

### **This needs to be folded into a pamphlet**

slang but as a well-formed set of rules of pronunciation and grammar capable of conveying complex logic and reasoning and confirms the Black vernacular as a separate and independent dialect of English. Perhaps even more so today, Labov's conclusions are mandatory reading for anyone concerned with education, race and social change. You can also read an edited version of his study here:  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/issues/95sep/ets/lab0.htm>

**A Clockwork Orange** by Anthony Burgess is fascinating. Burgess, a ployglot who loved language in all its forms, created Nadsat as a fictional argot for his teenage characters in the novel. He needed his narrator to have a unique voice that would remain ageless while reinforcing Alex's indifference to society's norms, and to show that the youth subculture to which he belongs exists outside those norms.

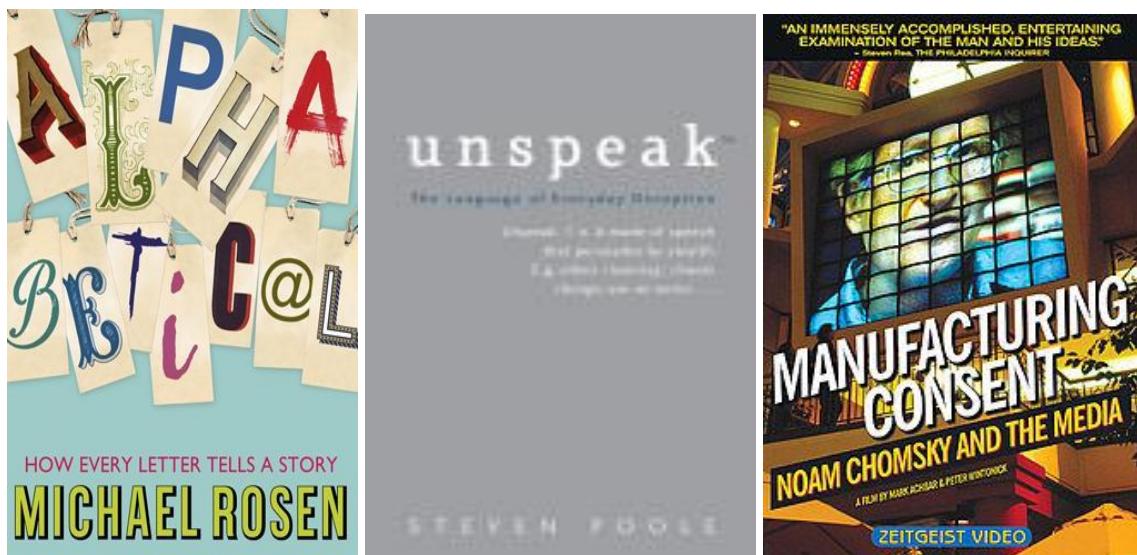
### Acquisition

**How Children Learn: From Montessori to Vygotsky - Educational Theories and Approaches Made Easy**, Linda Pound (*Step Forward*). Designed for pre-school teachers, this is a straightforward overview of children's learning and development in a wider sense than the specific linguistic one we deal with in English Language. Quite expensive - we have a copy of this if you are interested. Particularly useful if you are thinking of going into teaching.

**Children's Minds**, Margaret Donaldson (Harper Collins) Margaret Donaldson's influential work on child development shows that context is key when it comes to the development of language and thought, and how the right support can ensure children are skilled in these areas before they even start school. She revisits earlier theories of child development, notably those of Jean Piaget, to expose flaws in the accepted wisdom on child psychology and to suggest a range of new strategies to help children combat difficulties. As wise and perceptive today as it was when it first appeared, Margaret Donaldson's bestselling work is essential reading for anyone interested in child development and child psychology.

**Play and its role in the Mental Development of the Child**, Lev Vygotsky. A classic psychology text, which can be found here:  
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/vygotsky/works/1933/play.htm>

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE A LEVEL



## Suggested Reading

Introductions and general interest:

**English Language for Beginners** (Lowe and Graham - this is out of print but we have a copy in the English office!)

**Linguistics for Beginners** (Terrence Gordon, *For Beginners*)

**Alphabetical: How Every Letter Tells a Story**, Michael Rosen (John Murray)

Anything by David Crystal! For example, **How Language Works**, **The Stories of English**, **The Story Of English in 100 Words**, all Penguin. Our hero (along with Chomsky)!

### Power

**Politics and the English Language**, George Orwell - a classic, this essay focuses on political language, which, according to Orwell, "is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind." Orwell believed that the language used was necessarily vague or meaningless because it was intended to hide the truth rather than express it. You can find this easily by googling it....

**Unspeak**, by Steven Poole (*Abacus*) - a critique of modern political language in the tradition of Orwell.

**Manufacturing Consent**, Edward S Herman and Noam Chomsky (Vintage). This is compelling indictment of the news media's role in covering up errors and deceptions in American foreign policy of the past quarter century. Not really language focused, but worth a read if you are interested in politics (Other key texts include **How The World Works** and **Hegemony or Survival**. If these seem daunting, **Chomsky for Beginners** is a good introduction)

### Gender

**The Myth Of Mars And Venus**, Deborah Cameron (OUP) Dr. Cameron challenges the idea that sex-differences might have biological rather than social causes. The book argues that there is as much similarity and variation within each gender as between men and women. Cameron concludes that we have an urgent need to think about gender in more complex ways than the prevailing myths and stereotypes allow (see also her book **Verbal Hygiene**).

**Men, Women and Language**, Jennifer Coates (Routledge.) An excellent sociolinguistic account of language and gender. Coates sets out the idea that gender is not a given but is socially constructed. She explores

- the linguistic strategies used by male speakers to dominate female speakers
- the characteristics of language use in same-sex groups
- the way children develop gender-appropriate speech

- the role played by gender in language change
- the social consequences of gender differentiated language in the workplace and in the classroom.

**Delusions of Gender**, Cordelia Fine (*Icon books*) The book for you if you are interested in a psychological or scientific perspective on gender. A vehement, clever and witty attack on claims that gender is hard-wired, and gender differences are biological. As a neuroscientist, Fine uses hard science to demolish old myths, dressed up in new scientific finery, which help perpetuate the status quo. She reveals the mind's remarkable plasticity, shows the substantial influence of culture on identity, and, ultimately, exposes just how much of what we consider 'hardwired' is actually malleable. This startling, original and witty book shows the surprising extent to which boys and girls, men and women are made - and not born.

**Man-Made Language**, Dale Spender (*find the introduction at <https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/ot/spender.htm>*). One of the classics. Published in 1980, it is still as relevant today as it was then.

**Misogynies**, Joan Smith (The Westbourne Press) first published in 1989, this is now a classic feminist text. In this collection of stinging essays Joan Smith explores the phenomenon of women-hating in politics, religion, history, literature, and popular culture on both sides of the Atlantic. Inspired initially by the police investigation into the Yorkshire Ripper case, this is fascinating collection from the mind of a scholar. As above, as (if not more) important in 2014 as it was in 1989.

### Variety and Change

**The Adventure Of English**, Melvyn Bragg (Sceptre) Bragg's new-ish history of the language (a spin off from his tv series) is readable and entertaining.

**Language in the Inner City**: Studies in the Black English Vernacular, William Labov (*University of Pennsylvania Press*). First published in 1973, Labov's study looked at educational under-achievement in the inner city and located the problem not in the children, but in the relations between them and the school system. This position holds that inner-city children do not necessarily have inferior mothers, language, or experience, but that the language, family style, and ways of living of inner-city children are significantly different from the standard culture of the classroom, and that this difference is not always properly understood by teachers and psychologists. His ground-breaking study firmly establishes African American Vernacular English not simply as