



ENGLISH ENTRANCE EXAM: SAMPLE

Name and Surname(s): _____

Time allowed for this exam: 2 Hours

Before starting, please read the following carefully:

- ☞ All mobile phones must be turned off.*
- ☞ Make sure your name is correctly given above.*
- ☞ There are three parts to this exam – each carries the same weight:*
 - I. Reading Comprehension*
 - II. Language Work*
 - III. Written Essay.*
- ☞ Write all your answers in English in this exam booklet. Use the spaces provided.*
- ☞ All rough paper will be collected after the exam.*

POLITE WARNING!

***ANY TALKING, COPYING OR USE OF NON-AUTHORISED DEVICES DURING THE EXAM
WILL MEAN AUTOMATIC AND IMMEDIATE DISQUALIFICATION***

I. Reading Comprehension

II. Language Work

III. Essay

Google and Ogooglebar: Who owns the meaning of words?

1 **Googleable or ungoogleable?**

We are all familiar with the words “to google” or “googleable”, in fact they’ve been around for over a decade. In more recent years the Swedish have taken to using the term “ogooglebar” (roughly equivalent to saying “ungoogleable”), which was sanctioned by no less than the Language Council of Sweden and included in its official list of new words. That is, until recently when they struck it off in protest after a trademark row with Google.



Unfortunately for Scandinavians, Google didn’t like the idea of its name being part of a new general term for something which cannot be found using any kind of internet search engine. Instead they insisted that the definition should be changed to describe searches performed via Google only and include a trademark notification. Their demand was backed with the threat of legal action and since the Swedish Language Council – which documents the emergence of new words in Swedish – was in no position to fight a legal battle with the internet giant, it decided to remove “ogooglebar” from the official list of new Swedish terms.

It remains to be seen whether absence from this list will make much difference to Swedish speaking habits. As the Council put it in an online statement on March 26, “Google has forgotten one thing: language development does not care about brand protection. No individual can decide about the language.” As a result the use of “ogooglebar” is almost certainly likely to spread. But the rise of “ungoogleable” and its international equivalents marks one of the most characteristic linguistic evolutions of our age: binary vocabulary.

25 **Unlike, unfollow, unfriend**

To take just a handful of terms, consider what it means to “like” and to “unlike”, how you can “follow” and “unfollow”, or “friend” and “unfriend” other people. Each of these cases offers the possibility of words and actions that are entirely reversible. There’s nothing that cannot be undone: the word “undone” itself has existed in English for around 700 years but in Shakespeare’s time it usually implied death, a far cry from pressing “Ctrl-Z” on a keyboard. So, if something is “googleable” why not “ungoogleable”? Are we to understand that the former is part of an ordered searchable realm, while the latter belongs only to cyber-dissidents and anonymous networks?

There is another consideration to this binary usage. You can “untag” yourself from an embarrassing public image, but both will remain recorded forever. No matter how many times you click undo, the machine and the software record and remember. Reversible words promise much (provided you only feel one of two ways), yet data itself only accumulates. Whether you consider yourself to be ogooglebar or not, the digital book of your life is steadily being written within somebody’s servers – and few of its words will ever be unwritten.

Whose language is it anyway?

All of which makes the ownership of words an important battleground. In Lewis Carroll’s *Alice Through The Looking Glass*, Humpty Dumpty explains to Alice that: “When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less.” Carroll was using absurdity to make a simple point: language is something we build together, and no single person (or company) can choose the precise meaning of my words. Google, however, seems determined to play Humpty Dumpty by making a very particular kind of binary claim: either you use Google their way, or they don’t let you use it all.

Just start typing into a search box to find out what “auto-completed” ideas are associated. If you can’t find something online, it’s often because you aren’t using the “right” words. And there’s a circular logic to all this, whereby what’s “right” means only what displays the best search results.

For Google, commercial imperatives are at stake, not least the question of trademark, but there’s also an echo of what many governments or institutions have attempted to do before them: language is judged by official approval. This puts Google in a curious situation: should it describe words as people are using them, or tell us how we “ought” to use them?

In the end, the Swedish Language Council’s statement on language’s independence from influence may not be quite as convincing. While no individual can decide the future of language, does the same apply to the software through which so many millions of our words flow each day?

I. Reading Comprehension (10 points)

Answer the following questions using your own words:

1. In your own words, what objection does Google have to the Swedish neologism “ogooglebar”? (1 point)
2. Why is the Swedish Language Council unable to include “ogooglebar” in its official list of new words in Swedish? (1 point)
3. What kinds of problems are associated with using binary language? (2 points)
4. What will be the impact of deleting “ogooglebar” from the official list on the way Swedes speak / use language? (1 point)
5. Why does the author associate Google with Humpty Dumpty? (3 points)
6. Does the author believe that Google can influence the way we use language? (2 points)

II. Language Work (10 points)

A) Explain the meaning of the following words / phrases in the context in which they appear (4 points):

1. It remains to be seen (*l. 19*):

2. a far cry from (*l. 30*):

3. no matter (*l. 34*):

4. at stake (*l. 49*):

B) Find a synonym in the text for the following (5 points):

1. explained

2. dominion

3. assertion

4. reinforced

5. have any impact on

C) Explain what “this” (*l. 51*) means (1 point)

III. Essay

Instructions

Write a short essay (approximately 150-175 words) in response to the question below. Your essay should be clearly organised and coherent. Allow time to revise and check your essay for formal accuracy, spelling and punctuation. Use the space below to write your essay

“Do you agree and / or disagree that the internet has changed the way we use language? Explain why /why not?”