

# Welcome to A Level English Language!

English Language is such an interesting subject to study and is not all about analysing texts like you would have done at GCSE (although this is still a part of it).

- We study aspects of language like:
- How and why the English language changes (this is what we will look at in this PowerPoint)
- How children learn language
- Why we have accents and dialects
- How men and women use language differently
- Why younger people speak differently to older people
- You will also have a chance to do some creative writing



If there is anything on this Powerpoint that you don't understand or if you need any additional support with anything, please get in touch. My name is Mrs Francis and I will be happy to respond to any queries you may have:

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# The English Language is constantly changing to adapt to the changing world around it.

For example, since the internet was invented, there has been a huge surge in new words (neologisms) entering the language. Without the internet, we would not have these absolute classics:

- Noob
- Derp
- FOMO
- Selfie
- Photobomb
- OMG/LOL/TMI etc

But it's not just the internet that leads to neologisms - global events can too.

**TASK 1: Can you list down all of the neologisms that came out of the Coronavirus pandemic?**



# Covid-19 Neologisms

- **The Rona** - slang term to personify the virus
- **Covidiot/covidiocy** - someone who recklessly ignores social distancing and hand-washing rules
- **Moronavirus** - same as above
- **Quarantini** - a cocktail created at home under quarantine.
- **Zoom-bombing** - when an uninvited guest disrupts a virtual meeting
- **Coronials** - a name for the babies conceived during the pandemic
- **Zumping** - breaking up with someone over Zoom because you cannot see each other in person.
- **Coronacation** - Spending most days doing absolutely nothing due to lack of school/work during lockdown.

One of the major changes to the English Language recently, however, has been the introduction of the use of emojis as a form of non-lexical (no words involved) communication.

They first appeared in Japan in 1998 when mobile phones (particularly text messaging) started to become popular and then increased with the use of internet chat rooms. In the 1990's, they were created using punctuation like :) ;)

**TASK 2: Why do you think the invention and popularity of mobile phones and the internet bring about this phenomenon?**



These forms of communication blur the boundary between written and spoken language. The words 'chat' and 'conversation' ONLY referred to spoken interactions before about 1990.



With this in mind, emojis fill essential gaps that written language cannot convey - body language, facial expressions, tone of voice etc.

The point here is that emojis have now become a part of the English Language - they were not needed before 1990 as language was very much either spoken or written - no grey area in between that we have now.

As you can see, not everyone gets these right all the time...nice one Brenda.

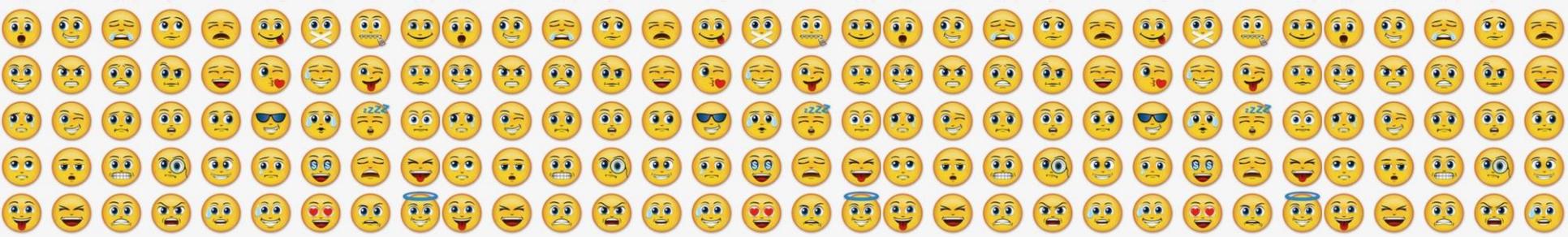


# Task 3

According to linguist, David Crystal, emojis are most often used to fulfil one of these four purposes:

1. To lighten the mood by introducing sarcasm or humour
2. To soften a blow or make something sound less harsh
3. To communicate when words fail us
4. To convey a more complex message in a simple way to save time

TASK 3: For each of the above categories, write down 3 emojis you might use to fill that purpose. For example, 🙌🏻 this emoji probably fits into categories 3 and 4.



# Task 4: An Investigation

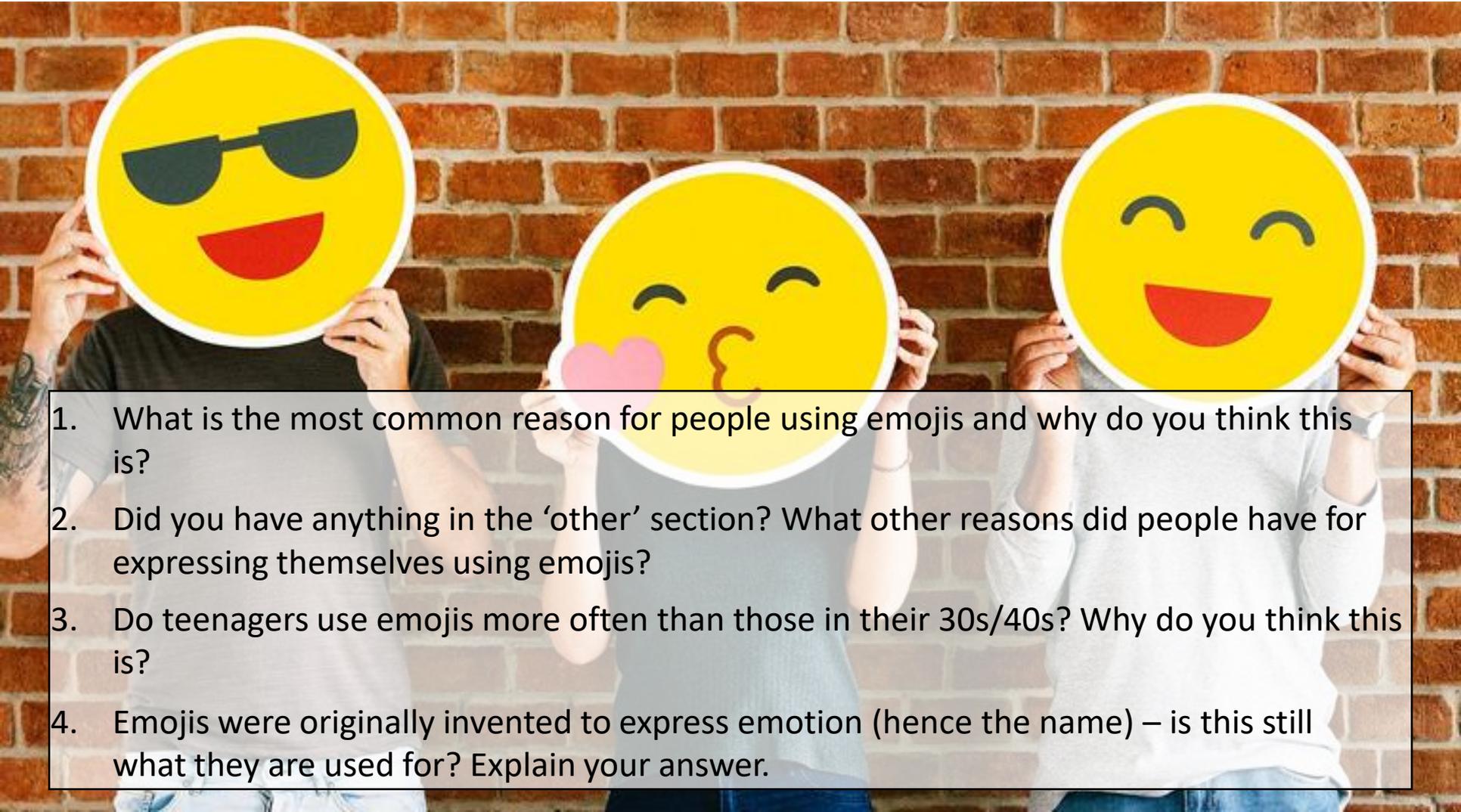
Next, you are going to conduct a mini investigation on how emojis are used in technological discourses (Messages sent to another person using technology such as computers, mobile phones, tablets etc).

1. Create a table like the one below.
2. Choose ONE form of technological communication (it could be Facebook, TikTok, Twitter, Snapchat, WhatsApp etc)
3. Go through your messages (do not worry - for both our sakes, I will not be asking for copies of these conversations) and look specifically at how emojis are being used both by you and other people.
4. For the first 50 (approx.) emojis you come across, put a tally in the applicable category based on why the person has used it.
5. Once you have categorised roughly 50 examples of emojis in total, work out the results - in percentages ideally.

Purpose	Tally
1. Lighten the mood using sarcasm or humour	
2. Soften a blow or make something sound less harsh	
3. To communicate when words fail us	
4. To convey a more complex message in a simpler way to save time	
5. Other	

# Summarising your Findings

Answer the following questions based on your results and your own opinions.



1. What is the most common reason for people using emojis and why do you think this is?
2. Did you have anything in the 'other' section? What other reasons did people have for expressing themselves using emojis?
3. Do teenagers use emojis more often than those in their 30s/40s? Why do you think this is?
4. Emojis were originally invented to express emotion (hence the name) – is this still what they are used for? Explain your answer.

# Task 5: Considering the Emoji Debate

I now want you to start considering different opinions about the use of emojis in English. Write the following statement at the top of your page:

**‘Emojis are contributing to a general decline in the quality of written English’**

Underneath the statement, draw two columns (use a whole page).

Agree

Disagree



**Brits place blame on emojis for ruining English language**

# Considering the Emoji Debate

Next, we need to consider wider arguments in the emoji debate. Read the provided texts. One comes from The Telegraph and the other was written by a Linguistics Lecturer from the Open University.

In each column, summarise the writers' arguments that agree and disagree with the statement you have written down.

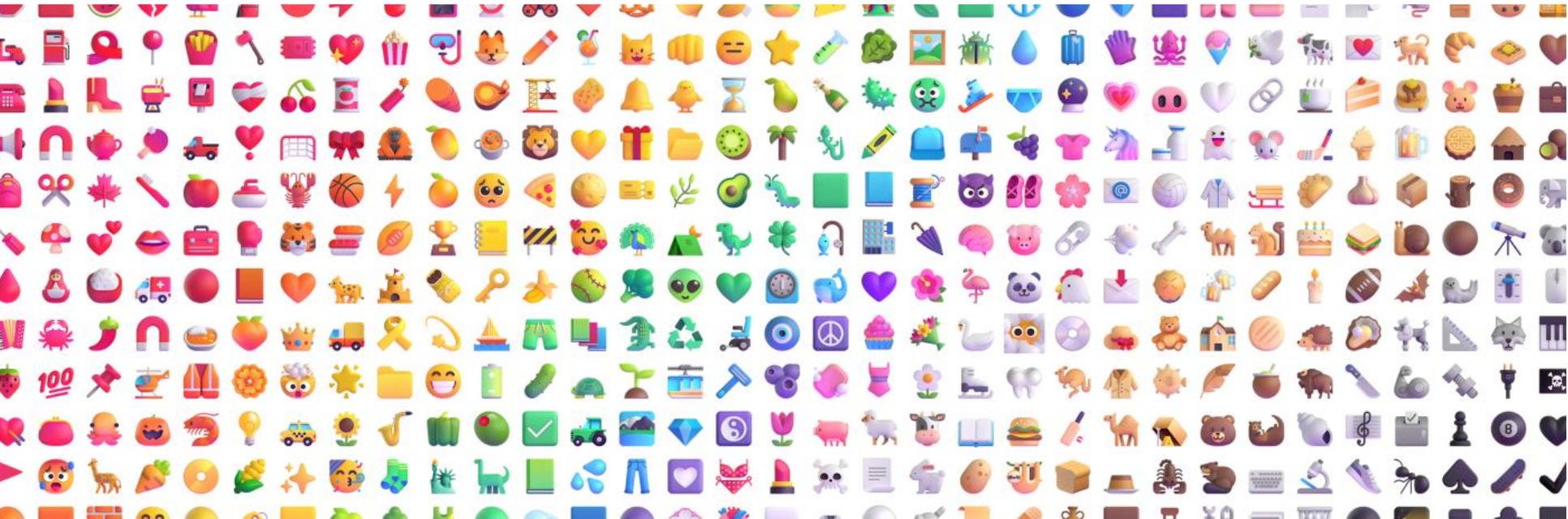
*Emoji 'ruining people's grasp of English' because young  
rely on them to communicate*

The Serious Business of Emojis

# Task 6: Evaluating Emojis

Using the information you have just gathered, come to your own conclusions and write a paragraph explaining your thoughts.

Do you agree that ‘emojis are contributing to a general decline in the quality of the English Language’ or do you have a different opinion on them? If you can, use information from the articles you have just read.



So far, we've looked at written language, specifically in technological texts. Next, we will be looking at **spoken language**.

We will be examining the ways in which people change their style of speech and their reasons for doing so. Let's take a moment to consider the way you communicate.

**TASK 1 - Summarise your response to the following:**

Do you speak differently on the phone than during face-to-face conversation?

Do you change the words you use, or even their pronunciation to suit the person you are talking to?

If so, why do you think this variation exists?

Let's start by thinking about the current biases and prejudices that may exist towards accent.



**TASK 2:** Read the provided article from the Independent and answer the following questions:

1. According to Dr Rob Drummond, who is more likely to be affected by accentism and why?
2. Why can accentism be an issue, particularly in the workplace?
3. How can a regional accent work in someone's favour in some jobs?

**Posh premium: Do posher sounding people really earn more?**

# TASK 3: Wider Reading

A lot of the work we do in English Language involves looking at opinion journalism and debating the different opinions about language. You will also be writing newspaper articles in the exam and potentially for coursework, so it is important that you get used to them.

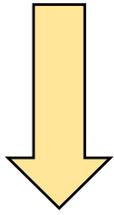
We just read an article about how having a regional accent can result in discrimination.

I now want you to find an article of your own that gives us a different opinion about having a regional accent.

You might find an article that discusses the benefits of not having a 'posh' accent or simply an article that gives an idea of the positive traits associated with a Welsh/Birmingham/Liverpool etc accent. Once you have found your article, move on to the next slide.

# Task 3: Summarise your Findings

Write down the title of your article and the publication it came from (usually the name of the website)



In no more than 5 bullet points, summarise what your article tells us about the benefits of having a regional accent.



# Task 4: Investigating Accent and Dialect

Essentially, we now recognise that there are benefits and drawbacks of speaking in particular ways.

Your next task is to examine **why** someone might want to change the way they talk. We are going to do this by looking at some famous people who did exactly that.

We will begin with Britain's first female Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher. This one is not necessarily about accent, but more about the tone and pitch of her voice.

Margaret Thatcher was the first female Prime Minister of Britain and was in office from 1979 to 1990.

During her time in power, the Falkland's War broke out in 1982. One of the reasons Argentina felt they could win this war is because they assumed Britain was weak as they had a female leader.

I want you to watch these two videos. Listen really carefully to how she speaks, particularly the tone of her voice. Do not worry about *what* she is saying, focus on *how* she says it and only watch the first couple of minutes of each video.

Here is Margaret Thatcher being interviewed in 1960: [Video 1](#)

Here is Margaret Thatcher being interviewed in 1987: [Video 2](#)

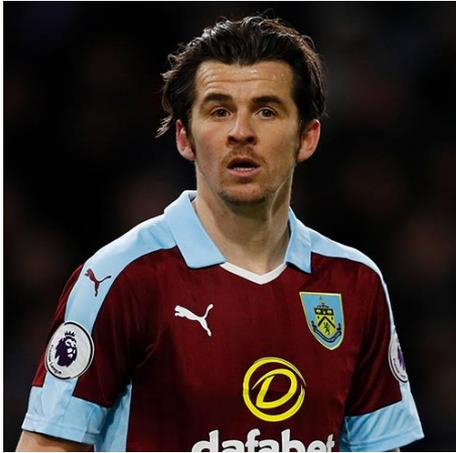


# Possible Findings

Here are some things you may have noticed. It's important that we consider **why** any variations may exist and tie our ideas to any relevant contextual information.

<b>Difference noticed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In the first video, the tone of Thatcher's voice varied far more than in video 2. She used a higher pitch to emphasise certain words and generally had a much higher voice in the 1960 interview than the one in 1980</li></ul>
<b>Background information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Thatcher wanted to be taken seriously as the UK's first female Prime Minister. She employed image experts to ensure she wore suitable clothes. She also employed a voice coach - part of the job of the voice coach was to make her voice sound deeper and more masculine.</li></ul>
<b>Possible reasons for the change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To be taken more seriously on the international stage, Thatcher needed to sound more masculine, so used a lower and more constant tone when speaking. This is the most popular opinion for the change in language style, however, it is important to acknowledge that there might be other reasons.</li><li>• The context was different - in video 1, she was at home with her children; in video 2, she was being interviewed about policies in a TV studio.</li><li>• She was 20 years older in the second video and so age might also have played a part in her speech style.</li></ul>

# Task 5: Independent Investigation



Joey Barton is a footballer from Liverpool. He played in the English Premier League for 10 years before transferring to Marseilles (French football club) in 2012 on loan.

Again, when you watch the videos, just watch the first couple of minutes and focus on the *way* he speaks rather than *what* he says.

Video 1 shows an interview with Barton in 2011:

[Video 1](#)

Video 2 shows an interview with Barton after his very first match for Marseilles in 2012: [Video 2](#)

Follow my example with Thatcher – write down the differences in the way he is speaking and try to come up with some suggestions as to WHY these differences are evident.

Mick Jagger was born into a middle class family in a wealthy area of Kent in 1943. He joined the rock band, The Rolling Stones in the early 1960s. At that time, rock music was associated with a ‘bad boy’ image and songs often contained messages of social unrest and rebellion.

Here is Mick Jagger in an interview in 1965, 2 years into his music career with The Rolling Stones: [Video 1](#)

Here is Mick Jagger in an interview with German TV in 1973, 10 years in to his rock career: [Video 2](#)

This one a bit harder than the others, but give it a go. Can you hear a different accent in the second video? How might this help his image as a rock star?

Just as we did with Margaret Thatcher, watch the above videos and make notes of any variations in speech style that are evident, considering possible reasons for this.

# Task 6: Evaluating your Speech Style

For your final task, I want you to consider the way **you** speak and all of the different factors that contribute to your individual speech style.

Define the word **sociolect**. Create a **sociolect map** with you in the centre & all of the different factors that have influenced or shaped your speech around the outside.

**What's still to come? How may your speech change further as you develop?**

