



Written Work Cover Sheet

Please use a separate cover sheet for each piece of written work. This work should be submitted electronically to the Admissions Office at your college of preference no later than **10 November**. If you have made an open application we will email you by the end of October, to tell you which college is considering your application.

Please follow the precise guidance from your college when submitting work. If scanned and sent by email, your work should be sent as one multi-page PDF file for each piece of submitted work, together with its own cover sheet. The work must be original. Ideally, it should have been marked by a teacher and **must not have been re-written or corrected for this application to Oxford**. All work must be in English (except where otherwise required for Modern Languages) and each page must be numbered. If your college asks you to submit work by email, please copy in your UCAS referee.

To be completed by the applicant:

UCAS Personal ID:	1	6	4	4	0	9	8	6	0	0
Surname/family name: Amlal		First/given name(s): Christ								
College of preference: Wadham College		Proposed course: Chinese								
Current or most recent school: London Academy of Excellence Stratford										
Title of your written work: Can we really keep English 'intact'?										
Subject for which this written work was done: Linguistics/Languages										
Please explain the circumstances in which your work was produced. For example, was this completed as part of your school work, did you receive any guidance and if so, how much? Over what timeframe was it written? This was produced independent of my A-level subjects and without the guidance of a teacher. This was completed during October to November 2022.										
I certify that this is my own work, and that it has not been re-written or corrected for this application to Oxford and that I have acknowledged material taken from other works. Please sign and date: Christ Amlal 8/11/2022										

To be completed by a school/college representative (please specify your role):

Please confirm the circumstances under which this work was produced were as outlined above by the applicant.
Name of school representative: Ben Webster
Position and relationship to applicant: Deputy Headteacher at LAE

College addresses and email addresses can be found at www.ox.ac.uk/ugcolls or in the University prospectus. Colleges are not always able to acknowledge receipt of written work, but will contact applicants before the deadline if the required work has not been received.

Please keep a copy of what you send, as tutors may refer to your work at interview.

Written Work 1: Can we really keep English 'Intact'?

To keep English 'intact' in an ever-globalizing world seems impossible; it would require the embalming of the English language. But which version of English? The English spoken in the UK and its numerous dialects? General American English or Indian English which both dominate globally in numbers of speakers? For the purpose of simplicity, keeping a language 'intact' suggests that future generations will speak a version of language which differs slightly or not at all in terms of grammar, vocabulary and intelligibility between past, present and future speakers. This essay will take a three-pronged approach towards answering the question, "Can we really keep English intact" through analyzing how English has changed over time, English in an ever-globalizing world and efforts to preserve "purity" in the English language. *A clear introduction*

Nearly a millennia ago, those inhabiting Wessex, Mercia and Northumbria would have all spoken English. Of course, English is no longer isolated to three dissolved Anglo kingdoms and nor is it intelligible with the English used by the Anglo-Saxons. Instead, English has been on an organic millennium-long journey, shedding its original grammar rules of case systems, inflections and much of its vocabulary. We can only speculate how a conversation between an English speaker from Massachusetts and a Saxon farmer would have fared. But the idea is fascinating as it reveals how poorly Old English vocabulary has been kept 'intact'. Describing food between the two would be challenging; centuries after the Norman invasion French culinary words displaced their Saxon counterparts, becoming placed on a higher register. Pig, cu and sheep could be used to describe both the living animal and cooked animal yet over time these became distinct from Porc, Bouef and Mouton (Pork, beef and mutton). French vocabulary was not simply added into circulation but outright replaced words such as witan with parliament. 60% of Modern English vocabulary has origins in Latin and French and while it was not unheard of to hear Latin in sermons and prayers, an average Saxon farmer would struggle to decipher meaning of much of Modern English vocabulary as would someone with Massachusetts hearing archaic Old English vocabulary. By analyzing our vocabulary further, then the most common words in circulation are to un-English in origin. We might as well be speaking old Norse with words such as anger, Thursday, ill, ugly and wrong all originating from angr, thors day, syk and rangr. *Good this example? Further?* That isn't to say grammar has been kept more 'intact'. Apart from odd instances of blond vs blonde, our bygone genders of masculine, feminine and neuter don't exist. English has largely lost its nominative case system of nominative, accusative, genitive, dative and instrumental case. Furthermore, extended interaction with speakers of the Old Norse language, less stress had been placed on inflectional endings which led to their disuse in speech. Could it not be said, that extended interactions with non-English speakers will lead modern-day English to lose its current grammatical features and lose or pick up new vocabulary?

In 1877, Henry Higgins the professor of 'phonetics' from the film My Fair Lady, prophetically predicted that after 100 years the English spoken in Australia, Britain and the USA would become distinct mutually unintelligible varieties. His prediction was wrong; English remains intelligible between these 3 countries. Yet does intelligibility between these three countries serve as the acid-test to determine whether English has remained intact? Indian Linguist Braj-bhushan Shrivastava argues that when considering English internationally, there exists three circles of English. The innermost circle consists of the English used in the: UK, USA, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. Whereas outer circles consist of Nigerian English, Singapore English and Indian English. Intelligibility remains between all varieties mentioned but the English in the outer circle features unique language features absorbed from the native languages used in the aforementioned countries. Braj-bhushan further argues that Business English taught internationally considers non-native varieties as inferior, which begs the question who decides what English is. While the government of the Philippines encourages formal English who is to say Taglish or the Singlish which dominates Singaporean homes, both featuring infusions from Tagalog/Malay plus Chinese, are not English? Since there is no board regulating what is considered English are creole and pidgin English not considered English? Unlike Samuel Johnson's 1755 dictionary definition of English, "belonging to England, thence English is the language of England". English belongs to no one country and has left a global footprint in much of the world. To suggest English remains intact excludes the fact that the varieties of English already offer distinct differences in grammar and vocabulary.

It is important not to gloss over existing English dialects. African American Vernacular English has specific grammatical rules such as double negatives or negative inversion and Cockney English too offers unique language features such as rhyming slang. Dialects have evolved alongside standard English, is it not arguable that dialects have swayed from what is mainstream? If it was possible without banning any deviation from

dictionary English, then we would never see any dialect of English crop up. Yet the 160 documented English dialects that exist suggest otherwise. If efforts were focused on keeping formal written English 'intact' then it is indeed possible to keep the grammar rules enforced similarly to written Latin. Perhaps what is needed is a regulatory body for the English language, such as the Académie Française which dictates what can and cannot enter the French dictionary. Alternatively, movements such as Anglish exist and possibly 'intactness' can be better achieved by reverting to an earlier form of English vocabulary wise. Anglish is a language movement which aims to "cleanse" English of unnecessary foreign words (mostly Greek/Latin vocabulary). Anglish aims to tackle communication difficulties by creating new compound words as a replacement of familiar words. Take for example the noun umbrella which is an Italian loan word that can be substituted by the new word "rainshade" a combination of rain plus shade. However, Anglish also aims to revive Anglo Saxon or Germanic words, now deemed as Archaic. However, can it not be argued that going back in time, vocabulary-wise, can be interpreted to suggest Modern English is no longer 'intact' as it loses its current vocabulary composition – coining new words? Anglish although receiving an increase in traction, remains a niche concept, no official education institutes promote Anglo-Saxon vocabulary over their Latin counterparts. *what is the rationale behind the 'Anglish' movement?*

In conclusion, if we are to keep English as it is intact it would be un-organic in every sense English has developed. The English language has travelled far beyond Europe and the Mediterranean filling its basket with foreign loanwords. Just as Latin had fallen, and given rise to new languages of Italian, French and Spanish. Who is to say English cannot also fall, surviving in written form but conversationally becoming un-intact? In any case, it is a herculean task to keep 'intact' a language with 450 million speakers, unless a movement such as Anglish gains more traction. Yet this too only tackles the vocabulary side of language; it would require mass language schools to instruct a generation of Modern English speakers to use archaic forms of inflexions and learn the case system. Perhaps to facilitate easier communication in an ever-globalizing world the English, as we know today, will lose many grammatical features and shed more vocabulary; thus, the concept of 'intactness' shatters and is purely theoretical.

A very well researched and constructed essay with clear analysis and a reasoned judgement reached at the end.