Pre-arrival task for <u>all</u> English Language students

To help you get ready for your studies in English Language, we would like you to complete a small task before starting your course. This task is optional, but we recommend you have a go at it. Feedback from previous students requested similar activities to help with getting ready for the start of their university course.

Aims of the activity
This task is intended to get you thinking (a) about the nature of language and in particular *variation* in language and (b) about different approaches or perspectives on language and variation.

These issues are considered in the first classes of your core English Language modules. You may therefore find it helpful to have prepared this task before those classes, so as to be able to better take part in the in-class discussion. However, even if you don't get the chance to complete this task (or perhaps haven't completed all of it) before you start your studies with us, please be assured that you won't fall behind. You will still be able to follow and take part in the first classes of the academic year.

Activity brief
(a) Find out what is meant by **prescriptive** and **descriptive** approaches to language. To help you with this, I'd like you to read the opening pages of Milroy and Milroy's book *Authority in Language* (provided).

   Note: Don't worry if some of the terms in this text are unfamiliar to you at the moment. For this task, you just need to be able to say what the difference is between *prescriptivism* and *descriptivism*.

(b) Watch the following news clip, broadcast by the BBC in September 2013: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-21361324

   Which approach is being taken here? What are the arguments for and against this kind of approach? What would a linguist say?

You can also make notes of any queries you may have (e.g. new, unclear technical terms or concepts in the reading) and bring those with you to discuss at the first teaching sessions of the term.

In addition to the task above, you may also find it useful to do some general preparatory reading in the core textbooks for the English Language modules that you will be taking in your first year.

ELAN1019: Approaches to Reading and Writing
Bauer, L. (2021) *The Linguistics Student's Handbook*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press
Eppler, E. D. and Ozón, G. (2013) *English Words and Sentences: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

ELAN1020: Words in Action: Introducing Linguistics
Eppler, E. D. and Ozón, G. (2013) *English Words and Sentences: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

ELAN1021: Evolving Language: Histories of Language
Crystal, David (2018) *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of The English Language*, 3rd edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

The second edition of the book from 2003 is also fine. Note also that this is not the same book as Crystal's *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language* (with no 'English' in the title). Make sure that you buy the right book!

ELAN1022: Topics in Linguistics Theory in Practice
Bauer, L. and Trudgill, P. (eds.) (1998) *Language Myths*. London: Penguin Books

---

Don't feel that you have to read all these books in their entirety before you start! But you may find it useful to take a look at the first couple of chapters or browse through the books and read chapters or sections that strike you as interesting.

These books will also be useful throughout your degree programme, which is why we recommend you buy them for yourself.

Contact
If you have any queries about this task or anything else to do with your English Language programme, please contact any of the following:

Gabriel Ozon (gabriel.ozon@dmu.ac.uk) English Language programme leader, module leader for ELAN1019
Alison Hall (alison.hall@dmu.ac.uk) module leader for ELAN1020
Aimee Bailey (aimee.bailey@dmu.ac.uk) module leader for ELAN1021
Keith Scott (jklscott@dmu.ac.uk) , module leader for ELAN1022