The methods outlined below are intended to provide you with a way of posing questions about texts and considering their features in terms of Language Change. The list is not exhaustive but designed to give you 'ways in' to a text. Be selective and **only apply those categories which are relevant** to the text. Try to avoid feature spotting and descriptive comments. See Language of the Bible for further discussion of the terms used here.

Audience

- ❖ Who is the intended audience? Think about who the text was originally for and the scope of readership now. Can you be specific or is the audience very general? Has the audience got wider or more restricted over time?
- ❖ Think about whether different translations are aimed at different audiences and why?

Purpose

- ❖ How would you describe the purpose of the text? Is it primarily designed to inform, persuade, entertain or advise/instruct? The text might have more than one purpose: it is worth considering the possible primary and secondary purposes of the passage.

Content/genre

- ❖ What kind of text is it? What are its typical features?
- ❖ What is the text actually about? Don't go into too much detail but show that you understand what is going on in the extract.
- ❖ If the text is a narrative, what is the narrative voice? Does the tone express authority or familiarity? Is it always the authorial voice or has another voice been constructed?
- ❖ Who has produced the text? Do we have that information? If not, why not? Is it a single writer or a collaboration? What do we know about the gender or status of the writer(s)?

Discourse

- ❖ How is the text structured or joined together? Is there any patterning in the language which adds cohesion to it?
- ❖ If the text is narrative, is it in chronological order? How is a non-narrative text organised?
- ❖ Is there any use of rhetorical devices e.g. repetition, anaphoric or cataphoric references?

Graphology

- ❖ Is there anything significant in the layout of the text?
- ❖ Does it use numbering, bullet points, headings, diagrams, illustrations etc.?
- ❖ Rather than just identifying features of graphology, consider how these might be important for a reader.

Grammar

- ❖ Are there any unfamiliar inflections? Can you see why these might have become obsolete?
- ❖ Are there any archaic pronouns e.g. thou?
- ❖ Are there different ways of creating negatives, questions, orders etc.? Why might these have fallen out of usage?
- ❖ Is the syntax different from that of Modern Standard?
- ❖ Is there a predominance of a particular type of sentence (e.g. simple/compound/complex)? Think about why this might be the case.
- ❖ Do declarative sentences predominate or are there are other types of sentence (e.g. imperative, interrogative, exclamatory)? What is the effect of this?
- ❖ Are there any constructions in the passive voice and what is the effect of these?

Lexis

- ❖ Are there any archaisms? Can you think of any reason why these words have fallen out of usage?
- ❖ Is the lexis standard high frequency or elevated low frequency? Can you

think of any reason why this might be the case.

❖ Are the nouns generally common or is there much use of abstract nouns? Why might proper nouns have been used a lot?

❖ Is there much descriptive lexis and does it appear as pre – or post – modification? If so, what effect does it have?

❖ Is there subject specific lexis? If so, what effect does this have?

Semantics

❖ Are there words or phrases which are still in general use, but which have been affected by semantic change? Can you compare the original meaning of a word with a current one and consider why such change might have taken place?

❖ Can you find any examples where a word now has more positive or negative connotations (amelioration/pejoration) than when used in older texts?

❖ Do the words have more than one meaning or are there ambiguities of meaning?

❖ Is there any use of metaphor or imagery? What effect does this have?

Spelling/orthography

❖ Are there any non-standard spellings? Are these single examples or patterns?

❖ Is the spelling consistent?

❖ Is the punctuation modern standard? Look at speech marks and apostrophes and consider the effect of these.

Phonology

❖ Are there any sound patterns? The Bible was often read aloud and therefore the sound patterns are important. **NB.** Consider the methods outlined under Homework activity: Rhetoric.

❖ Can you find any examples of alliteration, consonance, assonance or sibilance? How might these impact on the reader?

Concepts (linking with AO2)

❖ Are there any issues surrounding standardisation within the texts?

❖ Is there evidence of informalisation in more modern texts? If so, can you find examples?

❖ Do the texts identify any issues surrounding prescriptive/descriptive views about language change?

Context (linking with AO3)

❖ What references seem to be specific to the time when the text was produced? This can include events and ideas which have changed or become obsolete. This can be interesting with the Bible regarding events and some of the ideas, as all English translations were made long after the historical events took place.

❖ What values and attitudes are expressed in the text? The Bible is specifically intended to convey spiritual and moral ideas and values, but there may well be other values that come from the society of the time when the version was produced.

❖ What attitudes towards gender, race and family can you identify?

❖ What particular references are there which are specific to the time when the text was produced? This can include events and ideas which have changed or become obsolete

➢ This can be problematical with the Bible as far as events and some of the ideas are concerned, since all English translations were made long after the historical events took place.