentences may become clumsy and difficult to process, thus hindering cohesion.

**e.g.** End-weight: In rushed *two doctors, completely smothered in blood, awkwardly carrying a third person, who appeared to be unconscious*. (Although the usual sentence structure in English is subject-verb-object/complement, the principle of end-weight is adhered to in this sentence because the subject here is a long, syntactically complex noun phrase, which is more easily comprehended if placed at the end of the sentence.)

**e.g.** No end-weight: *Three doctors, completely smothered in blood, with two of awkwardly carrying a third person, who appeared to be unconscious*, rushed in. (This sentence is clumsy and does not flow well because the long noun phrase is fronted, delaying mention of the verb.)

### There-construction (a.k.a. existential 'there'; existential sentence)

This is a sentence in which the lexeme 'there' takes on the role of an empty/dummy subject at the start of the sentence, followed by new information. This construction allows new information with a higher communicative value to be conventionally placed at the end of a sentence by putting 'there' – an empty/dummy subject, which carries no meaning itself – at the beginning of the sentence.

**e.g.** "Then she unveiled her present to him. *There were* several chocolates, some stationery, a book and, to his bewilderment, a genuine, autographed cricket ball."

(The contents of the gift is new information. By employing a there-construction, we are able to place this new information in its rightful position in a sentence.)

### Clefting

Involves 'cleaving' (dividing) a sentence into two clauses to shift the focus of interest. The first clause is introduced by a 'dummy subject' like 'it', followed by the focused constituent. The rest of the sentence is recast as a relative clause (clause beginning with *that, which, who, whose, or whom*).

**e.g.** Maggie broke the lamp → *It was Maggie who broke the lamp.*

**e.g.** Use of the clefted construction, "*It was Maggie who broke the lamp*" (line 2), serves to lend more prominence to the agent, Maggie, by delaying her mention. This focuses the reader's attention on the most important sentence constituent, Maggie, thus aiding cohesion.

### End-focus (back-focus)

This is a way of lending prominence to information by placing the most important sentence constituents at the end of a clause/sentence. End-focus is a typical characteristic of English sentence structure, since new information is usually placed at the end of a sentence.

**e.g.** *The prize went to Robert.*

Often the longest clause elements are placed at the end of a sentence for easier comprehension and to aid fluidity (see also: *principle of end weight*).

**e.g.** I gave directions *to the tall, slim and undoubtedly striking blonde woman.*

### Front-focus

This involves placing constituents that are usually at the end of a sentence at the front. The atypical sentence structure draws attention to and places emphasis on the front of the sentence. Often, adverbials are moved to the front, serving to contextualise (provide information about time, place, or manner) the information that follows. Objects and complements can also be fronted to lend these sentence constituents more prominence.

**e.g.** Normal: He felt normal for once in his life.

Fronted adverbial: *For once in his life*, he felt normal.

(The fronting of the adverbial, “*For once in his life*”, serves to draw emphasis to the rarity and importance of this event, as well as to contextualise the proceeding information as having occurred for the first time.)

**e.g.** Normal: The garden was forlorn after years of neglect.

Fronted complement: *Forlorn* was the garden after years of neglect.

(Fronting is used by the author in line X, where the fronted complement ‘*forlorn*’ receives emphasis, thereby underscoring the pitiful state of the garden.)

### Anaphoric reference

An expression that refers back to something that was previously mentioned (the antecedent). The antecedent is necessary for the expression to make sense. This aids cohesion because it creates a link between clauses or sentences through the mutual referent (antecedent).

**e.g.** Use of the 3<sup>rd</sup>-person pronoun ‘*he*’ to make an anaphoric reference back to George in “*George* broke the car window... *He* was later fined” (lines 3-5), creates a semantic link between the two sentences through the mutual referent, George, thus contributing to cohesion.

### Cataphoric reference

An expression that refers forward to another expression following it. This is often used to build up suspense by delaying mention of the referent.

**e.g.** Use of cataphoric referencing, such as “*This was the life* – lying in the sun on a deserted island with my soul-mate” (lines 3-4), serves to build anticipation, which increases the entertainment value of the narrative.

e.g. Cataphoric referencing is used in lines 5-6, “He’s sweet, he’s strong, he’s handsome, he’s none other than... Channing Tatum!”, where the 2<sup>nd</sup>-person personal pronoun ‘*he*’ is used to delay mention of the referent, ‘Channing Tatum’, thus building suspense as the audience awaits who shall enter the stage.

### Deictic expression (exophoric reference)

An expression that refers to something beyond the text, something in the actual environment where the discourse takes place. A gesture (paralinguistic cue) and a context is necessary for the expression to make sense. It aids cohesion because connections are made between the discourse and the setting.

**e.g.** Given the program is broadcast on television, where it is accompanied with visual cues, the cohesive device of deixis is frequently used (“I used to be *this* tall” – line 3, “over *there*” – line 4), requiring viewers to make inferences and process paralinguistic cues to comprehend the full meaning of the discourse.

### Left/Right dislocation

This involves moving a phrase to the extreme left or extreme right of a sentence and separating it with an intonation break (comma), which makes it stand out even more. Unlike fronting, the grammatical functions of lexemes do not change when dislocated. Being a feature of non-standard English, dislocation is a typical feature of informal language, but not formal language.

**e.g.** Normal word order: Those cats are adorable little things.

In the dislocated sentence, a pronoun replaces the original position of the dislocated constituent. The pronoun acts as an anaphoric reference in left dislocation, and a cataphoric reference in right dislocation.

**e.g.** Left dislocation: *Those cats*, they’re adorable little things.

**e.g.** Right dislocation: They’re adorable little things, *those cats*.

### Repetition

Repetition of lexemes reinforces the subject matter of the discourse and lends the text unity by using the same referents.

**e.g.** Repetition of subject-specific lexis, such as “*pollution*” (lines 1,3,5), “*global warming*” (lines 2,6,7) and “*carbon dioxide*” (lines 4,8), reinforces the subject matter at hand, and aids cohesion by linking various parts of the texts where the same referent is used.

### Synonymy

This refers to the use of different, but similar words for the same referent.

**e.g.** Use of the synonyms ‘child’ and ‘student’ in “The smart *child* amazed his teachers... The *student* was subsequently offered...” (lines 4,8) aids cohesion by linking these two sentences through mention of the same referent.

### Antonymy

This involves using lexemes with opposite meanings, which helps with clarification and aids readers in making sense of the passage, especially if they do not understand the meaning of one lexeme provided.

**e.g.** Cohesion is achieved through the use of antonymy, such as ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ in, “The avocado must be *soft*, not *hard*” (line 4), which helps reinforce the message by using semantically contrasting complements.

### Superordinates vs. Hyponyms (See also below: *Substitution*)

Superordinates (also known as ‘hypernyms’) are lexemes used to describe a general category, while hyponyms are members of the general category (they are more specific). Superordinates and hyponyms can be used alternatively for the same referent, which is a way of linking clauses and sentences.

Co-hyponyms are hyponyms that belong to the same superordinate/hypernym.

**e.g.** superordinate: *dog*

**e.g.** hyponyms: *husky, collie, Labrador, poodle*

**e.g.** The alternating use of the hyponym ‘poodle’ and its superordinate ‘dog’ in the text (“I took my neighbour’s *poodle* out for a walk... All of a sudden, the *dog* started barking like mad!” lines 4-7) contributes to the cohesion of the text by linking various sentences where the same referent is featured.

### Collocations

Phrases or pairs of words that frequently appear together. Cohesion is achieved because a lexemes that frequently relate to one another are used.

**e.g.** Collocation is a source of lexical cohesion in the text. For instance, in line 3 (“The old man was smoking his pipe”), ‘smoking’ collocates with ‘pipe’, which, therefore, makes the occurrence of pipe cohesive.

### Cliches/platitudes

A stereotyped expression that expresses a common thought or opinion; a phrase or sentence that has become unoriginal due to overuse. They become clichés due to their usefulness. A cliché can convey a complex idea in a few words, and ensure understanding on the part of the listener. Clichés serve as shortcuts.. An entirely original and unique language is impossible, because it would be incomprehensible to everyone but the person making it up, and would communicate nothing. So, although clichés are often disparaged, they do serve as effective communicative tools because they are known by everyone.

**e.g.** *only time will tell, in the nick of time, lost track of time, frightened to death, read between the lines, run like the wind*

**e.g.** The use of the platitudes “*loved ones*” (line 5), “*over the moon*” (line 6) and “*gone with the wind*” (line 7) aid semantic cohesion, as meaning is conveyed through well-known, easily-recognised sayings.

### Ellipsis

Involves omitting elements of a clause or sentence to avoid repetition of known information, or to link sentences or clauses by referring to known information in other sentences or clauses.

**e.g.** The ellipsis of the subject ‘the flowers’ in the second main clause in “The *flowers* were bright and yellow and [*the flowers*] stretched for miles” (lines 4-5) avoids repetition, thus contributing to the economy of expression, as well as aiding cohesion by linking the second main clause to the subject of the first main clause.

### Substitution

Involves replacing an element in a clause or sentence with another one. This is a type of linking technique that relates sentences to one another.

- **Noun phrases** can be replaced with **pronouns**.  
**e.g.** *James* loves trains, so *he* collects them.

Similarly, **superordinates and hyponyms** can be used as substitutions.

**e.g.** Tod met a *husky* the other day. From the way Tod shrieked when he saw him, you could tell that he was afraid of the *dog*.

- **Verb phrases** can be replaced with an **auxiliary verb**.  
**e.g.** Mandy *likes swimming* and Harry *does* too.
- **Clauses** can be replaced with ‘**so**’.  
**e.g.** Q: “Is it going to be sunny today?” A: “I don’t think *so*.”

### Conjunctions (See also: *Lexicology*)

Joining words that provide links within sentences or between sentences.

**e.g.** *and* (additive), *yet* (adversative), *because* (causal), *while* (temporal).

### Linking adverbs (adverbials)

This is an umbrella term for a variety of lexemes or phrases that link clauses/sentences together and aid fluency. They contribute to cohesion by making reference to the time in which a clause occurs, manner in which it happens, the place it occurs, or the relationship between clauses.

- **Temporal adverbials** create a time link between clauses/sentences.  
*e.g. before, after that, at once, meanwhile, on Monday morning*
- **Manner/degree adverbials** describe how and to what extent something in the following clause occurs.  
*e.g. slowly, with great difficulty, with the grace of a swan*
- **Spatial adverbials** link a clause to a place or setting.  
*e.g. in the garden, north-west of here, on top of the shelf, in Spain*
- **Additive adverbials** add extra information.  
*e.g. furthermore, besides, incidentally, in addition, moreover*
- **Adversative adverbials** help create contrast between the previous and coming clause/sentence.  
*e.g. however, nevertheless, in contrast*
- **Causal adverbials** link clauses by suggesting one is the result of another.  
*e.g. therefore, as a result, thus, hence, consequently, owing to this fact*

**e.g.** The use of the adversative adverbials, such as “however” (line 3,6), and additive adverbials, such as “similarly” (lines 7,8), lend the text cohesion by describing how sentences contrast or complement each other, respectively. Temporal adverbials, including “meanwhile” (line 1) and “while you’re over there” (line 2), also aid cohesion by contextualising the proceeding information and describing how various parts of the text relate to each other time-wise.

## Features of spoken discourse

### Pauses and pause fillers

Pauses are short moments with no speech. They may be present to allow time for a speaker to think of what to say next; in this case, pause fillers are often used to indicate the floor is still being held (*um, hm, err*). Pauses may also be intentional; they can be used for emphasis, or to allow listeners to consider an idea or statement.

**e.g.** Owing to the informal, spontaneous nature of the discourse, non-fluency features such as pause fillers (“I, *ahh*, put the meat on the stove with some onions, carrot, and, *umm*, mushrooms” – line 2) are evident and allow the interlocutor to maintain the floor while recalling how they prepared the meal.

**e.g.** The use of emphatic pauses, such as in line 2, “Every second, a child dies from famine... This has to stop... Now”, serves to alert listeners’ attention to important lexeme ‘now’ to underscore the urgency of the issue, to highlight the gravity of the situation, and to provide listeners with a moment to reflect upon the significance of the received information.

### False starts and repairs

This refers to when a speaker begins talking, makes a mistake, recognises this, and repeats what they wanted to say correctly. Often the editing term “*I mean*” is used, but is not essential. We often make false starts and repairs without even recognising it, and they often go unnoticed when we listen to others speak too. When this non-fluency feature is present in spoken discourse, it demonstrates the spontaneous, unscripted nature of the speech, where there is little time for interlocutors to recall facts and construct grammatically correct statements.

**e.g.** *Carly- no, I mean, Sue sorted out the payments.*

**e.g.** *Where ah, when did you want to go?*

### Repetition

Involves saying things again for emphasis, or as a reminder to listeners. It can also be used as a device for seizing the floor.

**e.g.** Repetition, such as in “*So I put it in the oven as usual, and it suddenly went BOOM... Yeah, all I did was put it in the stove and it went BOOM*” (line 4-5), ensures cohesion is achieved by repeating the main point of the story and providing clarification; it also contributes to the story’s entertainment value by placing emphasis on the climatic part of the recount.

**e.g.** Repetition is employed by the teacher in line 6, “So (...) so (.) so as I was saying before...” as a way of signalling to the class of chatting students that he would like to seize the floor again.

### Adjacency pairs

These refer to ritualistic or formulaic clauses or sentences that are conventionally used. They involve set questions and replies that each speaker takes turns in using. They help with the general ebb and flow of the conversation, providing speakers with an arsenal of well-known expressions that get a conversation rolling smoothly.

**e.g.** Opening: A: “*Hey, how are you?*”  
B: “*Oh hey! I’m go=od, how about you?*”  
A: “*Yeah, not bad.*”

**e.g.** Closing: A: “*Well I must be off.*”  
B: “*Oh, it was so good to see you!*”  
A: “*Yeah, likewise! Let’s meet up some time.*”  
B: “*Definitely, see you!*”  
A: “*See ya!*”

**e.g.** The interlocutors demonstrate cooperative turn-taking, exemplified by their appropriate use of and response to conventional adjacency pairs. For instance, in line 3, Tony says “*G’day, how are ya?*” to John, who replies appropriately with “*Not bad, mate, yourself?*” in line 4, thus facilitating a smooth conversation.

### Overlapping speech

When two interlocutors say something at the same time. Even though it is often considered rude to interrupt, overlapping speech may be cooperative. For example, a speaker may help another speaker complete the sentence.

**e.g.** A: “*Yeah, and I just felt as if I was being... [used] yeah, or [something].*”  
B: [cheated] [mm]

**e.g.** Bianca demonstrates that she is a cooperative interlocutor by providing minimal responses, such as ‘*mm*’ (line 2), when Amy speaks. Likewise, cooperative overlapping speech is evident in line 2 (“[used][cheated]”), where Bianca aids her friend’s fluidity by helping her finish her sentence.

### Interrogative tags

These are reduced questions that are tacked on to the end of a declarative sentence. They may indicate that the speaker is hesitant, and is seeking confirmation; alternatively, they may be used to invite the other interlocutor to seize the floor. By inviting participation, the other speaker's positive face needs are met; thus, use of tag interrogatives helps build rapport.

**e.g.** Use of the interrogative tag, 'isn't she?', in line 2 by Bob ("Amy is coming to the party, *isn't she?*") invites Ron to seize the floor and provide affirmation.

### Discourse particles

These are often seen as 'meaningless' expressions, but actually play many crucial roles in conversation.

- **Hedging** is used when a speaker is not sure about what they're saying, and wish to be non-committal about their words. Hedgers, such as *like*, *kinda*, and *sorta*, are helpful when speakers wish to ask a favour of someone else, but do not wish to affront their negative face needs, because they convey uncertainty and indirectness.

**e.g.** Oh, it was *something like* 5 bucks.

**e.g.** Would it be okay if I, *like, maybe* borrowed your book, please?

- **Emphasis** is used to draw attention to a specific lexeme.

**e.g.** He's *like sooo* smart.

**e.g.** That was *like* awesome!

- **Quotative** discourse particles are used to introduce **direct speech**.

**e.g.** And he *goes*, "What the hell are you doing?"

**e.g.** And I'm *like*, "Well, what do you want from me?"

- **Reaction:** used to describe how someone responds (not what they say).

**e.g.** And he was *like* all in my face and angry and stuff.

**e.g.** Malcolm's use of the hedging discourse marker 'like' in "*Joe's, like, 18 years old*" (line 8), indicates lack of certainty as to how old Joe really is. In addition, the discourse particles "yeah-no" and "sorta" are used in line 15 ("*Yeah-no, I actually sorta think that it'd be better if we stayed home*") as a way of softening the disagreement, thereby appealing to the other interlocutor's negative face needs.

### Topic management

Involves the initiation of topics, topic development and topic change. Gender, age, status, expertise, and personality influence who has more power when it comes to topic management. Topic management is important to ensure a smooth and coherent conversation, in which each speaker builds on what has been previously said.

**e.g.** Owing to the fact that Victor is the host of the show, he acts as the topic manager, posing interrogatives (“So what’ve you been working on recently?” line 2), and using vocatives (“*Ben*, tell us about...” line 5) to invite others to seize the floor, ensuring the chance of overlap is kept to a minimum, thus contributing to the show’s entertainment value.

### Seizing, holding and relinquishing the floor

An interlocutor may seize the floor, given that another interlocutor is not speaking at the time. Openers may be used to grab the attention of listeners and to indicate that the speaker would like an extended turn. Once the floor is seized, a speaker may indicate that they would like to hold the floor by using pause fillers during short pauses to stop others from interrupting, or by outlining from the start that they have a set number of points to get through. A speaker can indicate that they are ready to relinquish the floor by using a falling intonation (↘), or by inviting others to participate through interrogatives or vocatives.

**e.g.** Openers: *Hey, listen to this.*

*Did you hear about...*

*I'd like to address three key points...*

**e.g.** Holders: *Oh, and also... and then... umm... then... so... but...*

### Minimal responses (back-channelling)

These are short sounds that indicate to the speaker that you are listening. Using them demonstrates that you are a cooperative interlocutor, and helps you build rapport with the other speaker by appealing to their positive face needs – their desire to be respected, valued, and heard.

**e.g.** Mandy appeals to Felicia’s positive face needs by providing reassurance that she is listening through back-channelling: “*mm*” (2,3), “*yes*” (4,6), “*definitely*” (9, 14).

# SEMANTICS

## Semantic field

A specific area of meaning that a set of words or discourse belongs to.

**e.g.** *Horrific, terrible, and awful* all belong to the semantic field of *bad* because they all share a similar meaning.

## Semantic patterning in texts

This refers to the creative ways meaning is conveyed in texts.

### Irony

Language that expresses incongruity (inconsistency) between what might be expected and what actually occurs.

- **Verbal irony:** when someone intentionally says something that is meant to be understood differently to what they actually said.  
**e.g.** *“Great! Thanks for the parking ticket, officer!”*  
**e.g.** The speaker’s use of irony, such as “I never use clichés. I avoid them like the plague” in line 2, contributes to the speech’s humorous style and helps it achieve its primary purpose, which is to entertain.
- **Dramatic irony:** occurs when the audience is aware of something that the character is not aware of.  
**e.g.** The use of dramatic irony in the film, where the detective investigating the case is unaware that the person responsible for the murder is his wife, contributes to its entertainment value.
- **Situational irony:** occurs when the exact opposite of what is meant to happen, happens.  
**e.g.** It is ironic that the Titanic, the ‘unsinkable ship’, sank on its first voyage.

### Metaphor

The use of a phrase or word to describe something that it isn’t. By describing one thing in terms of another, an implicit comparison is made.

**e.g.** *She is a witch. The snow is a white blanket. He is a shining star.*

**e.g.** The author uses metaphor, such as “This room is a dump” (line 2), to help provide a description of the room, which is unknown to readers, by likening it to the qualities of a well-known thing. Thus, readers conjure an image of the room being filthy, disgusting and unpleasant, much like a dump, which helps the text achieve its primary purpose, which is to convey a descriptive story.

### Oxymoron

When two apparently contradictory words are placed together for special effect.

**e.g.** *delicious poison, honest thief, brutal love, innocent lie, bitter-sweet*

**e.g.** The use of the oxymoron ‘delicious poison’ in line 3, in which two apparently contradicting lexemes are placed together, helps to grasp the reader’s attention and direct their attention towards the poison.

### Hyperbole

Persuasive exaggeration that creates a comical or less-than-serious tone.

**e.g.** *I’m so hungry I could eat a horse.*

**e.g.** Given the primary function of the television programme is to entertain, hyperbole is often used for comical effect: *“I swear, I actually shat my pants when you jumped out like that”* (line 5).

### Litote (understatement)

An understatement in which something is expressed (often something bad) by negating its opposite (negating something good).

**e.g.** *this is no small task*

**e.g.** *he doesn’t have what we call an exemplary record* (euphemism).

**e.g.** Owing to the gravity of the subject matter, euphemistic litotes, such as *“your son is not performing at his peak”* (line 2), are employed to lessen the acuteness of the situation and to promote composure, rather than incite alarm.

### Simile

An explicit comparison of two things using ‘as... as’ or ‘like’.

**e.g.** *She was as white as a sheet. He is fast like the wind.*

**e.g.** The writer uses simile (“as soft as a baby’s bum” – line 7) to draw a comparison between the pillow and the known soft qualities of a baby’s bottom, thus helping to describe the pillow to the audience.

### Personification (animation)

Involves giving objects or ideas human-like qualities. This makes a text more dynamic and vivid, thus contributing to its entertainment value.

**e.g.** *the wind whispered, the kettle screamed, the leaves danced*

**e.g.** Personification, such as “*the TV hummed*” (line 5) and “*the machines moaned*” (line 6), brings the text to life, helping to describe the action or movement of inanimate objects by relating them to human behaviour.

### Pun

A play on words. They often utilise **homonyms** (words with same sound and spelling, but different meanings) and **homophones** (words with the same sound, but different spellings and meanings).

**e.g.** *Thief is court out. Santa’s helpers are known as subordinate clauses.*

**e.g.** The author of the newspaper article uses a pun for the heading (“Thief court out” – line 1), which attracts the attention of readers and encourages them to continue reading.

### Metonymy

When an item the referent is closely associated with is used to name the referent. Unlike a synecdoche, a metonym does not have to be a part of the referent.

**e.g.** *a ride* refers to a *car*: “*That’s a nice ride you have there.*”

**e.g.** *chompers* refer to *teeth*: “*You’ve got a nice set of chompers!*”

**e.g.** Coherence is achieved through the interlocutors’ abilities to infer; for instance, when Gary uses the metonym ‘hand’ in “Lend me a hand” (line 11), the other participants infer that he is referring to help, and eagerly offer their services (“Of course, what’s the matter?” – line 12).

### Synecdoche

Where a part of something is used to represent the entire whole.

**e.g.** *wheels* refer to a *car*: “*Woah, you’ve got a nice set of wheels!*”

**e.g.** *bars* refer to *prison*: “*The criminal was placed behind bars.*”

### Symbolism

The use of an object to represent something else.

**e.g.** *doves* symbolise *peace*; *roses* symbolise *love*

**e.g.** The use of symbolism, such as ‘dark’ in “After he left, my whole world became dark”, adds extra semantic layers to the text and relies on the reader’s ability to infer that darkness represents depression, and a lack of happiness and purpose.

### Lexical ambiguity

When a single word can have two or more possible meanings.

**e.g.** *Someone praised me on my driving today by leaving a note: parking fine.*

**e.g.** Lexical ambiguity is avoided by repeating mention of the subject in the second main clause, rather than using a pronoun: “Rob and Bart went to school, but Bart went home early” (line 4).

## Sense relations

Refer to relationships between lexical items in a language.

### Idioms

An expression that has a meaning that cannot be deduced from the meanings of each lexical item that makes it up.

**e.g.** *wolf in sheep’s clothing* (imposter); *kick the bucket* (to die)

**e.g.** The achievement of coherence is reliant upon the reader’s ability to infer; for instance, the idiom “it happens once in a blue moon” requires the audience to infer that the event does not happen frequently, given blue moons – two full moons in one month – are rare.

### Denotation (denotative meaning)

The literal, direct or primary meaning of a word (found in a dictionary).

**e.g.** The *denotation* of the word ‘house’ is ‘a place where a person resides’.

## Connotation

The emotional implications and associations that a word evokes for a person, in addition to the denotative meaning.

**e.g.** house – *home, shack, residence, dwelling, abode, estate, mansion*

**e.g.** The author uses negatively-connoted lexis, such as ‘catastrophe for nature’ (line 2), ‘near extinction’ (line 3), ‘ruthless destruction’ (line 4), and ‘selfish clear-cutting of forests’ (line 5), to create an image of a country that exploits its nature for riches, which makes the reader more inclined to support the sustainability campaign, helping the text to achieve its persuasive function.

## Euphemism

Euphemisms provide speakers with mild, indirect ways of referring to adverse events or topics that are considered inappropriate or taboo. Thus, the delivery of negative news is made more bearable, and offensive subjects may be discussed without inflicting face affront upon listeners, which aids in maintaining social harmony.

**e.g.** she died → *she’s not with us anymore; she’s in a better place.*

**e.g.** toilet → *lavatory, amenity, ladies’/mens’ room*

However, in some cases euphemisms can cause more harm than benefit when used to obfuscate inconvenient truths. For instance, when announcing the sacking of employees, companies will often use euphemisms, such as “organisational restructuring”, or “changing the mix of casual to permanent staff to achieve greater flexibility”, to ‘sugar-coat’ their adverse decisions. This use of euphemism to disguise the layoff of workers trivialises and undermines the importance of these people, thus arousing indignation.

## Political correctness

A niche of euphemism is **politically correct language**, or PC language – a socially manufactured restrictor of free speech that aims to eliminate language that intentionally or inadvertently excludes or disparages, replacing it with neutral and objective language. By shedding light on underlying discriminatory tones of lexis, political correctness forces us to reconsider the values portrayed through our language choices, encouraging us to adopt a more inclusive world-view.

**e.g.** poor → *economically marginalised*

**e.g.** gay marriage → *marriage equality*

However, critics of PC language claim that it is superfluous and over-the-top, despising it for the linguistic ‘straight-jacketing’ it entails. To many it seems political correctness tips the scales in favour of minority groups, leaving others to live in fear of retribution for expressing their opinions. For instance, it has

become politically correct to use terms such as ‘same-sex marriage’ and ‘marriage equality’, while supporters of ‘traditional marriage’ are criticised for being narrow-minded and homophobic. Since no one wishes to be maligned with epithets such as ‘homophobe’ or ‘sexist’, people are forced to conform to ‘politically correct’ opinions. The result is an unhealthy, totalitarian society, in which individuals fear opposing dictated opinions, rather than a democratic society, where people are able to express their views without denigration. Clearly, although political correctness has been popularised with the best intentions of eradicating discrimination, it can also function to oppress people who have views that are in dissonance with proscribed ‘politically correct’ ones.

In addition, the excessive application of political correctness can result in neutral terms being stigmatised unnecessarily. For example, by referring to blind people as being ‘visually impaired’, we are implying that being blind is something awful or embarrassing that ought to be euphemised. The unnecessary stigmatisation of ‘blind’ can actually making blind people feel even more outcast.

## Dysphemism

A dysphemism is a derogatory or unpleasant term used instead of a pleasant one.

**e.g.** she died – *she carked it; she kicked the bucket.*

It can be used to deliberately offend and affront others’ face needs, but can also signal intimacy and closeness in a relationship. In fact, as Burrige reports, many Australians consider “the more affectionate they feel towards someone, the more abusive the language can be towards that person”.

Swearing, in particular, is quite acceptable in Australian culture. Swear words once served an exclusively auto-cathartic or abusive function, allowing language users to verbalise passionate emotions or intentionally inflict face affront on others. However, the emergence of another function of taboo language – to reduce social distance and promote in-group solidarity – has resulted in an increased tolerance of profanity. In a number of speech communities, the use of taboo language signals familiarity; for instance, male friends refer to each other as ‘faggots’ or ‘bloody bastards’ in a jocular fashion, using the expletives as terms of endearment.

## OTHER METALANGUAGE

There are some metalinguistic terms that don't quite fit into one particular subsystem. But that doesn't make them any less important!

### Prescriptivism

An approach to language that dictates rules of usage. Prescriptivists believe that language is governed by a set of rules, and that if these are not obeyed then the language user is 'wrong'. They regard Standard English as being the 'best' form of English. They despise linguistic change and see it as a process of language decay, which erodes standards and leads to a debased form of English.

### Descriptivism

An approach to language that involves observing language as it is spoken or written in different contexts. Descriptivists aim to describe the ways in which language varies according to user, audience, purpose and context. Descriptivists accept that linguistic change is inevitable; they recognise that languages must adapt to meet the demands of the users.

### Standard English (SE)

Variety of English that has been accepted as the norm. Also called a 'dialect', although it is not linked to a specific region and has no regionally distinctive features. It provides English-speaking countries with a unified means of communication, seeing as it is not associated with any one region or community of speakers (it is not 'regionally defined'). It is considered a prestigious language form and the symbol of 'good English' due to its association with wealth, power, government, law, education, the Church and the financial world.

### Non-standard English

Any variety that does not use the same vocabulary or grammar as Standard English. From a linguistic perspective, Standard English serves merely as a point of comparison to describe other varieties. Non-standard Englishes are not wrong, but different.

### Overt and Covert Prestige

There are different types of prestige, depending on the situational context. **Overt prestige** refers to the respect you get in formal domains by employing Standard English, using elevated lexis, jargon, speaking with a cultivated accent, and employing syntactically complex sentences. Doing so makes you appear intellectual, well-educated, wealthy, professional, and/or successful.

**Covert prestige**, on the other hand, is the respect you get in informal settings (for instance, when with your peers) by using slang, dysphemistic expressions, non-Standard English, phonological deletions, discourse particles, and syntactically incomplete sentences.

One type of prestige is not better than the other; they are both essential should we want to be accepted in both formal and informal domains.

## Jargon

This refers to the highly elevated, subject-specific lexis used by particular professions or hobby groups. Owing to the technicality of these terms, only members that have sound knowledge in the subject matter are able to comprehend these lexemes and, thus, gain access to the in-group.

**e.g.** we English Language students employ a plethora of linguistic jargon (just take a scroll through this document – ha ha!), which not all English Mainstream students would understand. Thus, our jargon serves as a linguistic barrier, distinguishing us as an in-group.

## Slang

Slang includes all those non-standard lexemes that are used by a particular in-group, such as teenagers. We teenagers are actually one of the major driving forces behind language change, adapting the language to distance ourselves from our parents' generation and to, consequently, establish a distinct identity. One way in which we do this is through semantically modifying Standard English lexemes; for example, in 'teenspeak' the lexemes "chat" and "thirsty" are used adjectivally, and mean "disgusting" and "looking for attention", respectively. Portmanteau words are also coined to describe new activities and phenomena, including "cellfish" (noun: someone who rudely keeps using their phone in the presence of other people) and "procrastabaking" (verb: baking to procrastinate).

An interesting thing about slang is that it is constantly being replaced with new slang terms; as soon as a slang term becomes overused, it is ditched, and another term comes along, ensuring that we uphold the linguistic barriers of our in-group.

## Colloquialisms

Unlike slang, colloquialisms are informal expressions known to most people. They help build rapport because they establish mutual ground and familiarity.

**e.g.** *in the nick of time, in a minute, fat chance that'll happen*

## Positive and Negative Face Needs

Everyone has what we call **face** – it's like your ego. And our face has needs, both positive and negative needs.

**Positive face** refers to a person's need to feel like they belong, and that they're loved, needed, cared for, and respected. By appealing to others' positive face needs, we build rapport with them and help foster solidarity. For example, we can compliment them, pose them interrogatives to show we're interested in their life, and use back-channelling to show that we're listening to them.

Unlike the name suggests, **negative face needs** aren't bad. They refer to a person's desire to feel independent and free, their desire to not feel restricted, dictated, or imposed upon. When we're asking favours of people, seeking help, or requesting someone's time, it's important that we appeal to their negative face needs. We can do so by using politeness markers to show that we respect their needs, and hedging to avoid directness.

Whenever we don't meet others' face needs, we commit what's called **face affront**. This can cause a break-down in cooperative communication, resulting in conflict.

## Idiolects, Sociolects, and Ethnolects

While the label 'Australian English' may be used as if it were a single immutable language, it is merely a convenient umbrella term for what are really mutually intelligible speech varieties. Although, at this point in time, regional differences in Australian English are not prominent, variation certainly exists and is indicative of socio-economic class, age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and other social parameters, thus serving as an expression of identity.

An **idiolect** is an individual's way of speaking – it includes their accent, slang they frequently employ, and all the little quirks that make them unique and portray their identity.

A **sociolect** is a variety of English spoken by a social class. For example, the working class speaks differently to the upper class; these differences are what create in-group solidarity and contribute to individuals' identities.

Finally, an **ethnolect** is a variety of English spoken by an ethnic group. It often includes expressions, pronunciations, and lexemes taken from the group's native language; these serve to convey their cultural identity, and function as in-group solidarity markers. For instance, 'Lebspeak' is "English with Arabic flavourings", as Bruce Moore describes, and is typically used by second-generation Australians of Lebanese background. Many lexemes are borrowed from Arabic, including "Shoo" ("what's up?"), "yallah" ("let's go"), "habib" (equivalent to 'mate' or dear person) "habibah" (female loved one), and "ijah" (swear word signalling the presence of an authority figure). Another ethnolect is 'Jewish English' – a blend of English with Yiddish and Hebrew. Loanwords include "nosh" (v: to eat/snack), "nebach" (adv: unfortunately), and "schlepp" (v: to drag), to which English morphemes are often added, producing neologisms, such as "schleppiness" and "schleppingly". Endearing Yiddish diminutives "-ele" and "-l" are also given to English names (e.g. Rachele, Stevele), and common nouns (e.g. roomele, boyele, storele). By adapting Australian English to include aspects of their native language, second-generation Australians are able to retain their cultural roots and indicate their connection to their ethnic communities, while simultaneously conveying an Australian identity.

## Domain

Refers to the general sphere of activity or interest where the communication takes place. It's like the broad topic of a discourse.

**e.g.** The discourse takes place in the *public/private domain*.

**e.g.** The discourse centres around the *domain of sport/religion/war/work*.

Even within the same domain, individuals employ different linguistic features and registers depending on the demands of the situational context (see below).

## Audience

Refers to other interlocutors in a conversation, or to the population that has access to the discourse. The size, age, gender, race, familiarity, and status of audience members will influence the type of language used.

**e.g.** *An audience of employers* will demand a higher degree of formality and sophisticated lexis compared to an *audience of close friends*, with whom one can communicate informally and casually.

**e.g.** *Due to the fact that the programme is being broadcast nationally to a vast and unknown audience*, Standard English is used, as it is the variety learnt by all English-speakers in schools and is not regionally defined.

## Setting (locale)

Refers to when and where the communication takes place.

**e.g.** *Given the setting of the discourse is a workplace*, formal Standard English is used so as to convey a sense of professionalism. The use of elevated lexis, including “\_” (line 1), “\_” (line 2) and “\_” (line 3), is one way in which the formal register is achieved.

**e.g.** *Owing to the fact that the setting of the discourse is a social party*, informal non-standard English is predominantly used, featuring a plethora of slang (“\_” line 8), and diminutives (“\_” line 11), which reduce social distance and enable rapport to be built between interlocutors.

## Field (subject matter)

Refers to the main topic of focus of communication. This provides clues regarding the function of the communication.

**e.g.** While the domain of this piece of bureaucratise is centred around sport, the *subject matter* consists of the terms and conditions of entry to the stadium, featuring a plethora of *subject-specific lexis*, such as “breach of conditions”, “refusal of entry”,

“liable” and “eviction”.

## Mode

Refers to the medium of the discourse, whether it be spoken, written or electronic.

**e.g.** *The written/spoken/electronic discourse* is of a letter/broadcast/email... that occurred on/was published on \_ 2015.”

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