

# Function and Power of Language Study



This option is designed to assess primarily Learning Outcomes 1, 4, and 5.<sup>1</sup>

The study will focus on some aspect of language used in a context beyond the classroom. It should be between 500 and 1000 words.

## Criteria for Judging Performance

The student's performance in the *function and power of language study* will be judged by the extent to which he or she demonstrates:

### Analysis

- ?? How clearly does the student define and explore a topic of language use in a social context?
- ?? How effectively does the student clarify the ways in which language is used to influence opinions and decisions in the social context?
- ?? How well does the student identify features of language use in society?
- ?? To what extent does the student establish the link between those features and the function of language in the chosen social context?

### Communication

- ?? How accurate and fluent is the student's expression?
- ?? How appropriate are the form and register for the audience and purpose?

## Task:

1. Choose a stereotype of adolescence like the "mook", "midriff", "rebel", "nerd", "jock", etc. and examine how it is created or represented across three different texts which cover at least two of the three *media* and *genres* listed below:

### Media

Film: TV episode, music video, short film, TV advertisement  
Print: magazine article, short story, newspaper or magazine advertisement  
Oral: radio, speech, play, radio advertisement

### Genres

Narrative: comedy, drama  
Persuasive: advertising  
Informational: report, text book, brochure

2. Identify the original owners / producers behind the texts (in particular, corporations) and show how they are linked to the sources and reception of the texts (their audience, media outlets, promoters, etc). Analyse precisely how those producers benefit from promoting such a stereotype.

## Method:

1. Find a range of interesting texts that clearly relate to an adolescent or teen audience BEFORE choosing the "stereotype" upon which you choose to focus. Work out what type of adolescent these texts have in common. You may wish to begin with one text (e.g. a Pepsi Max or Sprite ad) and move out from there, looking for texts that match the character type.
2. Having identified the FOCUS of your study (a particular adolescent identity or stereotype), and chosen THREE texts from at least TWO of the *media* and *genres* specified above, set about ANALYSING the three texts themselves. Concentrate on identifying the features of language used in each one to construct your stereotype, using the recommended frameworks (e.g. the Encoded Signs / Decodable Meanings at work in TV ads).
3. Write a report, linking all three texts to the corporation(s) behind their production and promotion. This should include an argument reaching conclusions about the actual effects such identities have on young people's real lives.

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<sup>1</sup> LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the program in Stage 1 English, students should be able to:

1. demonstrate clear and accurate language skills through reading, viewing, writing, listening, and speaking;
4. compose texts, in a range of modes and forms, that are relevant to the context and achieve their purpose;
5. recognise and explore the social function and power of language.