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Cambridge Assessment International Education

# Cambridge International AS & A Level

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE** **9093/42**

Paper 4 Language Topics **October/November 2025**

**2 hours 15 minutes**

You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

**INSTRUCTIONS**

- Answer **all** questions.
- Follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.
- Dictionaries are **not** allowed.

**INFORMATION**

- The total mark for this paper is 50.
- The number of marks for each question or part question is shown in brackets [ ].

This document has **8** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

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## Section A: English in the world

### Question 1

Read the following text, which is taken from an article published in 2022 in *Language Magazine*.

Discuss what you feel are the most important issues raised in the text relating to the changing use of English in the world. You should refer to specific details from the text as well as to ideas and examples from your wider study of English in the world. [25]

**English Hegemony[1] as an Issue of Justice**
*Multilingualism is the birthright of all Americans*

In US schools, English enjoys overwhelming hegemony. Granted, 'standardized' English enjoys power and prestige over other native US varieties, such as AAVE and even local 'Spanglishes', but their combined power leaves precious little space for the languages of other cultures and families, whether from immigrant or indigenous lands.

The US ignores those languages to such an extent that even Spanish classes at US schools manage to marginalize the voices of native speakers in the very schools where the language is taught. A friend of mine in Colorado was scandalized by her stepson's high school. 'He's taking Spanish, and there are literally native speakers walking through the halls. How are they not part of the curriculum?' My family hosted an exchange student from Spain, and she was invited to come to only one or two Spanish class sessions over the course of an academic year. Her knowledge of Spanish was wasted, not to mention her other language, Basque, and the Mandarin and Norwegian of her fellow exchange students.

On the contrary, one finds multitudes of videos – and headlines – online of native English speakers demeaning speakers of other languages with horrifying words. Some Americans would effectively ban languages other than English from the public sphere. We must challenge the hegemony of English as the global language, as a zero-sum game with every other language losing ground.

Through teaching the languages of our community, our native-born Americans can learn about the varieties of experiences, accessed through multiple languages, that their immigrant and refugee classmates and families offer to our American community. Americans should value all languages as a matter of our wellbeing and communal justice.

Every student – and teacher – should have the opportunity and encouragement to speak the language of their communities without shame or discouragement. This includes the languages of one's ancestors as well as those of our neighbors' ancestors.

***

**For justice, we center the value of diverse linguistic experience**

Only a tiny portion of Americans come from a purely English-speaking past, so multilingualism is the birthright of all Americans! The White, monolingual anglophone was a deliberate construction. In fact, the multilingual, emerging English-speaking immigrant reminds us of the roots of America. Let us nurture their linguistic gifts as we bring life to the rich, complex web of languages in our communities, reveling in them with gusto in the public square.

[1] *hegemony*: dominance or leadership

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**Turn over for Question 2**

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## Section B: Language and the self

**Question 2**

Read the following two texts.

Text A is an extract from an interview with linguist Nicole Holliday. It was published in 2021 in *Futurity*, an online magazine.

Text B is a list of some commonly-used slang terms which have emerged on, or been amplified by, TikTok[1]. The list was published in 2022 in *The Daily Mail*, a British newspaper.

Discuss what you feel are the most important issues raised in the text relating to the ways in which language can shape and reflect personal and social identity. You should refer to specific details from the text as well as to ideas and examples from your wider study of Language and the self. [25]

**Text A**

### Why TikTok is poised to change how we speak

Is TikTok changing how we speak? A linguist weighs in on the platform's effect on language trends. Largely characterized as a Gen Z phenomenon, TikTok is a social app with more than 100 million active users in the United States alone – almost one-third of the country's population.

***Q:** How does TikTok influence our vernacular in a different way than other mediums?*

***A:*** I think it's primarily an issue of exposure. I think it's a little bit more powerful because it's audio. We've evolved to talk to each other face-to-face. That's how communication presents. We did that for thousands of years before phones and all of this. So, it's actually more resonant for us when we see a person and we hear them, as opposed to reading something that they wrote, like if it were on Twitter[2].

TikTok also puts us in touch with people we have never been in touch with before. For example, I've been following #BamaRush. I can't imagine being a 33-year-old professor in Philadelphia 20 years ago and hearing college students from Alabama talk in a casual way. It just would not have happened for me. All of these girls in Alabama share a community, and they talk to each other, and there's a lexicon and a style within their community because that's how language works. But we're also getting to look at it.

***Q:** Is it true that most linguistic changes come from the youth, taking for example the impact of the 'Valley Girl' speech pattern popularized in the 1990s?*

***A:*** Yes! It's coming from the youth because the youth are cool. That's an axiom[3] for sociolinguists.

***Q:** How does tech influence the speed of trend uptake? Is what we're seeing now different than a couple decades ago?*

***A:*** I think it's faster, for sure, but it's faster on both ends. Things come and go these days. They also diffuse things in different ways, and this is part of the change in the medium.

On TikTok, because of the way the algorithm works but also because of my interests, I can be hyperspecialized. There's #linguistics on TikTok, which you would probably never come across, and that forms what linguists call a community of practice. So our

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communities of practice can be hyperspecialized for the stuff that we're interested in, and also they can be anywhere in the world. We can talk instantaneously, mediated via video chat, with anybody. So that just causes things to move really quickly. *30*

[1] *TikTok*: social media site for video sharing
[2] *Twitter*: microblogging site rebranded 'X' in 2023
[3] *Axiom*: an established rule

**Text B**

| **TikTok** | **Meaning** |
|---|---|
| ***Quiet quitting*** | A reclaiming of work-life balance |
| ***Pick me girl*** | A girl who tries to impress others by being different or quirky |
| ***Vibe check*** | Measure how cool someone is |
| ***Simp*** | Somebody who shows excessive sympathy and attention towards another person |
| ***Villain era*** | Refers to a shift in a person's priorities as they reject the societal pressure to always play nice |

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