Victorian Certificate of Education

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

STUDY DESIGN

VICTORIAN CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT AUTHORITY

VICTORIA
State Government

Contents

Important information

Accreditation period

Units 1–4: 1 January 2016 – 31 December 2023

Implementation of this study commences in January 2016.

Sources of information

The *VCAA Bulletin* is the only official source of changes to regulations and accredited studies. The *Bulletin* also regularly includes advice on VCE studies. It is the responsibility of each VCE teacher to refer to each issue of the *the Bulletin*. The *Bulletin* is available as an e-newsletter via free subscription on the VCAA website at: www.vcaa.vic.edu.au.

To assist teachers in developing courses, the VCAA publishes online the *Advice for teachers*, which includes teaching and learning activities for Units 1–4, and advice on assessment tasks and performance level descriptors for School-assessed Coursework in Units 3 and 4.

The current *VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook* contains essential information on assessment processes and other procedures.

VCE providers

Throughout this study design the term 'school' is intended to include both schools and other VCE providers.

Copyright

VCE schools may reproduce parts of this study design for use by teachers. The full VCAA Copyright Policy is available at: www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Footer/Pages/Copyright.aspx.

Introduction

Scope of study

VCE English Language explores the ways in which language is used by individuals and groups and reflects our thinking and values. Learning about language helps us to understand ourselves, the groups with which we identify and the society we inhabit.

English Language builds on students' previous learning about the conventions and codes used by speakers and writers of English. Informed by the discipline of linguistics, it provides students with metalinguistic tools to understand and analyse language use, variation and change. Students studying English Language examine how uses and interpretations of language are nuanced and complex rather than a series of fixed conventions. Students explore how people use spoken and written English to communicate, to think and innovate, to construct identities, to build and interrogate attitudes and assumptions and to create and disrupt social cohesion.

The study of English Language enables students to understand the structures, features and discourses of written and spoken texts through the systematic and objective deconstruction of language in use.

Rationale

The study of English Language enables students to further develop and refine their skills in reading, writing, listening to and speaking English. Students learn about personal and public discourses in workplaces, fields of study, trades and social groups.

In this study students read widely to develop their analytical skills and understanding of linguistics. Students are expected to study a range of texts, including publications and public commentary about language in print and multimodal form. Students also observe and discuss contemporary language in use, as well as consider a range of written and spoken texts.

Knowledge of how language functions provides a useful basis for further study or employment in numerous fields such as arts, sciences, law, politics, trades and education. The study supports language-related fields such as psychology, the study of other languages, speech and reading therapy, journalism and philosophy. It also supports study and employment in other communication-related fields, including designing information and communications technology solutions or programs.

Aims

This study enables students to:
- describe and analyse the structures, features and functions of spoken and written English language using an appropriate metalanguage
- investigate language acquisition, use, variation, and change over time
- reflect critically on attitudes to language in both its historical and contemporary contexts, with particular focus on identity, social cohesion and the distinctiveness of Australian language
- explore and analyse the interplay between convention and creativity in language use
- develop an awareness of their own critical, selective and innovative use of language and apply it to their own writing and speaking
- demonstrate, in the creation of their own texts, effective and competent use of Standard Australian English to meet the demands of further study, the workplace, and their own needs and interests.

Structure

The study is made up of four units:

Unit 1: Language and communication

Unit 2: Language change

Unit 3: Language variation and social purpose

Unit 4: Language variation and identity

Each unit deals with specific content contained in areas of study and is designed to enable students to achieve a set of outcomes for that unit. Each outcome is described in terms of key knowledge and key skills.

Entry

There are no prerequisites for entry to Units 1, 2 and 3. Students must undertake Unit 3 prior to undertaking Unit 4. Units 1 to 4 are designed to a standard equivalent to the final two years of secondary education. All VCE studies are benchmarked against comparable national and international curriculum.

Duration

Each unit involves at least 50 hours of scheduled classroom instruction over the duration of a semester.

Changes to the study design

During its period of accreditation minor changes to the study will be announced in the *VCAA Bulletin*. The *VCAA Bulletin* is the only source of changes to regulations and accredited studies. It is the responsibility of each VCE teacher to monitor changes and advice about VCE studies published in the *VCAA Bulletin*.

Monitoring for quality

As part of ongoing monitoring and quality assurance, the VCAA will periodically undertake an audit of VCE English Language to ensure the study is being taught and assessed as accredited. The details of the audit procedures and requirements are published annually in the *VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook*. Schools will be notified if they are required to submit material to be audited.

Safety and wellbeing

It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that duty of care is exercised in relation to the health and safety of all students undertaking the study.

Texts selected for study should be appropriate for the age and development of students and, in that context reflect current community standards and expectations.

Teachers should consider whether there may be sensitivities in relation to certain texts and the issues they raise.

Employability skills

This study offers a number of opportunities for students to develop employability skills. The *Advice for teachers* provides examples of how students can develop employability skills during learning activities and assessment tasks.

Legislative compliance

When collecting and using information, the provisions of privacy and copyright legislation, such as the Victorian *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2000* and *Health Records Act 2001*, and the federal *Privacy Act 1988* and *Copyright Act 1968*, must be met.

Assessment and reporting

Satisfactory completion

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on the teacher's decision that the student has demonstrated achievement of the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Demonstration of achievement of outcomes and satisfactory completion of a unit are determined by evidence gained through the assessment of a range of learning activities and tasks.

Teachers must develop courses that provide appropriate opportunities for students to demonstrate satisfactory achievement of outcomes.

The decision about satisfactory completion of a unit is distinct from the assessment of levels of achievement. Schools will report a student's result for each unit to the VCAA as S (Satisfactory) or N (Not Satisfactory).

Levels of achievement

Units 1 and 2

Procedures for the assessment of levels of achievement in Units 1 and 2 are a matter for school decision. Assessment of levels of achievement for these units will not be reported to the VCAA. Schools may choose to report levels of achievement using grades, descriptive statements or other indicators.

Units 3 and 4

The VCAA specifies the assessment procedures for students undertaking scored assessment in Units 3 and 4. Designated assessment tasks are provided in the details for each unit in the VCE study designs.

The student's level of achievement in Units 3 and 4 will be determined by School-assessed Coursework (SACs) and/or School-assessed Tasks (SATs) as specified in the VCE study designs, and external assessment.

The VCAA will report the student's level of achievement on each assessment component as a grade from A+ to E or UG (ungraded). To receive a study score the student must achieve two or more graded assessments and receive S for both Units 3 and 4. The study score is reported on a scale of 0–50; it is a measure of how well the student performed in relation to all others who took the study. Teachers should refer to the current *VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook* for details on graded assessment and calculation of the study score. Percentage contributions to the study score in VCE English Language are as follows:

- Unit 3 School-assessed Coursework: 25 per cent
- Unit 4 School-assessed Coursework: 25 per cent
- End-of-year examination: 50 per cent.

Details of the assessment program are described in the sections on Units 3 and 4 in this study design.

Authentication

Work related to the outcomes of each unit will be accepted only if the teacher can attest that, to the best of their knowledge, all unacknowledged work is the student's own. Teachers need to refer to the current *VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook* for authentication procedures.

Metalanguage for Units 1 and 2

Each of the English Language units requires students to understand linguistic concepts and use metalanguage appropriately to describe and analyse language in an objective and a systematic way. Metalanguage underpins the key knowledge and key skills and provides students with the means to discuss elements of linguistic study. Students are required to understand and use the metalanguage contained in the unit and area of study introductions, the key knowledge and skills, and the following lists.

The subsystems of language

The subsystems of language are the essential organising tools with which students become familiar: phonetics and phonology (the study of the sounds of language); morphology and lexicology (the study of the structure or forms of words); syntax (the study of how words are combined into sentences); semantics (the study of meaning in language); and discourse (the study of how written and spoken texts of two or more sentences are organised).

In Units 1 and 2, students use metalanguage associated with the following five subsystems:

Phonetics and phonology

- the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)
- speech sound production: voicing, place of articulation and manner of articulation
- sounds in connected speech and connected speech processes: assimilation, vowel reduction, elision, insertion
- prosodic features: pitch, stress, volume, tempo and intonation.

Morphology and lexicology

- word classes: nouns, verbs, auxiliary verbs, modal verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, pronouns, conjunctions, determiners, interjections
- function words and content words
- affixation: prefix, suffix, infix
- inflection and derivation
- root, bound and free morphemes
- word loss; word-formation processes: blends, acronyms, initialisms, shortenings, compounding, contractions, collocations, neologisms, borrowing, commonisation, archaism
- morphological over-generalisation.

Syntax

- phrases, clauses and sentences
- sentence structures: sentence fragments; simple, compound, complex and compound-complex sentences; ellipses; and coordination and subordination
- sentence types and their communicative function in texts: declarative, imperative, interrogative, exclamative
- basic functions in clause structure: subject, object, complement, adverbial.

Discourse

- code-switching (the practice of alternating between two or more languages or dialects in conversation)
- paralinguistic features used in spoken texts: facial expressions, body gestures, body language, eye gaze.

Semantics

- the relation of meaning and sign
- semantic fields/domain
- semantic over-generalisation and inference
- etymology
- broadening, narrowing, elevation, deterioration, shift, denotation and changing connotation.

Other metalanguage

The following terms are not confined to one particular subsystem of language:

- function, field, mode, setting, context, relationships between participants
- register
- critical period of language development
- theories of child language acquisition including behaviourism, innatism, interactionism
- first- and additional-language acquisition, bilingualism, multi-lingualism
- Indo-European language family
- standardisation and codification
- prescriptivism and descriptivism
- Lingua franca
- linguistic relativism and determinism
- pidgins and creoles
- language maintenance, shift and reclamation.

Unit 1: Language and communication

Language is an essential aspect of human behaviour and the means by which individuals relate to the world, to each other and to the communities of which they are members. In this unit, students consider the way language is organised so that its users have the means to make sense of their experiences and to interact with others. Students explore the various functions of language and the nature of language as an elaborate system of signs. The relationship between speech and writing as the dominant modes of language and the impact of situational and cultural contexts on language choices are also considered. Students investigate children's ability to acquire language and the stages of language acquisition across a range of subsystems.

Area of Study 1

The nature and functions of language

In this area of study students explore the nature of language and the various functions language performs in a range of contexts. They consider the properties that distinguish human communication as unique, the differences between modes of spoken and written language, and the relationship between meaning and the rules that govern language use. Students are introduced to the theory that language is a system of signs and conventions and that while the relationship between words and meanings may be arbitrary, our use of language is rule-governed and informed by accepted systems, such as word order and affixation.

Meaning can be conveyed through a range of modes: speech, writing and sign. Languages allow for communication through actions, whether it be producing speech sounds and graphic symbols such as letters, or giving non-verbal signals through systems such as sign language. Each mode can combine with other modes for the purposes of communication. Students also consider the role of paralinguistic features in conveying meaning.

Students learn that language choices are always influenced by the situational and cultural contexts in which they occur and are based on the conventional understandings and traditions that shape and reflect our view of the world. They come to understand that language is never a neutral and transparent means of representing reality, and that it can encode social and cultural understandings.

Students learn that the situational elements of a language exchange, such as the function, field, mode, setting and relationships between participants, influence language choice. Cultural factors, such as the values, attitudes and beliefs held by participants and the wider community, also affect people's linguistic choices.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to identify and describe primary aspects of the nature and functions of human language.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge
- the properties that distinguish human communication as unique
- language as a meaning-making system that can be both arbitrary and rule-governed
- the primary modes of language: spoken, written, sign
- major functions that language serves when used in a given context
- the influence of context on language choice
- features that characterise speech and writing

* the structure of language, from morphemes to lexemes, to phrases and clauses, to sentence structures and types
* the ways in which language encodes social and cultural understandings
* metalanguage to discuss aspects of the nature and functions of human language.

Key skills
* define key linguistic concepts as they relate to the nature and functions of language
* use key concepts and metalanguage appropriately to describe and analyse language use in an objective and a systematic way
* compare written texts with transcripts of spoken English and analyse the nature and functions of each.

Area of Study 2

Language acquisition

This area of study focuses on the developmental stages of child language acquisition. Students explore how in addition to words and their meanings, children learn to use the phonological and grammatical conventions of the language, as well as the appropriate use of these conventions in different social situations. As children acquire language, they can be seen to change their language system gradually in response to the language use of others. At different stages, children's language develops across a range of subsystems allowing for increasingly complex communication and a greater range of functions.

Students are introduced to different theories that attempt to explain how children acquire language and research the so-called 'critical period', the window of opportunity during which language must be acquired. Students examine case studies that show what can happen when a child is deprived of the opportunity to learn a language.

Students also examine the similarities and differences between first- and additional-language acquisition. They consider differences in the language acquisition process in children who are brought up bilingual with those who learn additional languages as they grow up.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to describe what children learn when they acquire language and discuss a range of perspectives on how language is acquired.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge
* the nature and the developmental stages of child language acquisition
* the major theories of child language acquisition
* commonalities and differences between learning a language as a young child and as an adult, including first- and additional-language learning
* bilingualism and multi-lingualism
* phonological, morphological, lexical, syntactic and semantic development in children
* metalanguage to discuss how language is acquired.

Key skills

- define key linguistic concepts as they relate to the acquisition of language
- use key concepts and metalanguage appropriately to describe and analyse language use in an objective and a systematic way
- investigate what children need to acquire as they develop as users of spoken language from babyhood to early adolescence, including how they acquire language knowledge and how they learn to use language for a range of functions
- read a phonetic transcription of Australian English, using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).

Assessment

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on whether the student has demonstrated the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Teachers should use a variety of learning activities and assessment tasks that provide a range of opportunities for students to demonstrate the key knowledge and key skills in the outcomes.

The areas of study, including the key knowledge and key skills listed for the outcomes, should be used for course design and the development of learning activities and assessment tasks. Assessment must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and should be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe.

All assessments at Units 1 and 2 are school-based. Procedures for assessment of levels of achievement in Units 1 and 2 are a matter for school decision.

For this unit students are required to demonstrate two outcomes. As a set these outcomes encompass the areas of study in the unit.

Suitable tasks for assessment in this unit may be selected from the following:

- a folio of annotated texts
- an essay
- an investigative report
- an analysis of spoken and/or written text
- an analytical commentary
- a case study
- short-answer questions
- an analysis of data.

Assessment tasks may be written, oral or multi-modal.

Where teachers allow students to choose between tasks they must ensure that the tasks they set are of comparable scope and demand.

Unit 2: Language change

In this unit, students focus on language change. Languages are dynamic and language change is an inevitable and a continuous process. Students consider factors contributing to change over time in the English language and factors contributing to the spread of English. They explore texts from the past and from the present, considering how all subsystems of the language system are affected – phonetics and phonology, morphology and lexicology, syntax, discourse and semantics. Attitudes to language change vary considerably and these are also considered.

In addition to developing an understanding of how English has been transformed over the centuries, students explore the various possibilities for the future of English. They consider how the global spread of English has led to a diversification of the language and to English now being used by more people as an additional or a foreign language than as a first language. Contact between English and other languages has led to the development of geographical and ethnic varieties, but has also hastened the decline of indigenous languages. Students consider the cultural repercussions of the spread of English.

Area of Study 1

English across time

This area of study examines the changes that have occurred in English over time. Students investigate the factors that bring about language change, including those that come from within the language itself, from social transformation, and from contact with other languages. They explore language change across all subsystems as represented in texts that traverse the history of English.

Students examine the origins of English as a member of the Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family, tracing its development from Old through to Early Modern English and to the establishment of a standard language in the eighteenth century. Students explore the development of Australian English as a distinct national variety, the impact of technological advancement on English and the possibilities for the future of English.

Students examine the general concept of standardisation and the notion of 'correct English'. While some language changes are denounced by the wider community, with linguistic change often viewed as indicative of declining standards, others occur without widespread acknowledgment. The role of prescriptivist attitudes in establishing and maintaining standard language is considered in this unit, as are descriptivist approaches to language change.

Students explore how languages might continue to change to meet the needs and reflect the values of their users. They apply their knowledge of Australia's linguistic heritage to consideration of possibilities for the future of English.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to describe language change as represented in a range of texts and analyse a range of attitudes to language change.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge
- the historical development of English from Old English to present-day Australian English and factors influencing language change
- the relationship of English to the Indo-European languages
- the codification and the making of Standard English, focusing on the origins of the English spelling system
- changes in phonetics and phonology, in particular types of sound changes and symmetry of change

- changes in semantics, morphology and syntax
- changes in the lexicon through word addition and word loss, with particular reference to words in Australian English
- attitudes to changes in language including prescriptivism and descriptivism
- metalanguage to discuss language change.

Key skills
- define key linguistic concepts as they relate to the changing nature of English
- use key concepts and metalanguage appropriately to describe and analyse language change in an objective and a systematic way
- trace etymologies in appropriate sources, such as databases and etymological dictionaries
- analyse changes in the English language over time as reflected in texts
- apply knowledge of the evolution of English to hypothesise possibilities for the future of English.

Area of Study 2

Englishes in contact

In this area of study students consider the effects of the global spread of English by learning about both the development and decline of languages as a result of English contact, the elevation of English as a global lingua franca and the cultural consequences of language contact. Students explore the ways English is used as an expression of culture in a range of literary, transactional and popular-culture texts.

Students explore factors that contributed to the spread of English in the past, such as trade and colonisation, and factors that continue to contribute to the spread of English today. Students consider the consequences of the growth of English as an additional or a foreign language, including the development of English-based pidgins, creoles and other varieties, and its effect on indigenous languages around the world. Students become familiar with the distinctive features of a number of national, ethnic and regional varieties of English and explore the ways that these varieties show the effects of intensive contact with other languages. They examine the ways that multilingual speakers use code-switching to mark identity and as a means of inclusion or exclusion. Students explore how change to and loss of language affects its users' cultural identities and worldviews, as evidenced by the indigenous and migrant language reclamation and maintenance movements in contemporary Australian society. Students build on their knowledge that language encodes social and cultural understandings by exploring the concepts of linguistic relativism and determinism.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to describe and explain the effects of the global spread of English in terms of both conformity and diversity, through a range of spoken and written texts.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge
- factors in the development of English as a world language
- the distinctive features of national and regional varieties of English
- the distinctive features of pidgins, creoles and English as a lingua franca
- the role of language as an expression of cultures and worldviews, including representations of worldviews in texts
- the concepts of linguistic relativism and determinism

- the processes of language maintenance, shift, and reclamation
- cultural and social effects of language change and loss, with particular reference to Australian Aboriginal languages
- metalanguage to discuss the global spread of English.

Key skills
- define key linguistic concepts as they relate to the development of English as a world language
- use key concepts and metalanguage appropriately to identify, describe and analyse the different varieties of English that have developed as a result of the spread of English
- explore and analyse the effects of the global spread of English as reflected in texts.

Assessment

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on whether the student has demonstrated the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Teachers should use a variety of learning activities and assessment tasks that provide a range of opportunities for students to demonstrate the key knowledge and key skills in the outcomes.

The areas of study, including the key knowledge and key skills listed for the outcomes, should be used for course design and the development of learning and assessment activities. Assessment must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and should be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe.

All assessments at Units 1 and 2 are school-based. Procedures for assessment of levels of achievement in Units 1 and 2 are a matter for school decision.

For this unit students are required to demonstrate two outcomes. As a set these outcomes encompass the areas of study in the unit.

Suitable tasks for assessment in this unit may be selected from the following:
- a folio of annotated texts
- an essay
- an investigative report
- an analysis of spoken and/or written text
- an analytical commentary
- a case study
- short-answer questions
- an analysis of data.

Assessment tasks may be written, oral or multi-modal.

Where teachers allow students to choose between tasks they must ensure that the tasks they set are of comparable scope and demand.

Metalanguage for Units 3 and 4

Each of the English Language units requires students to understand linguistic concepts and use metalanguage appropriately to describe and analyse language in an objective and a systematic way. Metalanguage underpins the key knowledge and key skills and provides students with the means to discuss elements of linguistic study.

The subsystems of language

The subsystems of language are the essential organising tools with which students become familiar.

In Units 3 and 4, students use metalanguage associated with the following five subsystems:

Phonetics and phonology

- prosodic features: pitch, stress, volume, tempo and intonation
- vocal effects: coughs, laughter, breath
- sounds in connected speech and connected speech processes: assimilation, vowel reduction, elision, insertion
- features of Broad, General and Cultivated accents in Australian English
- phonological patterning in texts: alliteration, assonance, consonance, onomatopoeia, rhythm, rhyme
- an awareness of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and the phonetic transcription of Australian English.

Morphology and lexicology

- word classes: nouns, verbs, auxiliary verbs, modal verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, pronouns, conjunctions, determiners, interjections
- function words and content words
- affixation: prefix, suffix, infix
- inflection and derivation
- root, bound and free morphemes
- suffixation in Australian English
- word loss; word-formation processes: blends, acronyms, initialisms, shortenings, compounding, contractions, collocations, neologisms, borrowing, commonisation, archaism
- morphological patterning: conversion of word class, creative word formation
- lexical choice and patterning.

Syntax

- phrases, clauses and sentences
- sentence structures: sentence fragments; simple, compound, complex and compound-complex sentences; ellipses; nominalisation; and coordination and subordination
- sentence types and their communicative function in texts: declarative, imperative, interrogative, exclamative
- basic functions in clause structure: subject, object, complement, adverbial
- active and passive voice, including agentless passives
- syntactic patterning in texts: antithesis, listing, parallelism.

Discourse

- code-switching (the practice of alternating between two or more languages or dialects in conversation)
- factors that contribute to a text's coherence: cohesion, inference, logical ordering, formatting, consistency and conventions
- factors that contribute to a text's cohesion: lexical choice including synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy and collocation; information flow including clefting, front focus and end focus; anaphoric and cataphoric reference; deictics; repetition; ellipses; substitution; conjunctions and adverbials
- features of spoken discourse: openings and closings; adjacency pairs; overlapping speech; interrogative tags; discourse particles; non-fluency features including pauses, filled pauses/voiced hesitations, false starts, repetition, repairs
- strategies in spoken discourse: topic management, turn-taking (taking, holding and passing the floor), minimal responses/back-channelling
- conventions for the transcription of spoken English.

Semantics

- semantic fields/domains
- lexical choice and semantic patterning in texts: figurative language, irony, metaphor, oxymoron, simile, personification, animation, puns, lexical ambiguity
- lexical meaning, especially sense relations: synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, idiom, denotation and connotation
- euphemism and dysphemism.

Other metalanguage

The following terms are not confined to one particular subsystem of language:

- register
- overt and covert norms
- Standard and non-Standard English
- political correctness
- jargon
- slang
- colloquial language/colloquialisms
- double-speak
- taboo language
- public language
- rhetoric
- positive and negative face needs
- situational context
- cultural context
- social purpose
- ethnolect; sociolect; idiolect.

Unit 3: Language variation and social purpose

In this unit students investigate English language in contemporary Australian social settings, along a continuum of informal and formal registers. They consider language as a means of social interaction, exploring how through written and spoken texts we communicate information, ideas, attitudes, prejudices and ideological stances.

Students examine the stylistic features of formal and informal language in both spoken and written modes: the grammatical and discourse structure of language; the choice and meanings of words within texts; how words are combined to convey a message; the purpose in conveying a message; and the particular context in which a message is conveyed. Students learn how to describe the interrelationship between words, sentences and text as a means of exploring how texts construct message and meaning.

Students consider how texts are influenced by the situational and cultural contexts in which they occur. They examine how function, field, mode, setting and the relationships between participants all contribute to a person's language choices, as do the values, attitudes and beliefs held by participants and the wider community. Students learn how speakers and writers select features from within particular stylistic variants, or registers, and this in turn establishes the degree of formality within a discourse. They learn how language can be indicative of relationships, power structures and purpose through the choice of a particular variety of language and through the ways in which language varieties are used in processes of inclusion and exclusion.

Area of Study 1

Informal language

In this area of study students consider the way speakers and writers choose from a repertoire of language to vary the style of their language to suit a particular social purpose. They consider the features and functions of informal language in written, spoken and electronic interactions, understanding that the situational and cultural context of an exchange determines the language used.

Students examine the features that distinguish informal language from more formal language. They understand that informal language often lacks the carefully planned structure of formal texts and may play an important role in building rapport. They examine how users of informal language may be idiosyncratic in their linguistic choices and structure texts in a non-linear way, and they explore the role of colloquialisms and non-Standard English in establishing informal registers. Students study texts in which speakers use informal language including conversations, narratives, monologues, interviews and unscripted commentaries. They also examine informal texts produced by writers, including narratives, advertisements, journals, notes, and electronic or other written interactions involving one or more participants. Students consider features of 'chat' associated with both speaking and writing, such as a reliance on sequencing, cooperation and turn-taking, as well as features that are particular to each mode. Students learn that speakers have at their disposal a support system of prosodic and paralinguistic cues that they can use to organise and present information. They explore how writers may choose to rely on abbreviations, spellings which reflect pronunciation and prosodic patterns, emoticons and context-specific graphemes. Both written and spoken informal texts may contain non-fluency features, ellipses, shortened lexical forms and syntactic complexity.

Students investigate how informal language can be used to meet and challenge others' face needs, both positive (the need to be liked, respected and treated as a member of a group) and negative (the need to be autonomous and act without imposition from others); how informal language choices can build rapport by encouraging inclusiveness, intimacy, solidarity and equality; and how informal language features such as slang and swearing patterns are important in encouraging linguistic innovation and in-group membership.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to identify and analyse distinctive features of informal language in written and spoken texts.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge
- the role of Standard and non-Standard English in creating formal and informal texts
- differences in the nature and functions of formal and informal texts
- the relationship between the context and the features of language in informal texts
- the role of discourse features and lexical choice in creating textual cohesion and coherence in informal written texts
- stylistic features in informal speech and writing, including phonological patterning, syntactic patterning, morphological patterning, and lexical choice and semantic patterning
- features of spoken discourse and major discourse strategies used by speakers and the ways in which cooperation can be achieved
- the use of informal language for various social purposes, including:
  – encouraging intimacy, solidarity and equality
  – maintaining and challenging positive and negative face needs
  – promoting linguistic innovation
  – supporting in-group membership
- conventions for the transcription of spoken English texts, including symbols, legend, and line numbers
- metalanguage to discuss informal language in texts.

Key skills
- use key linguistic concepts as they relate to informal language in texts
- use key concepts and metalanguage appropriately to describe and analyse informal spoken and written language use in an objective and a systematic way
- analyse the effect of informal contexts on language choices
- analyse the nature, features and functions of informal written texts and transcripts of informal spoken English.

Area of Study 2

Formal language

In this area of study students consider the way speakers and writers choose from a repertoire of language to achieve a particular purpose. As with informal language, the situational and cultural context determines whether people use formal language and in which mode they choose to communicate.

Students examine the features and functions of formal language, particularly in literature and the public domain. They understand that formal language, in all modes, tends to be less ambiguous, more cohesive, and is more likely to make explicit aspects of the presumed context. They examine formal texts, exploring how writers and speakers are more likely to consider how their audience might interpret their message, packaging it appropriately with attention to the art of rhetoric, including the use of figurative language. Students learn that formal written texts are more likely to have been edited while formal spoken texts may have been rehearsed. They examine such formal written texts as legal documents, bureaucratic policy and procedures, official documents, informational prose, and literature. They also examine formal language in spoken texts such as speeches, lectures, oaths, liturgies,

performances, and monologues. Formal speech has many of the organisational and stylistic features of written language, but also draws on paralinguistic features such as gesture and eye contact and prosodic cues such as pitch, stress and intonation.

Students investigate the range of ways formal language can be used to perform various social purposes. They investigate how formal language can be used to meet and challenge others' face needs, both positive and negative. Formal language choices, particularly politeness strategies, can also reinforce social distance and relationship hierarchies, or build rapport. Similarly, varieties such as jargon can reinforce the user's authority and expertise or promote in-group solidarity.

Students examine texts in which speakers and writers use formal language to celebrate and commemorate, and they explore how formal language can be used to clarify, manipulate or obfuscate, particularly in public language – the language of politics, media, the law and bureaucracy. Students learn that formal language enables users to carefully negotiate social taboos through the employment of euphemisms, non-discriminatory language, and political correctness. They explore how variations in style reveal much about the intentions and values of speakers or writers, as well as the situational and social contexts in which formal texts are created.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to identify and analyse distinctive features of formal language in written and spoken texts.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

- the nature and functions of formal and informal texts
- the relationship between the context and the features of language in formal texts
- the features and functions of formal writing and formal speech as represented in a range of texts from literature and the public domain
- the role of discourse features and lexical choice in creating textual cohesion and coherence in formal spoken and written texts
- stylistic features in formal speech and writing, including phonological patterning, syntactic patterning, morphological patterning, and lexical choice and semantic patterning
- the use of formal language for various social purposes, including:
  - maintaining and challenging positive and negative face needs
  - reinforcing social distance and authority
  - establishing expertise
  - promoting social harmony, negotiating social taboos and building rapport
  - clarifying, manipulating or obfuscating
- metalanguage to discuss formal language in texts.

Key skills

- define key linguistic concepts as they relate to formal language in texts
- use key concepts and metalanguage appropriately to describe and analyse formal spoken and written language in an objective and a systematic way
- analyse the effect of formal contexts on language choices
- analyse the nature, features and functions of formal texts
- evaluate features of language in the public domain.

School-based assessment

Satisfactory completion

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on whether the student has demonstrated the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Teachers should use a variety of learning activities and assessment tasks to provide a range of opportunities for students to demonstrate the key knowledge and key skills in the outcomes.

The areas of study and key knowledge and key skills listed for the outcomes should be used for course design and the development of learning activities and assessment tasks.

Assessment of levels of achievement

The student's level of achievement in Unit 3 will be determined by School-assessed Coursework. School-assessed Coursework tasks must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and must not unduly add to the workload associated with that program. They must be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe.

Where teachers provide a range of options for the same School-assessed Coursework task, they should ensure that the options are of comparable scope and demand.

The types and range of forms of School-assessed Coursework for the outcomes are prescribed within the study design. The VCAA publishes *Advice for teachers* for this study, which includes advice on the design of assessment tasks and the assessment of student work for a level of achievement.

Teachers will provide to the VCAA a numerical score representing an assessment of the student's level of achievement. The score must be based on the teacher's assessment of the performance of each student on the tasks set out in the following table.

Contribution to final assessment

School-assessed Coursework for Unit 3 will contribute 25 per cent to the study score.

Outcomes	Marks allocated*	Assessment tasks
Outcome 1 Identify and analyse distinctive features of informal language in written and spoken texts.	50	Analysis of one or more samples of informal language in any one or a combination of the following: • a folio of annotated texts • an essay • an investigative report • an analytical commentary • short-answer questions. Assessment tasks may be written, oral or multi-modal. The total suggested length of the student responses should be approximately 600–800 words or equivalent.
Outcome 2 Identify and analyse distinctive features of formal language in written and spoken texts.	50	Analysis of one or more samples of formal language in any one or a combination of the following: • a folio of annotated texts • an essay • an investigative report • an analytical commentary • short-answer questions. Assessment tasks may be written, oral or multi-modal. The total suggested length of the student responses should be approximately 600–800 words or equivalent.
Total marks	**100**	

*School-assessed Coursework for Unit 3 contributes 25 per cent.

External assessment

The level of achievement for Units 3 and 4 is also assessed by an end-of-year examination, which will contribute 50 per cent.

Unit 4: Language variation and identity

In this unit students focus on the role of language in establishing and challenging different identities. There are many varieties of English used in contemporary Australian society, including national, regional, cultural and social variations. Standard Australian English is the variety that is granted prestige in contemporary Australian society and it has a role in establishing national identity. However, non-Standard English varieties also play a role in constructing users' social and cultural identities. Students examine a range of texts to explore the ways different identities are constructed. These texts include extracts from novels, films or television programs, poetry, letters and emails, transcripts of spoken interaction, songs, advertisements, speeches and bureaucratic or official documents.

Students explore how our sense of identity evolves in response to situations and experiences and is influenced by how we see ourselves and how others see us. Through our language we express ourselves as individuals and signal our membership of particular groups. Students explore how language can distinguish between 'us' and 'them', creating solidarity and reinforcing social distance.

Area of Study 1

Language variation in Australian society

This area of study enables students to examine the range of language varieties that exist in contemporary Australian society and the contributions these varieties make to a construction of shared national identity. Australian English has much in common with Englishes from other continents, but the language has also developed features across all subsystems of language that distinguish it from other Englishes.

Students explore how the Broad, General and Cultivated Australian accents reflect the society from which they emerged and the forms that achieved social prestige over time. However, Australia is not linguistically uniform, and contemporary texts in both written and spoken modes both challenge and construct notions of what it means to be Australian and what might be meant by 'national identity'. Increasing global contact, the influence of modern technologies and other social changes are shaping contemporary Australian English, and attitudes towards Australian language continue to evolve.

Students examine how Standard Australian English, as the variety of Australian English afforded prestige by public institutions, has played a pivotal role in establishing the legitimacy of Australian English in comparison to other national varieties of English. They explore how the non-Standard English varieties operating in Australia provide further dimensions to Australian English. They consider variation between regions, a range of migrant ethnolects, and Aboriginal Englishes, in addition to exploring how the language features associated with stereotypes may be adopted subconsciously or deliberately employed to establish or challenge identities.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to investigate and analyse varieties of Australian English and attitudes towards them.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge
- the role of Standard and non-Standard English in Australian society
- the ways in which a variety of Australian identities are constructed and reflected in a range of texts
- the characteristics of Australian English in contrast to Englishes from other continents, in phonological, morphological, lexical, and grammatical patterns
- the features of Broad, General and Cultivated Australian English accents

- how Australian English varies according to geography, including national and regional variation
- how Australian English varies according to culture, including Aboriginal English and ethnolects
- attitudes within society to different varieties of Australian English, including prescriptivism and descriptivism
- the role of language in constructing national identity
- metalanguage to discuss varieties of Australian English.

Key skills
- use key linguistic concepts and metalanguage appropriately to discuss language variation and identity in Australia in an objective and a systematic way
- use key concepts and metalanguage appropriately to analyse attitudes to varieties of Australian English in an objective and a systematic way
- investigate and analyse how Australian identity is constructed and reflected in a range of written and spoken texts.

Area of Study 2

Individual and group identities

In this area of study students focus on the role of language in reflecting and constructing individual and group identities. They examine how language users are able to play different roles within speech communities and to construct their identities through subconscious and conscious language variation, according to age, gender, occupation, interests, aspiration and education. While individual identity can be derived from the character traits that make us unique, our social identities are drawn from membership of particular groups. Students investigate how, as individuals, we make language choices that draw on our understanding of social expectations and community attitudes.

Students examine overt and covert norms in speech communities. They consider how knowing and being able to exploit overt norms – which are typically associated with Standard English – allows users to construct a prestigious identity associated with their class, education, occupation, social status and aspirations. They also consider how covert norms – those that are given prestige by local groups and are typically associated with non-Standard English – can be powerful in constructing identities, establishing those who use them as members of the 'in' group, while those who are unable to conform are cast as outsiders. The language features associated with jargon and slang also provide a powerful basis for inclusion and exclusion.

Students learn how societal attitudes, personal associations and individual prejudices can lead to social disadvantage and discrimination against use of non-Standard English dialects and accents.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse how people's choice of language reflects and constructs their identities.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge
- social and personal variation in language according to factors such as age, gender, occupation, interests, aspirations and education
- features of language that contribute to a sense of individual identity and group membership
- representations of individual and group identities in a range of texts

- the ways in which the language of individuals and the language of groups is shaped by social expectations and community attitudes
- the ways in which people draw on their linguistic repertoire to gain power and prestige, including exploiting overt and covert norms
- the relationship between social attitudes and language choices
- metalanguage to discuss representations of identity in texts.

Key skills
- use key linguistic concepts and metalanguage appropriately to discuss the relationship between language variation and identity for both individuals and groups in an objective and a systematic way
- use key concepts and metalanguage appropriately to analyse attitudes to varieties of English in contemporary Australian society in an objective and a systematic way
- explain and analyse how group and individual identities are constructed and reflected in a range of written and spoken texts.

School-based assessment

Satisfactory completion

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on whether the student has demonstrated the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Teachers should use a variety of learning activities and assessment tasks to provide a range of opportunities for students to demonstrate the key knowledge and key skills in the outcomes.

The areas of study and key knowledge and key skills listed for the outcomes should be used for course design and the development of learning activities and assessment tasks.

Assessment of levels of achievement

The student's level of achievement in Unit 4 will be determined by School-assessed Coursework. School-assessed Coursework tasks must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and must not unduly add to the workload associated with that program. They must be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe.

Where teachers provide a range of options for the same School-assessed Coursework task, they should ensure that the options are of comparable scope and demand.

The types and range of forms of School-assessed Coursework for the outcomes are prescribed within the study design. The VCAA publishes *Advice for teachers* for this study, which includes advice on the design of assessment tasks and the assessment of student work for a level of achievement.

Teachers will provide to the VCAA a numerical score representing an assessment of the student's level of achievement. The score must be based on the teacher's assessment of the performance of each student on the tasks set out in the following table.

Contribution to final assessment

School-assessed Coursework for Unit 4 will contribute 25 per cent to the study score.

Outcomes	Marks allocated*	Assessment tasks
Outcome 1 Investigate and analyse varieties of Australian English and attitudes towards them.	50	For each outcome, any one or a combination of the following: • a folio of annotated texts • an essay • an investigative report • an analytical commentary • short-answer questions.
Outcome 2 Analyse how people's choice of language reflects and constructs their identities.	50	Assessment tasks may be written, oral or multi-modal. The total suggested length of the student responses should be approximately 600–800 words or equivalent.
Total marks	**100**	

*School-assessed Coursework for Unit 4 contributes 25 per cent.

External assessment

The level of achievement for Units 3 and 4 is also assessed by an end-of-year examination.

Contribution to final assessment

The examination will contribute 50 per cent.

End-of-year examination

Description

The examination will be set by a panel appointed by the VCAA. All the key knowledge and key skills that underpin the outcomes in Units 3 and 4 are examinable.

Conditions

The examination will be completed under the following conditions:

• Duration: two hours.
• Date: end-of-year, on a date to be published annually by the VCAA.
• VCAA examination rules will apply. Details of these rules are published annually in the *VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook*.
• The examination will be marked by assessors appointed by the VCAA.

Further advice

The VCAA publishes specifications for all VCE examinations on the VCAA website. Examination specifications include details about the sections of the examination, their weighting, the question format/s and any other essential information. The specifications are published in the first year of implementation of the revised Units 3 and 4 sequence together with any sample material.