**Stage 2 Essential English**

**Assessment Type 3: Language Study**

**Music**

The focus for the Language Study is ‘the use of spoken, non-verbal, visual, and/or written language by people in a chosen context beyond the classroom.’

**A successful Language Study often comes from a passion. This could be a hobby, sport, job or communal interest. You’ll need to select one of the following**

* workplace, training or volunteering
* virtual social networking
* a recreational or personal interest (e.g. sport, reading)
* educational/academic (e.g. school)
* cultural (e.g. language group, festival)
* the local community
* a community of interest.

**Let’s say, for example, that you love music.** Begin by narrowing the focus of your topic to a specific context and process such as

talking with musicians about their enthusiasm

interviewing a radio announcer who presents a specialist program on community radio

comparing language use across music publications such as Rolling Stone magazine and the Pitchfork website

examining how lyricists employ language to engage listeners

**investigating the language used in the local hip-hop community.**

Once complete, present your study including an:

* an introduction, describing the context, question, or hypothesis and the selected language resources
* an analysis of the language in the selected resources and the extent to which that supports or answers the question or hypothesis
* evidence from the selected resources that supports the analysis
* a conclusion about the use of language in the chosen context.

The language study should be a maximum of 1500 words if written or 8 minutes if presented in oral form. If presented in multimodal form, the length should be equivalent.

Performance Standards for Stage 2 Essential English

| - | Communication | Comprehension | Analysis | Application |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | Consistently clear and coherent writing and speaking, using varied and appropriate vocabulary.  Discerning use of consistently appropriate textual conventions for context and purpose. | Thorough comprehension of the information, ideas, and perspectives in a range of texts.  Thorough comprehension of ways in which the creators and readers of texts use a wide range of language features and stylistic features. | Thoughtful analysis of ways in which creators of a range of texts convey information, ideas, and perspectives.  Sophisticated analysis of cultural, social, and/or technical language in supporting effective communication in a range of contexts. | Versatile selection and use of a range of language and stylistic features to convey information, ideas, and perspectives in a range of contexts.  Sophisticated creation of texts for different purposes, using appropriate textual conventions in real or imagined contexts |
| B | Usually clear and coherent writing and speaking, using appropriate vocabulary.  Effective use of appropriate textual conventions for context and purpose. | Comprehension of information, ideas, and perspectives in a range of texts.  Comprehension of ways in which the creators and readers of texts use language features and stylistic features. | Analysis of ways in which creators of a range of texts convey information, ideas, and perspectives.  Well-considered analysis of cultural, social, and/or technical language in supporting effective communication in a range of contexts. | Appropriate selection and use of some language and stylistic features to convey information, ideas, and perspectives in a range of contexts.  Effective creation of texts for different purposes, using appropriate textual conventions in real or imagined contexts |
| C | Generally clear and coherent writing and speaking, using mainly appropriate vocabulary.  Appropriate use of some textual conventions for context and purpose. | Comprehension of some information, ideas, and perspectives in a limited range of texts.  Comprehension of some ways in which the creators and readers of a narrow range of texts use some language features and stylistic features. | Description and some analysis of ways in which creators of a narrow range of texts convey simple information, ideas, or perspectives  Analysis of cultural, social, and/or technical language in supporting effective communication in a limited range of contexts. | Appropriate selection and use of a narrow range of language and stylistic features to convey information, ideas, and perspectives in some contexts.  Creation of texts for some different purposes, using textual conventions in real or imagined contexts |
| D | Occasionally clear and coherent writing and speaking, using restricted vocabulary.  Occasionally appropriate use of some textual conventions for context and purpose. | Identification of some simple information, ideas, and/or perspectives in a limited range of texts.  Occasional comprehension of some ways in which the creators and readers of simple texts use some language features and stylistic features. | Description of the ways in which creators of a narrow range of texts convey simple information, ideas, or perspectives.  Reference to cultural, social, or technical language in supporting effective communication. | Some selection and use of a narrow range of language and stylistic features to convey simple information, ideas, and perspectives in a restricted range of contexts.  Creation of texts for limited purposes, using some textual conventions in real or imagined contexts |
| E | Restricted clarity and coherence in writing and speaking, using limited vocabulary.  Limited use of textual conventions for a context or purpose. | Identification of a simple piece of information, idea, or perspective in a text.  Limited comprehension of one or more ways in which the creator or reader of simple texts use a language feature or stylistic feature to make meaning. | Recognition of the way in which a creator of a text conveys a simple piece of information, idea, or perspective.  Recognition of a way in which language supports communication. | Use of one or more language or stylistic features to convey a piece of information, simple idea, or perspective in a context.  Creation of a text for a purpose, with attempted use of textual conventions. |

**How does the Scottish band Belle and Sebastian use language to create vivid characters in three different songs?**

Belle and Sebastian is a Glaswegian band that formed in 1996. Named after a French children’s television series, their nine albums have received critical acclaim, and are known for their literate and wistful lyrics. I enjoy how characters and narratives feature in their songs so decided to investigate the ways language is used to develop both of these.

“Dress Up In You” comes from their 2006 album *The Life Pursuit.* Characterisation is a key element in this song. Establishing who the people are is our first problem as the identities of the singer (the narrator) and the person they’re singing for (the addresse) present engaging challenges for the listener.

The song is sung in first person, with lead singer Stuart Murdoch beginning, “I’m the singer, I’m the singer in the band / You’re the loser, I won’t dismiss you out of hand.” Contrasting with the song’s gentle ballad style, this appears straightforwardly autobiographical, and our interpretation is that he’s addressing a fan or groupie. “You’re the loser” is brutal, but suddenly softened in the next line.

As quickly as Murdoch presents this relationship he changes it, with a simple, arresting couplet, “‘Cos you’ve got a beautiful face / It will take you places.” He has moved rapidly from calling the addressee a “loser” to “beautiful.” Either way the observation seems to only exist in the present tense. However, in the second verse he again surprises us by revealing more about the two characters, and the complex history of their relationship.

You kept running  
You’ve got money, you’ve got fame  
Every morning I see your picture from the train  
Now you’re an actress!

The American writer, Norman Mailer, said that writing ultimately concerns the nature of shifting power, and this is true here for in six lines we move from the narrator calling the other a “loser” to now confessing that he can, “see your picture from the train.” This suggests that the narrator has a regular, anonymous job and sees this other person, on a billboard, presumably in an advertisement. Subtextually, this infers that she has power, status and money. With sparse lyrics Murdoch conveys vivid characters and an intriguing, dynamic relationship. This continues with the accusatory, “You got lucky, you ain’t talking to me now.”

Many listeners might’ve realistically presumed their relationship was romantic, but yet again the lyricist changes our perception by gradually disseminating information: it was platonic and possibly sisterly. Murdoch leaves the nature of their childhood connection vague with use of, “We had a deal there / We nearly signed it with our blood.”

As the narrator’s anger lessens, he instead becomes confessional, with a compliment that’s metaphorical and striking in its original simplicity, “If I could have a second skin / I’d probably dress up in you.”

(extract- 478 words)