



الجامعة العربية المفتوحة  
Arab Open University

## **ASSIGNMENT BOOKLET 2007-2008**

### **U210A - the English Language: past, present, and future**

#### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

**To read and understand, specially sections on learning outcomes p.4 and how to write your assignment p.8**

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U210 Course Chair  
2007 - 2008*



Assignment Booklet  
U210A The English Language: past, present and future

## U210A

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## ASSIGNMENT BOOKLET 2007/2008

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(Including TMAs 01-02)\*

**The booklet contains valuable information**  
*Please read carefully before embarking on any assignment.*

### Cut-off dates

TMA 01	end of week 6
TMA 02	end of week 12

### Completing and sending in your assignments

When writing your assignment:

- put your name, and the assignment number at the top of every sheet.

When you have finished your assignment:

- fill in Section 1 of the TMA cover form, taking care to enter your personal identifier and the assignment number correctly
- Some of the material given on pp. 4-12 is taken from *Assignment Book 2002* by Diana Honeybone, pp. 4-11, The Open University. Material was modified in order to take AOU examination and assessment regulations into consideration. The TMAs were prepared by Dr Hayat Al-Khatib, U210 Course Chair.

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## Introduction

There are two tutor-marked assignments (TMAs) for the course, each relates to a Block theme in the course.

The *Study Calendar* shows the distribution of TMAs and gives the cut-off dates for their submission. You must adhere to the submission dates as you will be penalized for late submissions.

Your course result will depend upon your achievement in the two components of assessment. The TMAs and midterm constitute 50% of the Continuous Assessment Component, and the final examination constitutes 50% of the Examinable Component. You must obtain at least 40% in both the Continuous Assessment Component and the Examinable Component and an overall total course grade of 50% to be certain of obtaining a pass result. (Please refer to the *Study Calendar* for further information.)

As well as contributing to the overall assessment of the course, the TMAs will help to consolidate your understanding of the course material, and your grade will give some indication of how well you are doing. Your tutor's comments will explain the grade more fully and provide guidance on becoming more proficient at setting out your ideas and arguments in writing, an important skill in studying at university level. We recommend that you keep a copy of each assignment for reference and as a safeguard against the unlikely event that your submitted TMA is lost.

You should hand in your assignments to your tutor by the cut-off date. A set of TMA cover forms is included in your course package. Attach one of these to each TMA you submit. Please ensure that the TMA cover form is completed correctly.

If you think you may be late with an assignment, consult your tutor as soon as you can (and, in any case, before the submission date). The University's policy on late submission is set out in the *AOU Examination Bylaws*)

## Learning Outcomes

This is a level two course in your English Language and Literature programme and the distribution of the grading scheme reflects the weight allocated for each component. The TMAs will take account of the learning outcomes drawn up for the course. Learning outcomes are what you can expect to achieve if you take full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. They include knowledge and understanding of the ideas and issues discussed in the course materials, along with certain skills (e.g. skills to do with discussing ideas and evaluating arguments). The learning outcomes particularly relevant to your study of the course are set out below.

**Knowledge and understanding (displaying knowledge of the themes of the blocks)** *Allocated 50% of the grade in TMAs, midterm and final*

You are expected to develop good knowledge and understanding of:

- Historicism: the development and change of English from the Old English period to the present day, recognizing the relationship of linguistic development to historical, social and political processes (Block 1)
- Variation and change in contemporary English in different parts of the world indicating the dynamic nature of language and the social and regional influences on language use (Block 2)
- How spoken and written English may be used to differing effects in a range of social and cultural contexts underlining the fact that language can be manipulated to achieve specific effects in everyday life, marketization, rhetoric and advertisement (Block 3)
- Stylistic, social and political issues surrounding the creative and literary use of English, setting language and language use in context (Block 4)
- How English works, and how it may be described and analysed (Set Book: *Describing Language*)
- How your learning in different parts of the course may be integrated according to the course themes: varieties of English, changing English, English in context, status and meaning of English, English and identity, achieving things in English, regulating English, discourses about English.

**Cognitive skills (displaying an understanding of the concepts through constructing a coherent argument, identifying relevant key points)**

*Allocated 20% of the grade in TMAs, midterm and final*

To be successful in your study of this course, you are expected, in writing TMAs, to:

- identify and summarize the main points in an academic argument;
- critically evaluate alternative explanations and arguments;
- interpret and evaluate linguistic evidence;
- learn and use appropriate terminology for the study of language;
- apply the knowledge and understanding acquired from the theoretical component of the course to the analysis of spoken, written and multimodal texts in English and hence combining the theoretical with the applied.

**Communication skills (clarity of presentation of discussion and evaluation of arguments, using appropriate language, grammar and referencing)**

*Allocated 30% of the grade in TMAs, midterm and final*

To be successful in your study of this course, you are expected to show in your TMAs knowledge of the themes associated with the TMA question:

- identify the purpose of an academic assignment, and plan a strategy for tackling it;
- identify and evaluate the relevance of information from a variety of sources;
- identify the viewpoints of authors of source material;
- synthesize and organize information from a range of sources;
- construct a coherent argument, supported by evidence and clearly focused on the topic under discussion;
- present the argument clearly and in an appropriate academic style and format;
- provide appropriate academic references to the sources used in preparing written work;
- respond to feedback about improving the effectiveness of written communication for academic purposes.

These learning outcomes are reflected in the assessment criteria that your tutor will take into account when marking your TMA (cf marking criteria on p. 14).

In addition to these outcomes, you can expect to acquire other 'generic' skills that would apply to many second level courses. These would include practical skills such as managing substantial amounts of information and organizing time effectively.

## **Types of assignments**

Assignments include:

- general essays in which, for instance, you are asked to respond to a question, or discuss and evaluate a statement – such essays normally relate to more than one study week;
- assignments based more narrowly on particular course materials – for instance, you may be asked to review a course reading, or compare the position taken in different readings;
- assignments that take as their stimulus a piece of data such as a transcript, newspaper cutting, audiocassette extract or short piece of written text, which you are asked to analyse or discuss.

Assignments may also contain a mixture of these elements. Across the course as a whole you will have a choice from a wide range of topics and between different types of assignment.

In devising assignments we have tried to observe the following principles:

- the assignment should be unambiguous (i.e. the wording should be clear, and the task you are required to do should be clearly explained);
- the assignment should relate in a straightforward way to the course materials (i.e. the questions should be consistent with the study questions and study guidance for each block – there should be no unpleasant surprises!).

We provide notes to help you in tackling the assignment and to help your tutor in marking it. These notes give fairly full advice on how to structure your answer. Please note that the guidance is meant to assist you and not be a rigid prescription that you must follow, so you should not feel constrained by these suggestions if you prefer an alternative structure for your essay. You should consult your tutor if you are in any doubt.

The notes below give advice on planning and writing assignments. Some of this may be familiar to you if you have previously studied courses in related areas. If you have had limited experience of essay writing, you should pay particular attention to the advice given here and, if necessary, ask your tutor for help in putting it into practice. A useful additional source of help is *The Arts Good Study Guide* by Ellie Chambers and Andrew Northedge (1997, The Open University).

## **Planning your work for the assignments**

When you come to write your assignment, it is useful first of all to remind yourself of the general criteria for marking assignments (see p. 14). Then you should assemble the material you have been collecting for doing the assignment, check through the question wording and notes, and draw up a plan of what you intend to cover.

You could begin with a series of subheadings based on the TMA notes, gathering under each subheading your own list of the points you wish to make and the information or evidence you have collected in support of each point.

The total length of each assignment should be 1,500-2,000 words. It is a good idea to indicate on your plan the (approximate) number of words you intend to devote to each section. Normally you should allocate a small number of words to your introduction (say, 150-200 words) and maybe a few more to your conclusion, with the bulk of the word allowance divided between your major sections.

When you have completed your plan, look carefully through it and check it against the assignment question. Does it contain enough material to enable you to answer the question? Does all the material seem relevant? Can you think of any additional evidence or information? Within and between each heading, is the material in an appropriate order? Does it allow you to build up an argument, moving logically from one point to the next?

## Writing up your assignments

### Length

Each TMA should be 1,500-2,000 words. Refer back to your plan to remind yourself of how you are dividing your word allowance. You do not need to supply an accurate word count, but you must take care not to go significantly under or over length. If you write a very short essay you will not be able to cover sufficient material in enough depth, while an overlong essay usually means that you are not selecting and editing your material properly. Do not include irrelevant material that could detract from your answer and/or make it more difficult for your tutor to follow your argument.

Quotations within your essay will be considered part of the total length, so must be kept concise. Bibliographies are not included in the word count.

### Structure and presentation

If you have drawn up your plan carefully, writing your assignment should flow more easily: you are simply elaborating on the notes you made under each heading of your plan. The following suggestions may help:

- Some people find it easier to write their introduction last of all. Others prefer to write their introduction first, outlining what they are going to do in their essay, and then revise it when they finish their answer.
- Ideally, type or word-process your answer; but, if this is not possible, write it as clearly as you can. It can be very difficult for a tutor to make a fair assessment of work that is hard to read.
- Make sure you leave wide margins for your tutor to make comments.
- Use subheadings in the essay. Headings can help you to structure your argument and avoid including irrelevant material.
- Try to include signposts to help your reader along (e.g. draw points together at the end of a section, then indicate how you are going to follow on from these in the next section.)
- For some TMAs there may be a wide range of material to draw on. You must try to select the most relevant material for your purpose: *you are not required to use every suggestion provided in this booklet*. Your tutor will not expect you to cram in every possible detail. Select the material you want to use, set it out in your introduction and then follow this plan in your essay. The guidance on structure for each TMA in this booklet will help you to plan and structure your work.
- When you have finished your assignment, read it through carefully. Check that it is clear and provides a full answer to the question. At this point you should also check aspects of presentation (spelling, punctuation, etc.)

If you feel that you need additional support with academic writing, or if you have any specific difficulties (e.g. with handwriting or spelling), you should discuss this with your tutor early on in the course and try to work out a way of minimizing problems.

## Referring to the course material and other sources

Your assignment is meant to provide evidence that you have read and understood the course materials. You may refer briefly to other sources of evidence if you wish, but *your assignments will be assessed primarily on your understanding and use of the course materials*. Use evidence to advance your argument.

## Citing material from the course

When you are reporting a piece of research or an argument, you should make it clear where this comes from. The course chapters provide examples of the usual academic conventions for doing this (e.g. 'Quirk (1986) claimed that ...'). Since you and your tutor have access to the same course material, you can, if you wish, use a form of reference such as: 'In Chapter 1 Reading A, Randolph Quirk claimed that ...'; or 'On Audiocassette 1 Band 3, Dick Leith suggested ..' The main thing is to make it clear which piece of work you are drawing on. Wherever possible, give precise page references: this not only makes it easier for your tutor to check the evidence you are drawing on; it also helps you trace your sources when you come to revise.

You may wish to include brief quotations from the course materials. In this case, they should be clearly set out as quotations, and the source should be given. Otherwise, if you are discussing ideas from the course, try to read and absorb these, then **use your own words** to express the ideas. It is particularly important, when setting out your own ideas or arguments, that you do not reproduce long extracts from the course (or from other sources) with little or no change, as this gives the impression that you are trying to pass off someone else's ideas as your own. This could constitute plagiarism, which is treated as a very serious offence by the University. Below is an extract from a chapter on plagiarism, which underlines the severity of the offence and warns against committing it intentionally or unintentionally.

## PLAGIARISM

### What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is the *theft* of other people's words and ideas. Plagiarism happens when you claim (or *appear* to claim) that an idea, or the expression of it, is your own when in fact it is someone else's. Deliberate plagiarism usually takes the form of either getting someone else to write your essay for you and then saying it's yours, or copying chunks of text out of a book with the deliberate intent of deceiving the reader into thinking they are your own words. Accidental plagiarism,

which most institutions are obliged to penalize equally heavily, is achieved by oversight and/or lack of skill in manipulating information. Here are some examples of how it can happen:

- You make notes from a book, copying out lots of relevant passages and then, when you come to write the essay, you copy your notes into it, forgetting that they were copied in the first place.
- You use a book which covers exactly the area you are dealing with; you are aware that you mustn't copy it out, so you deftly rephrase little bits, by replacing 'small' with 'little', 'major differences' by 'main differences' and by swapping over the order of two halves of a sentence. *You* think that this is now legitimate, but your assessors do not.
- You use entirely your own words, but you don't acknowledge the source of your information.
- You draw from notes you made or were given for some previous course of study, without realizing that these were copied or adapted from some other source.

**A reader will assume that any idea not referenced is your own, and that any passage not in quote marks is in your own words. This is a contract of trust which you must respect.**

### **How to avoid accidental plagiarism: some strategies**

When writing you have to acknowledge everything you've got from a source other than your own head, your own ideas and common or uncontroversial knowledge (*English is a Germanic Language*, for example). However, having too many references in a text breaks up the flow of your writing, but that is better than not referencing your work. To avoid too much repetition, you may be able to say at the beginning of a section or paragraph: *The following is a summary of information given in Smith (1994)*. Note, however, that it is *not* sufficient to give one vague reference to your source somewhere, and then draw directly from it page after page.

Rather than just summarizing what you are reading for the sake of it, make notes relevant to the task in hand and identify the major points that relate to your purpose. Make the notes under headings; you can then write out your own version based on those points. When making notes, use your own words wherever possible. Never copy anything out without putting it in inverted commas and putting a page reference next to it. Always keep the full reference details for any source you draw on, as you will need them later. These details should be integral to your notes, so that you can easily see where an idea or quote has come from. Where your source text gives examples of a phenomenon under discussion, try to think of some examples of your own (or look them up in a dictionary or another book). This is in any case a good way of ensuring that you understand what you are

writing about. However, if you are in doubt about whether your example is valid (e.g. where the examples have been drawn from a particular source that you cannot access), quote the ones you have been given and acknowledge them appropriately. If there is any terminology you don't understand, look it up [or ask your tutor for advice], don't just copy it out.

(Wray *et al*, 1998)

### **Listing your sources in a bibliography**

At the end of your assignment, you should list the sources to which you have referred. The course books illustrate the conventional layout for different types of reference (see examples in the box below). When referring to course materials, you do not need to give such full sources (you could simply list materials as '*Describing Language*, Chapter 1' or 'Audiocassette 2 Band 2 Indian English', etc.). The important thing is that your tutor should be clear about material you have drawn on.

#### **Reference list styles**

*Note: it is usual to italicize book titles; however, if you are not able to do this, you should underline them instead.*

##### *Book*

TRUDGILL, P. and HANNAH, J. (1994, 3rd edn) *International English*, London, Edward Arnold.

##### *Chapter/extract from an edited collection*

HARRIS, J. (1993) 'The grammar of Irish English' in MILROY, J. and MILROY, L. (eds) *Real English: the grammar of English dialects in the British Isles*, London, Longman.

##### *Paper in a journal or magazine*

WALES, L. (1994) 'Royalese: the rise and fall of "the Queen's English" ', *English Today*, vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 3-10.

## **Some frequently asked questions**

Here we offer some guidance on some of the dilemmas that occur regularly when preparing to answer a TMA.

### **What should I do if the question is not clear or seems ambiguous?**

As mentioned above, we try to ensure this will not be a problem. However, if you feel a question is unclear, you should contact your tutor in the first instance: he or she should be able to help you sort out any confusion. Failing that, you should state in your introduction how you are interpreting the question (together with whatever justification you think is necessary) and then proceed to answer it on those terms.

### **What should I do if I disagree with the arguments being put in the course material?**

You are not expected to agree with everything that is said in the course book or audiovisual material. Indeed, we hope that you will engage in a critical dialogue with the analysis and arguments you encounter.

However, any criticism you offer should be based on sound knowledge and understanding of the ideas and information presented in that part of the course, and your reservations should be supported by relevant argument and information either from the course material or another source that is fully acknowledged and referenced.

### **Should I include personal experience and material from other sources?**

You are often asked, as part of your study, to relate ideas in the course to your own experiences of English. It is also suggested that you collect your own examples of material to put in a file. Examples might be newspaper articles dealing with any aspect of English, advertisements, letters, business cards, and so on. You may also like to jot down examples of English that you hear around you or which your children use. You may use examples which are relevant. In this case, ensure that any examples you include can be related to the question; try to use them to illustrate or address points from the course; and select a small number of examples so that you have enough space to deal with ideas and evidence discussed in the course materials. Please remember to acknowledge your source. Extensive analyses should be accompanied by a photocopy of the original data wherever possible.

## **Marking criteria**

Your tutor will primarily make use of the following criteria in deciding what mark to give your assignment.

- *The relevance of your answer to the question as set*  
Your discussion should clearly demonstrate your understanding of the question.
- *Your knowledge and understanding of the course material*  
Your discussion should display evidence that you have understood and can draw effectively on research evidence, ideas, concepts and arguments that are central to the course.
- *Your ability to discuss and evaluate alternative explanations and arguments*  
You should discuss and evaluate arguments put forward in support of a particular viewpoint.
- *The ability to present and pursue an argument*  
The structure of your answer should manifest your ability to put together the material to sustain and support an argument.
- *The ability to express yourself clearly using academic conventions as appropriate*  
Your work should be clear in the way you make points, present research findings and make critical comments. You should be able to refer to key terms and concepts from the course materials. You should also acknowledge clearly any sources you have drawn on.

For assignments that include practical work with language data, your tutor will take into account:

- *Your ability to make a clear analysis and interpretation of language data as specified in the assignment*  
Your tutor will look to see whether your analysis is appropriate, whether it draws on relevant ideas and concepts from the course, and whether any interpretation you give is justified by reference to relevant aspects of the data.

The comments from your tutor should explain why you received the marks given. They will cover the content of your assignment (e.g. your understanding of key issues, the argument you have constructed). Comments may also include teaching points about aspects of your work which could have been strengthened or extended. In addition, they may suggest ways of improving your performance in future assignments.

The detailed marking criteria your tutor will use in marking both your TMAs, and final examination paper are as indicated on the following page.

**The marking scheme for this course will be as follows:**

**Marking Criteria\***

	<i>Criteria Mark/Band</i>	<i>Relevance to question</i>	<i>Knowledge and understanding of course material</i>	<i>Approach to alternative explanations and arguments</i>	<i>Construction of argument</i>	<i>Clear expression and use of academic conventions</i>	<i>Approach to language data (where appropriate)</i>
<b>F</b>	<b>Fail (F)</b>	None or slight Some relevant material but failure to address question	Very little from course/fundamental Misunderstandings Little appreciation of main idea or inadequate knowledge/insufficient reading	None or with no support from course No evidence of critical thinking	Slight/ Lack of organization	Expression and sentence structure needs attention/insufficient referencing/ deficiencies	Slight/ Insufficient/not enough detailed discussion of data
<b>D D+</b>	<b>Pass</b>	Some ability to identify main issues	Very basic understanding of course material/substantial omissions and/or misunderstandings	Lacking /heavily descriptive	Lines of arguments may be clear for short sections but not sustained or developed	Bare bones of structure/coherent expression/attempts at referencing	Analysis barely appropriate /related to course. Interpretations barely justified
<b>C C+</b>	<b>Good</b>	Clear evidence of understanding question and overall direction of answer	Effective drawing on evidence/ideas/concepts and arguments central to the course	Recognition and limited discussion of competing explanations for linguistic events/processes	Clear, sustained argument	Good structure/ expression/referencing	Analysis appropriate/ related to course. Interpretations justified
<b>B B+</b>	<b>Very Good</b>	Utilizes a wide range of relevant and contemporary material to produce a cogent and insightful argument	Comprehensive and judicious use of relevant literature	Good discussion of competing explanations and arguments	Assertions are made with evaluated evidence; all sections contributing	Very good structure, expression and ability to employ sources appropriately	Very good analysis. Judicious interpretations.
<b>A</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	Creative /original relevant stance	Excellent knowledge and understanding	Critical approach	Cohesive/and original/creative	Excellent structure, expression and use of evidence	Excellent analysis/ interpretations

\*These marking criteria are informed by and mostly extracted from the UKOU U210A Assignment Booklet 2004 (p. 30). They are to be used as general guidelines for marking TMAs, tests, and the final examination as long as they do not violate criteria and marking standards set by AOU including the marking and grading system indicated on page 17 of this Assignment Booklet. They are also subject to any changes AOU might deem necessary.

## TMA 01

Please return your completed assignment to your tutor to arrive by the end of week 6.

This assignment covers your study of Block 1 (Weeks 1-6). Your answer should be about 1,500-2,000 words in length.

### TMA 01

**Throughout its history of development, English has come into contact with other languages, affecting and being affected by them.**

**Discuss the factors that influenced the development and progression of English in the British Isles leading to the adoption of one standardised dialect, and then in the colonies leading to the emergence of new forms of English (Block theme: History of development of the English Language).**

### Notes

Before beginning your assignment, you should refer to the general guidance on essay writing at the beginning of this booklet.

### TMA explained

This TMA focuses on Block One theme and traces the development of the English language to highlight the role of historical, social and political influences. The question is two fold. Part one asks about the factors that influenced the development of one standardised variety. The discussion should include patterns of language contact, population movement, industrial revolution and the reformation in addition to other factors, lead to the emergence of a standardised variety that became the national language of Britain.

The second part of the question targets the post-colonial development of new forms of English. The discussion should include the factor of the expansion of English outside England that led to patterns of language contact and colonisation in the British Isles and the colonies. Different perspectives on English language use and nationalist reactions had linguistic consequences for English, both inside the British Isles and in the colonies.

The TMA is primarily concerned with Block One of the Course Book: English: history, diversity and change. Material for the TMA can be found in:

- \* Chapters 1, 3, 4 and 5 in *Course Book One*.
- \* Extracts on Bands 1 - 6 of audiocassette 1.
- \* Associated notes in Study Guide 1.
- \* Relevant discussion which may be found in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 of the set book *Describing Language*.

## TMA 02

*The assignment covers your study of weeks 7-12.*

*Please return your completed assignment to arrive to your tutor by the end of week 12. Your answer should be around 1,500-2,000 words.*

### TMA 02

**Rhetoric is a powerful tool that exemplifies the strategies used to make language in use most effective. In an extract from the video cassette VC1 band 3, Martin Luther King, a social rights activist, outlined dissatisfaction with broken promises on August 28, 1963, in his famous speech *I have a dream*. Identify, with reference to the extract below, the linguistic and stylistic tools that are employed by public speakers to influence their audience (Block theme: language in use).**

***“One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro still lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of an ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land”***

### Notes

Before beginning your assignment, you should refer to the general guidance on essay writing at the beginning of this booklet.

### TMA explained

The TMA is concerned with the analysis of language texts and identifying the strategies that include language organisation in rhetoric as well as extralinguistic mechanisms of influencing the audience. The aim is to bring an understanding of how language is used to impact participants with maximum effect.

The main material for the discussion would come from chapter 4 of Course Book Two, *Rhetoric in English*. You may wish to start with a general definition on rhetoric and its importance as an art to inflame passions since the times of Cicero. The discussion should trace, with relevant examples, the development of rhetoric, its characteristics and its application in modern times, especially to the extract at hand. The opening paragraph of the TMA should introduce rhetoric: definition, function and strategies. An overview on the organization of the TMA should follow. Body paragraphs should discuss each of the items used in Martin Luther King's speech and provide examples from the text itself. A discussion on the extra linguistic items needs to follow. The conclusion should sum up the discussion and emphasize the idea that language in use operates according to a set of rules and is not arbitrary.

## University marking and grading

In addition to doing the two TMAs, you are also required to take one midterm and one final exam. Together, the TMAs, and midterm constitute 50% of the Continuous Assessment Component of the course. The final exam constitutes the remaining 50%.

The weighing and allocation of marks (out of a 100) is as follows:

Two TMAs	35 marks
Midterm	15 marks
Final exam	50 marks

The AOU standard scale of performance for the course is as follows:

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Performance standard</b>
A	Excellent
B+	Very good
B	
C+	Good
C	
D	Pass
F	Fail