VCE English Language

Year 11
Unit 1:
Language is an essential aspect of human behaviour and it is the means by which individuals relate to the world, to each other, and to the communities of which they are members. In this unit, students consider the way language is organised so that its users have the means to make sense of their experiences and to interact with others. Students explore the various functions of language and the nature of language as a highly elaborate system of signs. The relationship between speech and writing as the dominant modes of language and the impact of situational and cultural contexts on language choices are also considered. Students investigate children’s ability to acquire language, and the stages of language acquisition across a range of subsystems.

Unit 2:
In this unit, students focus on language change. Languages are dynamic and change is an inevitable and a continuous process. Students consider factors contributing to change over time in the English language and factors contributing to the spread of English. They explore texts from the past, and contemporary texts, considering how all subsystems of the language system are affected – phonetics and phonology, morphology and lexicology, syntax, discourse and semantics. Attitudes to language change vary considerably and these are also considered. In addition to developing an understanding of how English has been transformed over the centuries, students explore the various possibilities for the future of English. They consider how the global spread of English has led to a diversification of the language, and to English now being used by more people as an additional or a foreign language than as a first language. Contact between English and other languages has led to the development of geographical and ethnic varieties, but has also hastened the decline of indigenous languages. Students consider the cultural repercussions of the spread of English.

Year 12
Unit 3:
In this unit students investigate English language in the Australian social setting, along a continuum of informal and formal registers. They consider language as a means of societal interaction, understanding that through written and spoken texts we communicate information, ideas, attitudes, prejudices and ideological stances. Students examine the stylistic features of formal and informal language in both spoken and written modes: the grammatical and discourse structure of language; the choice and meanings of words within texts; how words are combined to convey a message; the purpose in conveying a message; and the particular context in which a message is conveyed. Students learn how to describe the interrelationship between words, sentences and text as a means of exploring how texts construct message and meaning.

Unit 4:
In this unit students focus on the role of language in establishing and challenging different identities. Many varieties of English exist in contemporary Australian society, including national, regional, cultural and social variations. Standard Australian English is the variety that is granted prestige in contemporary Australian society and it has a role in establishing national identity. However, non-Standard varieties also play a role in constructing users’ social and cultural identities. Students examine both print and digital texts to consider the ways different identities are constructed.
Assessment
Each Unit in English Language consists of three outcomes that students need to satisfactorily complete in order to gain an S for each Unit of the subject. These Outcomes consist of both oral and written tasks.

Suggested Pre-requisites
There are no pre-requisites for the study of English Language. However the content of this subject is vastly different to that studied in Years 7-10 English at Galen and a student selecting this subject needs to demonstrate a genuine interest in acquiring new knowledge and skills. It is strongly advised that those wishing to complete units 3&4 complete units 1&2.