Example exam questions

- Evaluate the idea that a person's language use is influenced by their occupation.
- Evaluate the idea that occupational language needs to be in plain English.
- Discuss the idea that business English differs from everyday English.
- Evaluate the idea that different occupations have their own discourse communities.
- Evaluate the idea that occupational jargon is damaging the English Language.

Sentence starters

This supports the idea that…
One interpretation could be …
It seems reasonable to suggest…
X explores the idea of…
X suggests that…

One of the flaws of their argument is…

It could also be argued that…

Alternatively….

AO1: Apply appropriate methods of language analysis, using associated terminology and coherent written expression

Level/Marks	PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS
Level 5 9–10	Students will: • apply linguistic methods and terminology, identifying patterns and complexities • guide the reader
Level 4 7–8	Students will: • apply linguistic methods and terminology with precision and detail • develop a line of argument
Level 3 5–6	Students will: • apply linguistic methods and terminology consistently and appropriately • communicate with clear topics and paragraphs
Level 2 3–4	Students will: • use linguistic methods and terminology inappropriately and/or inconsistently • express ideas with organisation emerging
Level 1 1–2	Students will: • quote or identify features of language without linguistic description • present material with limited organisation
0	Nothing written about the text or topic

Terminology:

- Adjacency pair – A simple structure of two turns.
- Asymmetrical relationship – Unequal power balance between two people.
- Convergence – move language styles and patterns to more closely match those of other speakers.
- Discourse community – A group of people with shared interests and belief systems who are likely to use language in similar ways.
- Hedge – A word or phrase which softens what is said or written to make it less direct.
- Illocutionary speech act – The implied meaning that a text producers wants you to understand.
- In group – An exclusive group of people with shared interests or identity.
- Influential power – A type of power that is persuasive rather then imposing.
- Instrumental power – A type of power that is explicit and often imposed by a higher authority.
- IRE/IRF – initiation; response; evaluation/feedback – the structure of short interactions.
- Jargon – The vocabulary and manner of speech that define and reflect a particular profession which may be difficult for others to understand.
- Legalese – Legal register associated with the domain of law.
- Lexicon – The words used in a language or the words in a language by a person or group of people.
- Locutionary speech act – The literal meaning of something
- Management speech – Mocking term given to the way in which business speak.
- Occupation – A job or profession.
- Occupational register – The words or phrases used in solely in a particular job, or have originated from a particular occupation.
- Perlocutionary speech act – The perceived meaning that the text receiver understands.
- Phatic talk – socially orientated talk.
- Plain English campaign – A campaign established to ensure that documents produced by companies are clear and understandable.
- Power asymmetry – A power imbalance between speakers shown by the unequal way they address each other.
- Register – A variety of language that is associated with a particular situation of use.
- Semantic Field – A group of words which have similar connotations, or which are part of the same theme.
- Unequal encounters – When one speaker has accepted dominance over another influencing language choices.

AO2: Demonstrate critical understanding of concepts and issues

Level 5 17–20	Students will: • demonstrate a synthesised, conceptualised and individual overview of issues • evaluate and challenge views, approaches and interpretations of linguistic issues
Level 4 13–16	Students will: • identify and comment on different views, approaches and interpretations of linguistic issues
Level 3 9–12	Students will: • show detailed knowledge of linguistic ideas, concepts and research

Level 3 9–12	Students will: • show detailed knowledge of linguistic ideas, concepts and research
Level 2 5–8	Students will: • show familiarity with linguistic ideas, concepts and research

Theories

Occupation	Semantic Field
Lawyer	Legal lexis: court, order, jury, guilty, defendant, acquittal, bail, ad litem, caveat, plaintiff, verdict
Doctor	Medical lexis: abrasion, benign, chronic, defibrillator, inpatient, prognosis, suture, epidermis
Dentist	Dentistry: abutment, arch, bicuspid, bonding, caries, cavity, dentin, gingiva, malignant, orthodontist, root
Chef	Cookery: amuse bouche, basting, blanching, crimp, fricassee, ganache, julienne, omakase, roux, sautee

• **Swales** (2011) Many occupations have predictable discourse structures and patterns. Knowing how to communicate within them makes you part of a discourse community. • Drew and Heritage (2003) Suggest that members of a discourse community share inferential frameworks: knowledge built up over time and used to understand implicit meanings within an organization.

• **David Crystal**: Occupational varieties of language are in temporary use. They are "part of the job" – taken up as we begin work and put down as we end it. There are no class distinctions – every occupational group will have linguistic distinctiveness. However, "the more specialised the occupation, and the more senior and professional the post, the more technical the language is likely to be."

• **Koester** (2004) highlights the importance of phatic discourse within occupations: • "workers need to establish interpersonal relationships and have interactions that are not just about work-related procedures" For Koester, being sociable and engaging in personal chat is an important aspect of effective working as it creates "solidarity" within the workplace.

• **Norman Fairclough** (2002): 'Unequal Encounters' Language choice is created and constrained by asymmetrical situations accepted as 'normal' eg manager/worker, doctor/patient, teacher/student

• Oppressive and Repressive discourse strategies – linguistic behaviour that is open in its exercising of power and control. Repressive Discourse Strategy – a more indirect way of exercising power

• **Martin Joos** (1962) Levels of formality

- Frozen level: ritual or very conventional situations.
- Formal level: normally used by a speaker addressing an audience.
- Consultative level: people who are not family, friends or acquaintances but where interaction is the norm.
- Casual level: This is used between people who know each other reasonably well in informal settings.
- Intimate level: private communication such as between family members and close friends

Johnson (2000) Code-switching also 'functions to announce specific identities, create certain meanings, and facilitate particular interpersonal relationships'

Culpeper (1994) "positive facework attempts to provide the pill with a sugar coating; negative facework attempts to soften the blow."

Irving Goffman (1955) developed face theory we present a particular image or face to other people, depending on the context and to whom we're speaking. Generally, we try to accept the face we're being offered as a part of the politeness principle. Not to do so can result in the other person being hurt or offended or embarrassed. Maintaining face is all about maintaining status.

• **Zentella** (1985). 'Code-switching performs several functions' • First, people may use code-switching to hide fluency or memory problems in the second language • Second, code-switching is used to mark switching from informal situations (using native languages) to formal situations (using second language). • Third, code-switching is used to exert control, especially between parents and children. • Fourth, code-switching is used to align speakers with others in specific situations (e.g., defining oneself as a member of an ethnic group).

• **Brown and Levinson:** Face Theory • Face = a person's self-esteem or emotional needs. • Positive face = the need to feel wanted, liked and appreciated. • Negative face = the need to have freedom of thought and action and not feel imposed on. • Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) Acts like promises, apologies, expressing thanks, even non-verbal acts such as stumbling, falling down, are considered to threaten primarily the speaker's face, whereas warnings, criticisms, orders, requests, etc. are viewed to threaten primarily the hearer's face.

• **Deborah Tannen** (1999) refers to the power/solidarity paradox. This states that every utterance is potentially ambiguous as to whether it is establishing power or solidarity because the symbols (or language) that display power (differing status) and solidarity (equal status) are often the same.

• **Brazil** (working in the 1970s and 1980s) investigated rising tones and falling tones in speech. He refers to the dominant speaker to indicate the person who has the greater freedom in making linguistic choices. He states that rising tones are more available to the dominant speaker or someone who wants to use them to claim dominance.

Hornyak (1994) found that shift from work talk to social or personal talk follows a pattern: the shift is always initiated by the highest ranking person in the room.

Key takeaways
- Occupational groups are types of discourse communities.
- A discourse community is a group of people who share a common interest, like an occupation.
- Occupational language is the language used in a workplace or occupational group.
- Each occupation will have a semantic field of workplace-specific lexis.
- Occupational language can contribute to effective communication, professionalism and maintaining a hierarchy in the workplace.
- The use of occupational language can cause misunderstandings between professionals and the general public

Case studies:

Teacher Talk: Sinclair and Coulthard 3 main functions of teacher talk.

- Informative – The seat of government in Holland is The Hague.
- Directive – I want you to mark on your maps the capital of Holland.
- Elicitation – What's the capital of Holland?
- Directives can often be syntactically disguised within sentence moods: As a declarative – I'd like you to find page 46 in your books. As an interrogative – Can you find page 46 in your books? As an imperative – Turn to page 46, please.
- Modal verbs are a significant feature of teacher talk because they are formal and make utterances less blunt.

Elicitation exchanges follow a three part pattern. Sinclair and Coulthard call this pattern Initiation – Response – Follow-up (IRF): Teacher elicits by asking a question – the initiation Pupil answers – the response Teacher gives feedback – the follow-up Teachers also ask known answer questions – questions to which they already know the answer – in order to test pupils' knowledge.

Opening and closing framing moves provide exchange boundaries before the next 3 part exchange begins. 2 part exchanges (adjacency pairs) are also common: - question / answer - inform / acknowledge - introduction / greeting - complain / excuse