

English Language resources: KS5 Language - Starter activities

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Compounding

Task

- ❖ Set a timer for 5 minutes and organise pupils to work in pairs or small groups (this can be done individually if more appropriate for the class).
- ❖ Write a word on the board or display on a screen and ask pupils to write down as many compounds as possible using that word before the timer runs out.
- ❖ Allow hyphenated words and phrases which seem to 'go together' to refer to one thing
 - e.g. post – postman, postcard, postcode, post-box (or post box), lamppost, seatpost
- ❖ After the time is up, collect and compare answers.

Discussion points

- ❖ These could include
 - If the words can be grouped in terms of meaning or lexical fields
 - The significance of the order of words in the compound
 - What role hyphens play in the compounding process, especially pointing out words which are in a transitional stage between being hyphenated and not hyphenated, e.g. re-sit / resit
 - Whether pronunciation changes are part of this process and if so, at what stage?
 - The difference between compounds made using whole words and those made using affixes e.g. post-haste, post-feminist, posthumous where 'post' is a prefix

Resources

- ❖ Online timers with sound:
<http://www.online-stopwatch.com>
- ❖ Possible words to choose from:
 - Water, light, day, night, out, cross, hand, back, moon, blue, back, motor, love, table, head, heart, ice, door, book, news, gate, stand, out, high, iron, snow, eye,

- post, sun, counter, down, foot, fore, free, hair, hard, over, under, sea, wheel, work.

Affixation

Task

- ❖ Set a timer for 5 minutes and organise pupils to work in pairs or small groups (this can be done individually if more appropriate for the class).
- ❖ Write an affix on the board or display on a screen and ask pupils to write down as many words as possible using that affix before the timer runs out.
- ❖ After the time is up, collect and compare answers.

Discussion points

- ❖ What each affix means
- ❖ How some affixes might alter the grammatical class of words e.g. noise (noun) / noisy (adjective).
 - Use this as an opportunity to reinforce grammatical terminology, if needed.

Resources

- ❖ Online timers with sound:
<http://www.online-stopwatch.com>
- ❖ Possible affixes to choose from:
 - **Prefixes:** un-, dis-, over-, pre-, anti-, semi-, re-
 - **Suffixes:** -able, -ance, -dom, -ation, -ism, -ment, -ness, -tion, -ous, -ly

'Call My Bluff' or 'Fictionary'

Task

- ❖ Organise the class into teams of three, and give each team a word and its true definition printed on a card
- ❖ They must create two more fake definitions for their word, write these onto their cards, and then prepare to present these to the class
 - This stage can be limited using a timer if required

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- ❖ The class must try to identify the true definition, while the team's aim is to mislead as much as possible.

Discussion points (after a few rounds)

- ❖ Why do some words remain current and others fall out of use?
- ❖ Establish terms such as archaic language, obsolete, technical lexis etc.
 - As appropriate (and for a lengthy discussion) consider what criteria should be applied to decide if a word is rare, obsolete or even archaic.
- ❖ How does the internet act to preserve old words?

Resources

- ❖ Sets of three A5 cards for each team – one card in each set must be printed with the true definition.
- ❖ Try:
 - pabular – (adjective) Of, relating to, or of the nature of pabulum (which means fodder)
 - nodose – (adjective) Of the nature of a node or nodule; having nodes or nodules; knotty
 - factioneer – (verb) To busy oneself in factions (a faction is a group which is separate from the main group, often engaged in challenging the main group)
 - tag-rag – (noun or adjective) The rabble, the riff-raff; a low or despicable person.
- ❖ For more words, try using old dictionaries or <http://www.oed.com>
 - If your institution has a subscription, use the list of archaic words, or just sign up for 'Word of the Day' and receive a daily emailed word.

Spot the metaphor

Task

- ❖ Arrange the class into pairs. Present the following list on paper or on a screen:

- The descriptive approach taken by Jean Aitchison is 'a frontal assault on the rules of the English language.'
- The English language is 'going downhill fast.'
- 'Some seeke so far for outlandish English, that they forget altogether their mothers language. And I dare swear this, if some of their mothers were alive, thei were not able to tell what they say: and yet these fine English clerkes will say, they speake in their mother tongue, if a man should charge them for counterfeiting the Kings English.'
- 'Dictionary compilers of the 21st century are like 19th century gold panners: they must sift, and sift again to find the true gold.'
- 'So now they haue made our English tongue a gallimaufrey, or hodgepodge of all other speches.'
- 'The language the world is crying out to learn is diseased in its own country.'

- ❖ Ask pupils to identify the metaphor or image being used in each case.
- ❖ Gather answers from the class and focus on the effects of these images.

Discussion points

- ❖ Note that the older comments are from 1500s (Thomas Wilson 1553 and Edmund Spenser 1579)
 - What are the implications of this fact?
 - ❖ David Crystal, having noted that such responses to language change are commonplace through the ages, asks why people are so emotional about language.

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- What possible reasons might there be for this to happen?
- ❖ How can dictionary compilers make a judgement about what is 'gold' and what isn't?
 - What rules would the class apply?

Date the text

Task

- ❖ This activity can be done in small groups. Each group will need a set of texts, enlarged for group work.
- ❖ Ask pupils to order the versions of the text chronologically and identify linguistic reasons for the choices made.
- ❖ Encourage a whole-class discussion of the key features and ideas which lead to dating of texts
 - Reveal the correct order as part of this discussion, rather than as the end-point.

Resources

Text A

¹ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

³ And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light. ⁴ God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light 'day', and the darkness he called 'night'. And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

Text B

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

²And the earth was without forme, and voyd; and darkenesse was upon the face of the deepe. And the Spirit of God mooved upon the face of the waters.

³And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

⁴And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkenesse.

⁵And God called the light Day, and the darknesse he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

Text C

¹In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

²And the earth was waste and empty, and darkness was on the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

³And God said, Let there be light. And there was light.

⁴And God saw the light that it was good; and God divided between the light and the darkness.

⁵And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening, and there was morning -- the first day.

Text D

1 In the bigynnyng God made of nouyt heuene and erthe.

2 Forsothe the erthe was idel and voide, and derknessis weren on the face of depthe; and the Spiryte of the Lord was borun on the watris.

3 And God seide, Liyt be maad, and liyt was maad.

4 And God seiye the liyt, that it was good, and he departide the liyt fro derknessis; and he clepide the liyt,

5 dai, and the derknessis, nyyt. And the euentid and morwetid was maad, o daie.

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Text E

¹ In the beginning, when God created the universe, ² the earth was formless and desolate. The raging ocean that covered everything was engulfed in total darkness, and the Spirit of God was moving over the water. ³ Then God commanded,

Let there be light—and light appeared. ⁴ God was pleased with what he saw. Then he separated the light from the darkness, ⁵ and he named the light

Day and the darkness

Night. Evening passed and morning came—that was the first day.

Texts are

- A. Today's New International Version 2005
- B. King James Bible 1611
- C. Darby translation 1890
- D. Wyclif's Bible late 14th century
- E. Good News Bible 1976

Can you be a translator?

Task

- ❖ Pupils should work individually or in very small groups for this task.
- ❖ Display or hand out copies of an extract from the King James Bible (example below) and ask pupils to produce a modern version.
 - If the issue of how literally to translate arises, allow pupils to choose their style.
- ❖ After the translations are completed, some examples can be read out for specific passages.

Discussion points

- ❖ What linguistic difficulties (semantic, grammatical etc.) were encountered?
- ❖ What were the contextual factors which affected the decisions made in producing a modern version?
- ❖ What are the key issues related to literal translation and idiomatic / equivalent translation?

Resources

- ❖ <http://www.biblegateway.com> has many versions of the whole Bible.

Genesis 4

¹And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.

²And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

³And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

⁴And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

⁵But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

⁶And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?

⁷If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

⁸And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

⁹And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?

¹⁰And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

¹¹And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;

¹²When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

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Famous Bible quotations

Task

- ❖ Provide pupils with a sheet of examples (some are suggested below) and ask them to highlight (asterisk / underline / tick) the ones they recognise and can explain.
- ❖ Gather responses from class – check understanding of a selection of quotations.

Discussion points

- ❖ In what texts or situations have pupils encountered the quotations?
- ❖ Are some quotations more widely used than others? Why?
- ❖ Some sayings are distorted from the Bible text (you would need to demonstrate this by displaying the text, which is available at <http://texts.crossref-it.info/>) – how might this happen?

Resources

- ❖ Many examples are available at: <http://www.crossref-it.info/repository/sayings/?q=&submit=G>
- o
- An eye for an eye
- Eat, drink and be merry
- Go forth and multiply
- A fly in the ointment
- Get thee behind me, Satan
- Hiding your light under a bushel
- How are the mighty fallen
- Go the extra mile
- Wolf in sheep's clothing
- Wages of sin is death
- Through a glass darkly
- The Land of Nod.