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Introduction

The core aim of this book is to help you to develop and apply the key skills in reading and writing you need to succeed in your AS and A level English Language course; it is particularly designed for those working towards the Cambridge International Examinations syllabus 9093. The book covers a wide range of reading skills, such as decoding questions, drawing out important words and phrases, and understanding aspects of style, voice and tone. It addresses the conventions of certain kinds of written and spoken language, from scripted speeches to travel articles, from memoirs to letters, and looks at how you can capture these conventions and writers’ techniques in your own work. In writing, you will learn how to plan and structure shorter and extended responses, either for specified audiences or for a more general readership. You will learn how to adapt content from one text for a new purpose or context, and to write with originality and flair where appropriate. Most importantly, you will read model or sample responses which will help you evaluate your own work.

The AS Level section of the book is divided into three units:

■ In Unit 1 you will focus on responding to non-fiction texts as a reader, developing skills such as locating evidence and developing commentary. In particular, you will look at personal, descriptive and persuasive writing.
■ In Unit 2 the focus shifts to writing non-fiction with a strong emphasis on planning responses and on the range of text types you will need to master, for example letters, diaries, promotional texts, biography and character portraits.
■ In Unit 3 you will focus on imaginative writing with attention given to key areas such as characterisation, voice, setting, symbols, imagery and related linguistic techniques.

The A Level section of the book builds on the reading and writing skills you have learned at AS Level and applies them to significant areas of English language study. The features of spoken language underpin much of the A Level course and you will focus on the conventions we use in our discourse with others. You will link these spoken language studies to an examination of the historical and cultural influences which have influenced the style of spoken and written English and which continue to do so today. You will find out about the variations of English along with people’s attitudes to how the language is used, for example in relation to gender differences and political correctness. You will examine the many different varieties of English as a global language and, in the final unit, learn about the processes and theories of child language acquisition.

These are all very broad topics which lend themselves to further research beyond the core material covered in this book. You will therefore have many opportunities to research information as it applies to your own region.

A Level studies require extended essay writing using informed, clearly validated viewpoints and case studies. You will find examples and commentaries to help you develop an analytical framework.
There are a number of features in the book to help you in your study:

**LINK** – This suggests related sections or pages from the book which will help you make connections between skills or texts.

**TIP** – This provides focused advice to help your study and revision.

**KEY TERMS** – This defines important words that you need to understand or use in your studies.

**FURTHER RESEARCH/READING** – These suggest additional guidance or supporting material that can be accessed elsewhere, for example on the web.

Throughout the book, you will be given the chance to build and develop skills in small steps or stages, as well as writing extended, full responses to examination-style tasks and questions. Many of the texts you will encounter are challenging, but they come from a wide range of cultures, contexts and times. All have been included to engage and enrich your reading and writing experience and we hope that you will take the chance to explore some of them more fully.

In conclusion, we believe this book will provide a rich, enjoyable and useful course of study that will enable you to succeed in AS and A Level English Language.

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