

# A level ENGLISH LANGUAGE

## Unit 3

### Language over Time

#### Tackling Question 1: short questions



## Unit 3 Language over Time

### Question 1

#### Tackling the short questions

You have 1 hour and 30 mins to complete this paper. This gives you time to read the background information and the texts carefully.

#### Allocating your time

As a guide, you could divide your time as follows:

- 15-20 minutes to read/annotate the contextual information and the texts
- no more than 20 minutes on the short questions
- 50-55 minutes to write and plan the essay.

This is only a suggestion - you may prefer to spend a little more time reading and annotating, and a little less writing, but it is important to find a balance that suits you.

#### Short questions

When tackling the short questions, it is important to make sure that you read through the contextual information carefully before you start.

You should also note the date of each text so that you can identify the period in which each was written. You will never see a text on the paper that was written earlier than 1500.

The broad divisions below are two possible ways of categorising the key periods of the English language:

Early Modern English	1500-1700
Modern English	1700-1900
Late Modern English	1900-
PDE	current usage

OR

Early Modern English	1500-1700
Late Modern English	1700-

The identification of period is important because it will help you to identify the kind of linguistic and grammatical features you will be asked to describe.

#### Reading the questions

When you approach the questions, you need to be very clear about what you are being asked to do. Highlight the key words since these will show you how the marks will be awarded. The examples on the next page use the SAMs questions as an example.

- a) Identify the **word class** and **archaic spelling patterns** of the following words using **appropriate terminology**. [4]

*Majesties* (Text A, line 7)

*interupted* (Text A, line 5)

For this question, you will be awarded a mark for identifying the **word class** of each word (maximum of 2 marks), and a mark for describing each **spelling pattern** (maximum of 2 marks).

- b) What does the **spelling** of the examples below tell us about **language change**?  
Make two points and refer to the examples using **appropriate terminology**. [4]

*Septemb* (Text A, line 3)

*Septemp* (Text A, line 3)

*unweariedly* (Text A, line 25)

For this question, you need to comment on the examples to demonstrate a **distinctive feature** of language change. You will be awarded a mark for each point (maximum of 2 marks) and a mark for each appropriate use of terminology (maximum of 2 marks).

You could be awarded marks for demonstrating **wider knowledge of language change** (e.g. inconsistency, simplification of grammatical systems, standardisation, publication of Johnson's dictionary etc.), and for using **terminology** to label the words or to describe the pattern of variation.

- c) Describe the **form** and the **archaic grammatical features** of the following examples using **appropriate terminology**. [4]

*hath* (Text A, line 6)

*beat* (Text A, line 33)

For this question, you will be awarded a mark for identifying the **word class** of each word (maximum of 2 marks), and a mark for describing the **distinctive grammatical structure** in each case (maximum of 2 marks).

- d) Analyse features of the **grammatical structure** and **punctuation** that are typical of **Early Modern English** in the extract from Text A below. Make **four points** and select an **appropriate example** to support each point. [8]

For this question, you need to identify **four different grammatical or punctuation features** that are typical of the period. You will get a mark for each valid feature you describe (maximum of 4 marks) and a mark for an appropriate **supporting example** in each case (maximum of 4 marks).

Part (d) focuses on punctuation and grammatical features that are typical of the period so it is important not to discuss archaic spelling or archaic/obsolete words. Points should be based on features such as:

- noticeable use of punctuation
  - commas instead of full stops (comma splices)
  - commas splitting phrases/clauses
  - frequent use of the colon (instead of full stops etc.)
  - frequent use of parenthesis (e.g. interjections)
  - absence/presence of possessive apostrophes (-'s suffix for singular nouns appears in the latter half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century; -s' introduced in the 18<sup>th</sup> century)
  - absence/presence of apostrophes to mark elision
  - absence of speech marks
  - use of symbols e.g. &, ~ (for omission: *the~selves*)
  - abbreviations with superscript e.g. *w<sup>th</sup>* (with), *y<sup>r</sup>* (your)
- noticeable grammatical features
  - inversion of subject/verb
  - absence/presence of dummy auxiliary 'do'
  - double/multiple negatives
  - the absence of a plural inflection after an enumerator e.g. *ten year*
  - medial position adverbials (before the finite main verb; between the auxiliary/lexical verb)
  - passive verb phrases
  - frequent use of subordination e.g. relative, noun, adverbial, non-finite clauses
  - loosely structured compound-complex sentences.

This list is not exhaustive, but it suggests some of the key features you may be able to identify.

In your answer, you do not have to have an equal number of points for each area, but you should cover both punctuation **and** grammatical features.

### Answering the questions

Because you have only 20 minutes to answer parts (a) to (d), it is important that your answers are concise.

Always remember to look at the examples in context before you answer the question. This is particularly important when you are making decisions about the word class of a word.

The sample answers below are not the only way of responding to the SAMs questions, but they show how you can earn marks. Each answer:

- is concise and focused
- meets the requirements of the question
- demonstrates an ability to use terminology to describe
  - the form of the examples
  - specific archaic features
- demonstrates secure knowledge of language change
- is written in a fluent style and is technically accurate.

## Sample answers to the SAMs short questions

- a) Identify the word class and archaic spelling patterns of the following words using appropriate terminology. [4]

*Majesties* (Text A, line 7)

*interuppted* (Text B, line 5)

✓  
 The proper noun 'Majesties' (Majesty's) shows the ie/y  
 interchange which is typical of early Modern English. The past  
 participle 'interuppted' shows the doubling of a medial  
 consonant where we would have doubling of the initial  
 consonant (inter + rupted). 4/4

- b) What does the spelling of the examples below tell us about language change? Make two points and refer to the examples using appropriate terminology. [4]

*Septemb* (Text A, line 3)

*Septemp* (Text A, line 3)

*unwearidly* (Text A, line 25)

✓  
 The abbreviated proper noun *September* is spelt in different  
 ways because spelling was inconsistent in the Early Modern  
 English period. The adverb 'unwearidly' is spelt as it is said. 4/4

OR

✓  
 The -e of the -ed suffix is elided in 'unwearidly' to reflect the  
 pronunciation which is closer to /ɪ/. The other examples show a  
 changed spelling of the month where the similar sounding voiced  
 /b/ and voiceless /p/ bilabial plosives are used. This is because  
 Text A was written before Samuel Johnson's 1755 dictionary  
 which began the process of fixing spelling. 4/4

- c) Describe the form and the archaic grammatical features of the following examples using appropriate terminology. [4]

*hath* (Text A, line 6)                      *beat* (Text A, line 33)

*The third person present tense verb has the archaic -(e)th ending*  
*instead of PDE -s. The past participle 'beat' has an irregular*  
*form where the simple past is used for the past participle instead*  
*of the irregular form 'beaten'.*

4/4

- d) Analyse features of the grammatical structure and punctuation that are typical of Early Modern English in the extract from Text A below. Make four points and select an appropriate example to support each point. [8]

*Although the writer uses capital letters like PDE for proper*  
*nouns like 'Pudding-lane' and 'Cannon-street', he also uses one*  
*for the common noun 'Fire' for emphasis because the Fire of*  
*London is his topic. The names are also hyphenated*  
*('Grace-church-street') which is typical of the period. There are*  
*impersonal constructions delaying the subject which make the*  
*style formal like 'There hapned to break out ... a sad and*  
*deplorable Fire...' and 'it fell out ... that ...'. The sentences are*  
*long with lots of subordination like lines 1-9 with relative clauses*  
*'which ...', noun clauses 'that ...' and adverbial clauses 'as ...'*  
*and 'so that'.*

8/8

OR

*The writing is very formal which is typical of Early Modern English and there are features which show this. The sentences are compound-complex and long e.g. there hapned to break out ... which falling out ... and ... so close built ... and ... that care was not taken ... as ought ... There are lots of passive verbs e.g. was not taken, to be mastered and there is a comma separating the verb hapned to break out from the dummy subject a sad and deplorable Fire. Also the time reference noun phrase one of the clock is not contracted (one o'clock).*

8/8