



# 1 Study Guide

## *Introduction: Language, Languages, and Linguistics*

### **Study Questions**

Here are some study questions that you can use in preparing for your exams on this unit. You should be able to understand each question and its relevance, and to answer it in your own words (no more than a sentence or two should be necessary). Try to think up original examples to illustrate points where appropriate.

- In what way is language pervasive in your life?
- Why is language crucial to the creation of society?
- Discuss ways in which language is functional; why is this important?
- What does the history of English illustrate about language change in general?
- To what extent are the sounds used to express a given concept arbitrary?
- What are some examples of language change in Modern English?
- What are some examples of language contact?
- How many languages are there in the world?
- What factors might contribute to the decline in the number of languages?
- What issues are involved when people consider using the term “language” or “dialect”?
- What does it mean to say that two languages are mutually intelligible?
- What does it mean to say that linguistics is scientific?
- What is the difference between a linguist and a polyglot?
- What do linguists do?
- What are some of the questions that shape the field of linguistics?
- What do we mean when we say “all languages are created equal”?
- What is the difference between synchronic and diachronic?
- What is the difference between descriptive and prescriptive approaches to grammar?