Task A: Exploring voices: spontaneous speech in interviews

English Language and Literature at A level is a varied course which offers you the chance to broaden and deepen your GCSE skills to analyse the work of great fiction authors, explore a wide range of non fiction texts (including opinion pieces, travel writing, reviews and autobiography) and produce your own creative fiction and non-fiction writing. Alongside this, it also provides new opportunities to study the ways in which people use spoken language in their everyday lives and when engaging with the media, not only to communicate with each other but to present a particular view of themselves to the world..

Spontaneous speech is a technical term that refers to unplanned spoken language, rather than reading aloud from a written speech or script. We can analyse spontaneous speech to explore how people use language to react to others, present themselves in a certain way or achieve their purpose in a conversation.
This task focuses on television interviews: the interaction between interviewer and guests and the ways in which the speakers use language, spontaneously or scripted, to present themselves.

1. Watch this ITV interview between Piers Morgan and Donald Trump from 2019:
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lnl9LyTtECU

Listen carefully to what Donald Trump says – How far do you think he presents himself as a President? Do you think this is intentional?
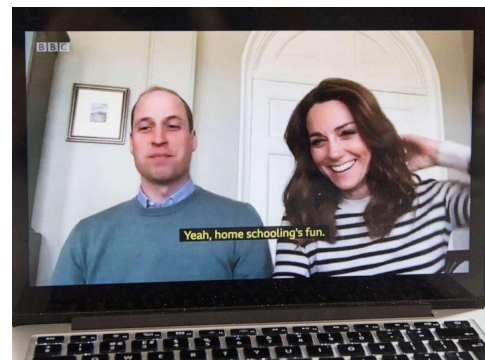
What do you think he wants the audience to think about him? E.g. that he is knowledgeable, important or easy to relate to?

2. Now watch it again and make notes about words and phrases which you think:
- seem to be key words he wants the audience to focus on – words that have been selected carefully or perhaps repeated to influence the audience
- seem informal/spontaneous
- seem more rehearsed/planned/formal
  Try to make some notes too on body language, tone of voice, emphasis on certain words (these things are called paralinguistic features) and interaction with the interviewer

3. Now watch this BBC news interview with The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge on mental health during the lockdown. Decide what you think they want the audience to think of them. How far do you think they present themselves as members of the Royal Family? Do you think this is intentional?

   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-ofnfnE3wk

4. Now watch again and make notes on the same topics as in task 2.

5. Extension question for those aiming for top grades:
   What do you notice about the language used by the interviewer in both interviews? Do you think they also aim to present themselves in a certain way to the interviewee and the audience?

6. Write a short comparison (about 400-500 words) of the two interviews – focus on how the participants aim to present themselves and how far you think they achieve this through their language.