

NEW EDITION



الجامعة العربية المفتوحة  
Arab Open University

**PROGRESSIVE**

# Skills

## in English

**Level 1 Teacher's Book**

Terry Phillips and Anna Phillips

*Garnet*  
EDUCATION

**Published by**

Garnet Publishing Ltd.  
8 Southern Court  
South Street  
Reading RG1 4QS, UK

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Second edition 2016

ISBN: 978-1-78260-309-2

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data  
A catalogue record for this book is available from  
the British Library.

**Production**

Project managers: Richard Peacock, Nicky Platt  
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Illustration: Doug Nash  
Photography: Alamy, Clipart, Corbis, Digital Vision, Getty Images, Image Source, Photodisc, iStockphoto, Shutterstock  
Audio: EFS Television Production Ltd, Silver Street Studios

**Acknowledgements**

The Publishers would like to thank the following who contributed to the piloting of the Garnet series at AOU:

1. FLS Deanship: Professor Ahmad Y. Majdoubeh and Professor Saleh Al-Salman
2. Kuwait Branch: Mr. Mohammed Farran and Ms. Hiba Tayyara
3. Egypt Branch: Dr. Heba Badreldin, Dr. Manar Shalaby, Ms. Amira Fouad, and Ms. Marine Milad.
4. Lebanon Branch: Dr. Hayat Al-Khatib, Mr. Ralph Sleiman, Ms. Mirna Abdel Malak, and Ms. Helen Zadourian

Every effort has been made to trace the copyright holders and we apologize in advance for any unintentional omissions. We will be happy to insert the appropriate acknowledgements in any subsequent editions.

**Printed and bound**

in Lebanon by International Press: [interpress@int-press.com](mailto:interpress@int-press.com)

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	Theme	Topics & Vocabulary	Listening	Speaking
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Reading	Writing	Phonology	Everyday English	Portfolio
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<p><b>Skills:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>preparing to read: illustrations</li> <li>the effect of frequency adverbs</li> </ul> <p><b>Grammar:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>frequency adverbs</li> </ul>	<p><b>Skills:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>gathering and recording information</li> <li>organizing information into paragraphs</li> <li>describing people</li> <li>the basics of essay writing</li> </ul> <p><b>Grammar:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adjectives for describing people</li> <li>linking with <i>and</i></li> <li>omission of repeated subject</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>hearing and saying vowels: /æ/ and /ɑ:/</li> <li>saying consonants: /n/, /ŋ/, /ŋk/</li> </ul>	Asking for information	What kind of person am I?
<p><b>Skills:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>dealing with new words</li> <li>preparing to read: section headings</li> </ul> <p><b>Grammar:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identifying noun phrases</li> </ul>	<p><b>Skills:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>writing about a process</li> <li>organizing information into a flow chart</li> <li>using chronological markers</li> <li>giving reasons for actions</li> </ul> <p><b>Grammar:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>because</i> and <i>so</i> (1)</li> <li>present simple passive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>hearing consonants: /g/, /dʒ/, /j/</li> </ul>	Talking about days and times	Jobs
<p><b>Skills:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>finding and using topic sentences</li> <li>looking for examples</li> </ul> <p><b>Grammar:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>introductory phrases</li> </ul>	<p><b>Skills:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>writing about results</li> <li>referring to tables and figures</li> </ul> <p><b>Grammar:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>past simple passive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>hearing consonants: -th, -er, -er</li> <li>saying vowels: /e/, /ɜ:/, /ə/</li> </ul>	Offering and requesting; accepting and refusing	Comparing countries
<p><b>Skills:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>recognizing reasons and results</li> </ul> <p><b>Grammar:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>because</i> and <i>so</i> (2)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Skills:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>writing topic sentences</li> <li>writing a case study</li> </ul> <p><b>Grammar:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>modifying nouns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>multi-syllable words</li> <li>saying vowel sounds</li> <li>saying the letter <i>s</i></li> </ul>	Getting around town	Wearable technology

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# Introduction

## The series

This course is part of the multi-level *Progressive Skills in English* series. The series as a whole prepares students to study wholly or partly in English medium at tertiary level, or to join the world of academic English, on the internet and in print.

This new edition has been extensively revised to take into account feedback from both teachers and students. In particular, Themes 4 and 5 are completely new. The accompanying Workbook provides further practice in all the skills areas.

## The themes

In each level of *Progressive Skills in English* there are five themes, covering a wide range of areas of human knowledge.

### Level 1

- Theme 1: Education
- Theme 2: Psychology and sociology
- Theme 3: Work and business
- Theme 4: Daily life
- Theme 5: Technology

## The sections

Within each theme there are four main sections, each dealing with a discrete skill: listening, speaking, reading or writing. A number of related topics are explored within each theme. For example, in Theme 1 the following areas are explored:

- Listening:** welcome talks for students starting at an English-medium university
- Speaking:** systems of education and qualities of good teachers
- Reading:** living and working at university
- Writing:** completing an application form and writing a Personal Statement

The focus in each section is on **one** specific skill. The Methodology notes in this Teacher's Book stress the discrete skills focus and caution against spending too much time on, for example, speaking in a listening

section. This is not because the writers dislike integrated skills. Indeed, each theme ends with a section called Portfolio, which provides detailed guidance on integrated skills activities following the completion of a particular theme. The insistence on the target skill is because the writers believe that both the teacher and the students should focus on improvement in a specific skill in a particular lesson, rather than moving constantly between different skills. However, the key word here is *focus*. More than one skill will, of course, be involved in any particular lesson. For example, in listening lessons there is almost always a speaking output, and in writing lessons there is almost always a reading input.

The commonality of theme across the four skill sections means that, by the end of a theme, students have a much deeper knowledge of both the information and vocabulary that it comprises than is normally achieved in ELT course books.

## The lessons

Each skill section contains two or four main lessons, and each lesson has a clear focus and purpose.

## Additional pages

Every theme contains three additional pages:

### Everyday English

This page is in the speaking section and builds skills in survival language and social English. In Theme 1, for example, this page covers *Asking about words and phrases* and in Theme 2, *Asking for information* in a university or college setting. See the **Methodology** section for more guidance.

### Knowledge quiz or Vocabulary quiz

This page is in the reading section and tests students on their acquisition of common core knowledge and thematic vocabulary from the theme. In Theme 1, for example, this page asks students to remember information about *Education*, including parts of a university campus, social customs in the UK and types of school. See the **Methodology** section for more guidance.

## Portfolio

This section comes at the very end of each theme and provides an opportunity to integrate skills learnt during the course. Students are provided with tasks and research information in additional listening and/or reading texts, and asked to produce talks and/or written texts. In Theme 3, for example, students are asked to research and talk about *Jobs*. See the **Methodology** section for more guidance.

## Approach

### Aims

In *Progressive Skills in English*, students learn to understand the main types of academic spoken language, lectures and tutorials, and the main types of academic written language, journal articles and encyclopedia entries. They also learn to produce the main kinds of student academic language, oral presentations, contributions to a tutorial and written assignments.

### Moving from teaching general to academic English

Many of the teaching techniques and approaches used in general English teaching can be transferred to the teaching of academic English. The differences are more to do with the syllabus and course content. Some of the key differences we have noted include:

#### Grammar

Most general English courses are driven by tense grammar. Since 80 per cent of academic English is in a present tense, the focus needs to move from tenses to syntactic grammar. For more details on this point, see **Syntactic grammar for EAP** below.

#### Skills

A general English course will focus mainly on oral communication. Listening will be extremely varied, from conversations and anecdotes to radio programmes. Reading is often relegated to third place and writing to a very distant fourth. For the academic learner, reading and writing are at least as important as the other skills. For more details, see **Discrete skills or integrated?** below.

#### Content

In EAP, listening to lectures will be more relevant than listening to anecdotes and stories. Academic students need to learn to 'grab' relevant information from a lecture after one listening only. Similarly with reading, required content will mostly be fact or theory or a mixture, rather than fiction and anecdote. Students need to be able to decide

quickly which texts, or parts of texts are relevant to the task and extract the information. Listening and reading texts in general will be much longer in EAP than in a general English course.

### Vocabulary

Students need a wide range of formal language. Academic texts about a single subject tend to use a lot of synonyms for key nouns and verbs, so students need to deepen and broaden their lexical range all the time.

### Topics and themes

Sometimes you find very familiar 'EFL' topics in *Progressive Skills in English*, but then you will see that the approach to that topic is different. For example, in a section on holiday resorts, students are not asked about going on holiday or planning a weekend away, but rather why particular resorts are popular, whether tourism benefits the local economy and how countries can increase tourism to a particular area.

### Critical thinking

Students are encouraged to ask *why* and *how* throughout the course, and to relate information from a particular text to their own selves or their own country/area. They are shown the importance of evaluating information and looking for stance or bias on the part of the speaker or writer.

### Discrete skills or integrated?

In terms of presentation, *Progressive Skills in English* is very definitely a discrete skills course. Research has shown that students need to have a clear focus, with measurable objectives in order to make real progress, and this is only really possible if the skills are initially separated out. However, integration is the norm in the real world and, since the course aims to mimic real-world skills usage, integration is automatic once one moves from presentation. For example, in the receptive skills lessons, as in the real world, students have to make notes from reading and listening and then discuss their findings, thus bringing in writing and speaking to listening and reading lessons. In the productive skills lessons, as in the real world, students have to research before producing, thus bringing in reading and listening skills.

### Receptive skills – listening and reading

Research strongly suggests that listening and reading are based on a continuous interaction between top-down and bottom-up processes. Top-down processes prepare the listener or reader to understand the information in the text. Bottom-up processes ensure

than the listener or reader can decode information in real-time, i.e., as it is actually being heard or read.

### Top-down processes

Before we can understand information, we need to recognize the context. We expect to hear different things in a restaurant, for example, from a lecture room, or to read different things in a novel and a religious text. We use context and co-text clues (pictures, newspaper headlines, diagrams) to **activate schemata** – pictures, we could say, of familiar situations. In the process, the brain makes available to us vocabulary, discourse structures and **background knowledge** of the real world, which help with bottom-up decoding. We start to develop **hypotheses** about the contents of the text, and we continually **predict** the next word, the next phrase, the next discourse point or the next communicative value as we are listening or reading. In *Progressive Skills in English*, students are taught to bring top-down processing to bear on new listening and reading texts. The course works to build schemata and background knowledge which will help students to predict content, in general and in particular. In the academic world, listening and reading normally have a productive by-product – detailed notes. Throughout *Progressive Skills in English*, students are taught to take notes and to use these notes in later activities to prove comprehension of the text.

### Bottom-up processes

Top-down processes enable listeners and readers to get a good general idea of what will be heard or read in a text. However, to get a detailed and accurate understanding, the text must be broken down into meaningful units. In the case of spoken English, this means being able to turn the stream of speech into actual words, which in turn means knowing the phonological code of English. With written English, it is slightly easier if your first language has a similar orthography to English, but will continue to pose problems for students whose L1 is Chinese or Arabic, for example. Research has shown that we use syntax to achieve this breaking into meaningful units (see below on **syntactic grammar**). In *Progressive Skills in English*, students are taught to recognize all the phonemes of English in context and to identify multi-syllable words from the stressed syllable in the stream of speech. They also learn to identify written words from the first two or three letters, a key skill which enables native speakers to understand written text at high speed. Students are also exposed to common syntactic patterns and practise breaking up incoming language into **subject, verb, object / complement and adverbial**.

### Productive skills – speaking and writing

Production in speech and writing in the normal EFL classroom is often more or less spontaneous and personal. Students are asked to speak or write about themselves, their lives, families, opinions, etc., with very little preparation. This mimics real-life conversation and, to some extent, real-life informal letter and email writing. This type of production is rare in *Progressive Skills in English* because it is not the model for production in the academic world.

Production in academia begins with an **assignment** which requires **research**. The research almost always leads to **note-taking**. From these notes, an oral presentation, tutorial contribution or written assignment is produced. There are normally three stages to this production: **drafting, editing and rewriting**. In *Progressive Skills in English*, we teach the idea of the TOWER of writing – **thinking, organizing, writing (for the writer), editing, rewriting (for the reader / listener)**.

### Syntactic grammar for EAP

Grammar in ELT has traditionally been seen as largely a question of verb tense, and that certain tenses are 'easy' and others are 'hard'. Progression through levels conventionally equates to the ability to manipulate different tenses, from present simple of the verb *be* at beginner level to present perfect continuous passive modal at advanced level. Most best-selling courses follow a structural syllabus which is largely a verb tense syllabus. However, English is a *syntactic* language where meaning is carried by word order rather than paradigmatic form. We cannot recover the meaning of a word or its role without a sentence or text context, because English words are not marked in most instances for part of speech or case. Many words can be nouns or verbs depending on context; *like*, to take an extreme example, can be a noun, a verb, a preposition or an adjective. Any noun can be the subject or object of a verb; only pronouns are marked for case, e.g., *He told him*.

Research has shown that native speakers use their knowledge of English syntax, together with their vocabulary, to decode sentences in speech and in writing. They do this in real time. In other words, native speakers are constantly constructing tree diagrams of incoming data which help them to predict the next item and its role in the ongoing sentence.

It is somewhat strange that this key fact seems to have gone unnoticed for so long by ELT practitioners. The reason is probably that most ELT classwork, for many decades, has been based on spoken interaction, often of informal conversation, rather than the individual

interacting with and decoding in real time a formal spoken or written text. Corpus research now shows us that conversation in English has an average phrase length of just over one word, and very short sentences, such as *I went there, She likes him, He's working in a bank*. In short sentences like this, the most salient area of difficulty is the verb form which must be dropped between the subject and the object, complement or adverbial. However, in academic or formal discourse, the average phrase length jumps to eight words. Analysis of this genre shows that noun phrases are particularly long, with pre- and post-modification of the head noun, and subject noun phrases are often preceded themselves by long adverbial phrases, so that a sentence may have a large number of words before the subject and more words before the main verb. For example:

According to research at the University of Reading into the problems experienced by children growing up with a single parent, children from one-parent families in deprived areas have a much greater chance of developing personality disorders.

The native speaker has little problem with this sentence, either in speech or writing, because he/she knows that the phrase *According to* is not the subject and the subject will come along in a while, and that *children* can be post-modified so he/she must wait for this noun phrase to end before encountering the verb, etc. The non-native speaker, trained in decoding simple short utterances, will have considerable difficulty.

Complex tenses are in fact not at all common in academic/formal English. Research shows that the majority of sentences in this genre are in the present simple, including its passive forms, for the obvious reason that most formal English presents facts, theories or states of being, which are rendered in English by this tense. The next most common tense is the past simple, because the genre often contains historical background to current facts, theories or states of being, which in turn is normally rendered in past simple. In one particular corpus study, only one example of the present perfect continuous was found in the whole academic/formal corpus. A student equipped with facility in these two tenses will understand the tense information in around 90 per cent of academic/formal sentences. However, they may not understand the noun phrases and adverbial phrases which surround these 'simple' tenses.

There is a final key issue which applies in general to long texts in the EFL classroom. In the main, when students are exposed to longer texts with a formal structure, they are allowed, even encouraged, to engage in multiple listenings or multiple readings before being asked to complete an after-doing comprehension task such as multiple choice or

true/false. This type of activity has no correlate in the real world, where listening has to be real-time – there is no opportunity for a second or subsequent hearing – and reading should be real-time if it is to be efficient. Comprehension occurs as the sentence is being received. However, real-time comprehension is only possible if the receiver understands the syntactic structures possible in the language and identifies, in real time, the structure being used at a particular time. The listener or reader is then ready for the required components of that structure and predicts their appearance and even the actual words. For example, once a native speaker hears the verb *give*, they will anticipate that a person and a thing will complete the utterance. Even if the 'person' noun phrase contains many words, the receiver will be waiting. For example: *The state gives unemployed people with a large number of children under the age of 18 still in full-time education ...* The native-speaker listener or reader is thinking, 'What? What does it give?' Conversely, the construction of extended formal text in speech and writing also requires a deep understanding of syntax, otherwise it is not possible to construct sentences of the complexity required by the genre.

While writing the syllabus for *Skills in English*, first published by Garnet Education in 2003, we were struck by the points above and began work on the implications for classroom practice. In *Progressive Skills in English*, we feel we have gone some way to presenting a coherent syllabus of relevant practice to build the skills required for real-time comprehension.

### Syntactic grammar at Level 1

By this stage in their studies, students are probably fully familiar with parts of speech and with the most common syntactic patterns (see tables 1 and 2 below). Since we cannot assume this familiarity, however, these points are quickly revised in the first few sections of the course. Thereafter, students are exposed mainly to basic S V O/C/A patterns, with co-ordination. Gradually, the length of the object noun phrase or complement is extended and co-ordination is introduced but with no ellipsis of subject or verb. This should ensure that students begin to get a natural feel for these patterns, can recognize them in real time in listening and reading, and produce them in speech and writing.

Table 1: Sentence roles and parts of speech

Roles in sentences	Possible parts of speech	Notes
Subject	noun, pronoun	extended noun phrase can contain other parts of speech, e.g., <i>a very large piece of research</i>
Object	noun, pronoun	
Complement	noun, adjective, adverb	an object becomes a complement when it has the same reference as the subject, such as in sentences with <i>be</i> and related verbs, e.g., <i>She is a doctor. He was late. They seem tired.</i>
Verb	verb	extended verb phrase can contain adverbs, e.g., <i>They are still waiting.</i>
Adverbial	adverb, prepositional phrase	note that this role in a sentence can be filled by a prepositional phrase as well as by an adverb, e.g., <i>He works hard. She works in a bank.</i>

Table 2: Main sentence patterns in English

We left.	S V
She is a doctor.	S V C
I am cold.	S V C
They were late.	S V A
We have been to the back.	S V A
I gave her the book.	S V O O
They made him president.	S V O C
I told her to leave.	S V O V
We saw them later.	S V O A
Accept responsibility.	V O

### Exercise naming

Many ELT course books give general names to groups of exercises, such as *Presentation* or *Pronunciation*. *Progressive Skills in English* goes much further and names the target activity for each exercise in its heading, e.g., *Activating ideas* or *Predicting the next word*. By this simple means, both teacher and students are informed of the purpose of an exercise. Make sure that your students understand the heading of each exercise so they can see clearly the point which is being presented or practised.

### Exercise types

As is probably clear already, *Progressive Skills in English* contains many original features, but teachers and course leaders need not be concerned that a

wholly new methodology is required to teach the course. On the one hand, exercise naming means that the purpose of new types of exercise is immediately clear. On the other, many traditional types of ELT exercises are used in the course, with only slight changes. The most significant of these changes are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Adaptations to traditional exercise types

Traditional exercise	Progressive Skills version
grammar tables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parts of sentence are clearly shown with subject, verb, object/complement/adverbial columns.</li> <li>- Parts of speech are clearly shown with colour-coding. purple = noun red = verb blue = pronoun orange = adjective green = preposition brown = adverb</li> </ul>
gap fill	In some cases, one part of speech is removed so students can see the various contexts in which, e.g., a pronoun can appear. In other cases, one role in the sentence is removed, e.g., the subject, so students can see the different words which can make up this role.
sentence anagrams	Words are jumbled in a number of sentences in the traditional way, but when students have unscrambled them, all the sentences have the same syntactic structure, e.g., S V O A. Words in a particular phrase are kept together during the jumbling, e.g., <i>in the UK</i> , rather than all being split; this helps students to think in terms of syntactic blocks rather than individual words.
transformation	Traditional transformation, e.g., positive to negative, appears regularly, but in addition, active to passive is introduced early on in the course, because of the relatively high frequency of passives in academic English.
joining sentences	Sentences are joined by co-ordinators from the beginning of <i>Progressive Skills in English</i> , but the second half of the sentence retains all its features, e.g., subject, verb, negation, for most of Level 1. This is because co-ordinated sentences with ellipses hide the kernel syntactic structure with which we want students to become familiar, e.g., <i>Some people do not know about the problem or care</i> . The second half of this sentence is originally: <i>Some people do not care about the problem</i> but with the ellipsis, the subject, the negation and the object disappear.

### Vocabulary lists

Vocabulary is a key part of language learning of any kind but it is even more important for the student of academic English. Students need a huge vocabulary in order to understand or produce the lexical cohesion common to this genre. The reading and writing sections in every theme begin with a vocabulary list of about 40 items in the right-hand column of the first lesson. This list contains items from the skill section which are linked to the theme. The part of speech is given in every case for single items. In addition, there is sometimes information on the precise meaning in the context of the theme, e.g., *area (n) [= location]* (as opposed to field of study, for example). There is space at the bottom of each list for students to add three or four more words that they wish to learn.

Most of the items in each list are probably new to the majority of the students in any class. A few of the items are likely to be known, but are so central to the theme that they are included for revision.

Normally, about 40 per cent of the words in the list are presented in the Vocabulary lesson, with some reference made to perhaps another 10 per cent. The remaining words will be encountered in other lessons and either specifically taught or understood in context.

You can use the lists in a number of ways:

- ask students to look at the list before the start of the skill section and tick the words they 'know'; do not test the students this time but encourage them to be honest
- ask students to repeat this activity at the end of the skill section, and again one week and one month later. On these occasions, test the students' knowledge, particularly in the relevant skill, e.g., to check that students can spell the words from a writing section
- get students to mark the stress on each word as they encounter it
- get students to underline or highlight in some way unusual spelling and pronunciation points
- put students into pairs or groups to test each other
- allow students to write a translation beside some or all of the words

Please note: flashcards and detailed notes on using them can be found on the *Progressive Skills in English* website, [www.skillsinenglish.com](http://www.skillsinenglish.com).

### Skills Checks

In every theme, there is at least one Skills Check. The naming of this feature is significant. It is assumed that many if not all students will have heard about the skills points in these boxes, i.e., they are skills *checks* not

skills *presentations*. It is the writers' experience that many students who have gone through a modern ELT course have *heard of* the majority of skills points but cannot make practical use of them. If you feel, in a particular case, that the students have no idea about the point in question, spend considerably longer on a full presentation.

In most cases, the students are given an activity to do before looking at the Skills Check, thus a test-teach-test approach is used. This is quite deliberate. With this approach, there is a good chance that the students will be sensitized to the particular point before being asked to understand it intellectually. This is likely to be more effective than talking about the point and then asking the student to try to apply it. The positioning of the Skills Checks means that the information relevant to an activity or set of activities is available for consultation by the student at any time. Because some students have an inductive learning style (working from example to rule) and some have a deductive style (working from rule to example), the Skills Checks have rules *and* examples.

You can use the Skills Checks in a number of ways:

- ask students to read out the rules and the examples
- get students to give you more examples of each point
- ask students to read the Skills Check and then cover it; read it out with mistakes or with wrong examples of the point being presented
- at the end of the lesson, ask students to tell you the new skill(s) they have encountered, without looking at their Course Books

### Pronunciation Checks

In the speaking section, and occasionally in the listening section, there are Pronunciation Checks. In Level 1, these chiefly focus on phoneme discrimination. For example, in Theme 2 Listening, one Pronunciation Check deals with hearing the two phonemes /æ/ and /ɑ:/, while in Theme 2 Speaking, another deals with the actual production of the two phonemes. The examples in these checks are recorded, so you can give students good models of the target point and then drill the items (see **Further speaking practice / drilling** below). Sometimes there is additional practice material to be completed after working through the check.

## Recurrent activities

As mentioned above, all exercises are named. Many of these names appear regularly throughout the course, sometimes with slight changes. This is because these activities are particularly valuable in language learning.

### Activating (background) knowledge / ideas

In line with basic communication theory, the lessons always try to move from the known to the unknown. This activity at the start of a lesson allows students to show that they have knowledge or ideas about the real world before learning new information. It also enables the teacher to gauge what is already known, and build on it if necessary, before moving further into the lesson.

While students are talking about a particular area, they are in effect activating schemata, which means they are more ready for further information in the same area.

### Understanding words in context

Research shows that it is possible to work out the meaning of a small proportion (perhaps ten per cent) of words in a text, if the remaining words and structures are well known. This activity guides students, perhaps through multiple matching, to show understanding of new items.

### Transferring information (to the real world) / Using new skills in a real-world task

It is essential that information is transferable outside of the classroom. This activity tries to make the bridge between information learnt in class and applications in the real world.

### Reviewing key words

Students are often given the opportunity to recall words from the previous lesson(s) of a skill section. This helps students to move information into long-term memory.

### Identifying a new skill

The methodology of *Progressive Skills in English*, as detailed above, is that students are presented with a text in the Real-time lesson which contains some recycled skills points and one or more new skills points. The students are not directed formally to the new point(s) but may notice while they are doing the real-time activity. Then in the next lesson, they are formally directed to the point(s). This is in line with the principle of noticing before learning.

### Predicting content

Listening and reading are real-time skills. The listener must be ahead of the speaker; the reader must be ahead of the text. Activities in this type of exercise help students to get ahead.

### Previewing vocabulary

This is a pre-teaching activity. Sometimes key vocabulary is required in order to complete a task later in a lesson. This key vocabulary is presented and needs to be practised thoroughly so it is fully available to students during the coming lesson.

### Hearing / Understanding / Studying a model / discourse structure

*Progressive Skills in English* follows the principle that students must see or hear what they are later asked to produce in speech or writing. In this exercise, they work with a model in order to recognize key features, such as discourse structure.

### Practising a model

Clearly, once students have seen key points about a model they should be given the opportunity to produce the text.

### Producing a model

This is the third stage, after 'understanding' and 'practising'. Students are given a task which requires the production of a parallel text.

### Producing key patterns

This is related to producing a model, but is at the sentence level.

### Showing comprehension

Comprehension in the real world is a real-time activity and is something which happens in the brain: it is not directly observable. However, it is essential that both teachers and students see that comprehension has taken place. But remember, this sort of activity is a test of comprehension not a sub-skill in comprehension.

### Researching information

*Progressive Skills in English* is not convergent. Students are only sent back to their pre-existing ideas of knowledge at the beginning of lessons, in *Activating knowledge / ideas*. *Progressive Skills* is divergent. Students are sent off to research and bring back information in order to give a talk, take part in a tutorial or produce a written text.

### Developing vocabulary

Students of academic English need constantly to develop their vocabulary knowledge. This exercise extends their existing vocabulary.

### Developing independent learning

Clearly, the ultimate aim of teaching a language is that students become independent learners who do not need a teacher to acquire new linguistic knowledge. This activity gives students a particular sub-skill to aid this process.

### Developing critical thinking

We must take students beyond the 'what' and the 'when' of information. We must get them to react to information and to ask why something happened or why it is important.

### Remembering real-world knowledge

*Progressive Skills in English* is based on the theory that people need a framework of knowledge in order to understand new information as they read or hear it. Therefore, they need to remember real-world knowledge from lessons, not just vocabulary, skills and grammar.

### Using / Applying a key skill

Skills are learnt. Then they need to be applied. This activity always connects directly to *Identifying a new skill* in an earlier lesson in the skill section.

### Making and checking hypotheses

Real-time listening and reading is about making and checking hypotheses. This is what makes it a real-time activity. Students need to learn a wide range of points about discourse, vocabulary and syntax which helps with making hypotheses. They then need to be given the opportunity to check these hypotheses.

## Methodology

### Everyday English

These additional lessons are designed to give university students some survival English for university life. The language and topics are freestanding so the lessons can be done at any time during the skill section or theme, or can be missed out completely should you so wish. The page could last a whole lesson or you could spend a shorter time and only work on two or three of the conversations. The format of all the Everyday English lessons is similar, with between four and six mini-dialogues on a similar topic or with a similar function.

Here are some ways of exploiting each stage of the lesson:

You may wish to highlight the grammar of some of the forms used in the conversations, but in general they can be learnt as phrases without going into too much explanation. Indeed, many of the forms that we often spend a lot of time on in class could probably be better learnt as fixed phrases, since their usage in everyday life is so limited, e.g., *How long have you been learning English?*

Ask students if they think the conversations take place in a formal or informal context. In Theme 1, for example, the conversations are obviously between two students so are more informal. In Theme 2, some of the conversations take place with members of staff, so these conversations are more formal. If conversations are formal, it is always important to remind students to use polite intonation.

Once any tasks set in the Course Book have been completed, and you have checked students understand the conversations, you can use the conversations for intensive pronunciation practice. Use one or more of the following activities:

- Play the audio, pausing after each line for students to listen and repeat, chorally and individually.
- Drill some of the phrases from the conversations, chorally then individually.
- Students practise the conversations in pairs, from the full transcript or from prompts.
- Students practise the conversations again, but substituting their own information, words or phrases where appropriate.
- Students extend the conversation by adding further lines of dialogue.
- Students invent a completely new conversation for the situation, function or photograph.
- Add some drama to the conversations by asking students to act out the conversations with different contexts, relationships or emotions (e.g., one student should act angry and the other student bored).

Monitor and give feedback after paired practice. You may want to focus on:

- intonation of *yes / no* questions
- stressed words in short answers, e.g., *Yes, it is. Yes, it does.*
- accurate use of auxiliary *do* in present simple questions.

### Knowledge / Vocabulary quiz

Although this is an optional part of each theme, the idea behind it is central to the approach of *Progressive Skills in English*. We have found from our work with universities around the world that students often fail to understand a text *not* because the English grammar is above their level, but because they do not have the framework of real-world knowledge or the breadth of topic-specific vocabulary in order to comprehend. This page makes these items central, but revises and tests them in a variety of enjoyable ways. There are several ways in which this page can be used. The Methodology notes for each theme suggest a particular way or ways on each occasion, but broadly the page can be done as:

- a quiz for individuals, pairs or groups where it appears, i.e., at the end of the reading section
- a quiz, but *later* in the course, when students have had a chance to forget some of the knowledge and/or vocabulary
- a quiz, but *before* the students do the theme; keep the answers and see how much they have learnt after doing the theme
- a self-study test; students write their answers and hand them in, or self-mark in a later lesson in class
- a phase of a lesson – the teacher sets the task(s) in the normal way and feeds back orally.

### Portfolio

The main features of the Portfolio lessons are:

- **versatility**  
It is possible to spend anything from part of a single lesson to four lessons on the activities; in addition, some, all or none of the work can be done in class.
- **integrated skills**  
All four skills are included in this lesson, though the focus will shift depending on the activity.
- **academic skills**  
The focus is on researching, digesting and exchanging information, and presenting information orally or in writing.
- **learner independence**  
At all stages from research through to oral or written presentations, the teacher should be in the roles of monitor, guide and, if necessary, manager, and should try to avoid being the 'knower' and 'controller'!

Here are some ways of exploiting each stage of the lesson:

#### Activating ideas

Use the photographs in the book or show your own. Make sure students have the key vocabulary for all the activities.

#### Gathering information

The course provides listening and reading texts. You can suggest extra internet research if you wish. The information is often presented as an information gap, with groups listening to different texts then regrouping in order to exchange information. At first, you may need to suggest the best way to take notes, e.g., in a table with relevant headings. Later, however, you should encourage students to design their own note-taking tables and headings. At all stages, encourage students to help each other with comprehension or any problems, only calling on you as a last resort. The research stages can be done in class or for homework. However, check the research has been done effectively and reasonably thoroughly before moving on to the presentation stages.

### Oral presentations

To start with, these should be no more than a few sentences long. The organization of the presentations is crucial and will depend on how much time you have and the number of students in your class.

- **Formal and teacher-centred**  
Set another activity for the class, or ask another teacher to do something with your class. Remove one student at a time (or one group, if the presentation is a collaboration) to another room so that you can listen to the presentation.
- **Student-centred to some extent**  
Students give presentations to other groups of students in the class. You may have between two and four presentations going on at the same time. Monitor as many as you possibly can. Make a note of students you have listened to and make sure you listen to different students next time round.
- **Student-centred and informal approach, requiring a mature class**  
Students give presentations to their groups as above. However, the 'listening' students give feedback after the talk, rather than you.

It is important that if you have students listening to talks, they are not simply 'passive' listeners. They will switch off and get bored. Wherever possible, therefore, assign tasks. This is relatively easy if students are listening to new information: they can complete notes or write answers to questions. However, if they are listening to talks similar to their own, give the 'listening' students feedback or comment sheets to complete (see below).

Table 4: Example feedback form for group tasks

Did the speaker ...	Always	Sometimes	Never
look up from notes?			
make eye contact?			
speak loudly enough?			
talk at correct speed?			
use good intonation patterns?			
use good visuals / PowerPoint slides?			
give all the important points?			
introduce the talk?			
conclude the talk?			

Please note: many of the above suggestions for oral presentations in the Portfolio lesson, including the feedback form, are also relevant for lessons in the speaking sections.

### Feedback on oral presentations

You can choose between giving formal, written feedback to individual students, and more informal oral feedback to each group or the whole class. Formal written feedback could be based on a checklist of speaking sub-skills such as those provided by IELTS or Cambridge ESOL for the FCE. Alternatively, you may prefer to devise your own checklist with broader headings, e.g.,

- accuracy
- fluency
- pronunciation
- grammar
- vocabulary, etc.

Informal feedback should include some positive and encouraging statements, as well as showing students what they need to work on. With the scaffolding in *Progressive Skills in English*, students should not make a large number of mistakes in producing spoken or written work, so it should be easier than otherwise to focus on a small number of areas for improvement. Make a note of grammar or vocabulary mistakes you hear while monitoring the class. Write the incorrect language on the board. Elicit from the class what the mistake is and how to correct it. Drill the correct sentence. Practise any words, phrases, sentences or questions that you noted were poorly pronounced.

Whichever method of feedback you choose, give the class one or two targets to work on for the next oral presentation, e.g., 'Look up from notes more often.' Even better, ask students to each set themselves a target for next time. Suggest ideas, which can be discrete (such as about the pronunciation of a particular sound) or much broader (such as about making clearer notes). Students should make a note of their target for next time and you can check it if you wish.

### Dealing with writing

In the Portfolio, you can adapt the final activity as you wish. You may like to give further practice of writing a full assignment-type essay, but there are other writing activities that are worth doing:

- notes only, possibly in a table
- PowerPoint slides
- a poster or wall presentation, particularly if you can display these publicly
- a one-paragraph summary

- a complete project on the topic, containing several different articles with accompanying visuals; this can be worked on individually or produced together in a group.

### Giving feedback on writing

*For work set for completion in class:*

Monitor and give some help to individuals. Make a note of common errors, i.e., mistakes that two or more students make. Then give feedback to the whole class. You can use the technique described above for feedback on oral errors; write the incorrect sentences the students have produced on the board and elicit the correct version.

*For work that you collect in:*

It is important not to get bogged down in detailed corrections and/or piles of written work waiting to be marked. For this reason, do not set too much written work as home assignments! You could, of course, ask students to comment on each other's writing in a phase in a later lesson, but this only works with relatively mature classes. Always set the length of the task: 200–400 words is probably enough for Level 1 of this course.

Establish a marking key with the class early on in the course. For example, *sp* = spelling, *p* = punctuation, *gr* = grammar, and use the grading grids provided for each theme's final writing task. This means you are able to highlight the problem areas but leave students to make the corrections.

Focus on only two or three key areas each time you mark. Initially, these may simply be presentation and layout, e.g., using paragraphs, but later could include using more complex noun phrases or more formal language. Later you can focus on sub-skills such as organization and discourse, cohesion, longer sentences, etc.

We have tried to provide model answers wherever possible, even for open-ended activities like the writing and speaking assignments. Always show these to the class and discuss possible variations, in order to avoid the models being too prescriptive. If you have students with good writing skills, ask their permission to show their written work to the class as example answers.

### Listening

'How many times should I play the audio of lectures?' This is a question we are often asked by teachers. On the one hand, we need to train our students to deal with the real-life lecture situation, in which students

will only have the opportunity to hear the information once. On the other hand, students may simply not understand the lecture after only one playing. So what is the solution?

- Firstly, it is important to make sure all the pre-listening activities are carried out effectively so that students can begin to predict the lecture content.
- Next, play the first section of the lecture once only for completion of the exercise or activity; this is a kind of 'test' to find out how well students would perform in the 'real-life' situation. It also trains students to listen for as much information as they can on the first hearing. Check how well students have completed the task and elicit the correct answers.
- Once you have confirmed the correct answers, move on to the next section of the lecture and corresponding exercise. Repeat the above procedure.
- When students have heard all the sections of the lecture, replay the complete lecture, with or without the transcript. This is where learning takes place, because students have the opportunity to see why they missed information or did not fully understand during the first playing.
- Finally, as a follow-up, students should be encouraged to listen to the complete lecture several times on their own at home, both with and without the transcript.

*What other strategies can the teacher use?*

- Remember that the key to comprehension in a foreign language is prediction, so students must have time to assimilate what they have just heard and predict what is coming next. You can pause the lecture any number of times during the first listening if you think your class needs this extra time. But, of course, pause at logical points – certainly the end of sentences and preferably the end of topic points.

*What other strategies can the students use?*

- Nowadays, most lecturers in the real world provide pre-lecture reading lists and notes, PowerPoint slides and visuals, and handouts. Summaries are also often available on the university's portal. There are PowerPoints available for the lectures on the *Progressive Skills in English* website. Students should be made aware of all of these resources and encouraged to use them.

### Further speaking practice / drilling

In the notes for individual speaking lessons, we often say 'practise the sentences with the class'. You can use one or more of the example drilling techniques below. There are many other techniques, but we have just

given a sample below. (The examples are all based on Theme 1 Speaking.)

- **Simple repetition, chorally and individually**  
Highlight the pronunciation area you want to focus on when you model the sentence or question, e.g., showing the intonation pattern with your hand, or using an intonation arrow on the board.
- **Question and answer**  
*When do you take national exams in your country?*  
*We take them at 16 and 18.*  
(Do not simply accept *16 and 18* in a controlled practice phase – encourage a full sentence.)  
Alternatively, you can practise short answers. Tell students if you require *yes* answers or *no* answers:  
*Is a nursery school for young children?*  
*Yes, it is.*  
*Does primary mean 'first'?*  
*Yes, it does.*  
*Do most children leave school at 18?*  
*Yes, they do.*
- **Transformation**  
These examples focus on forms of the present simple tense.  
*Many children begin school at seven.*  
*Sorry, but they don't begin school at seven.* OR  
*Actually, they begin school at five.*
- **Substitution**  
Say a phrase or sentence and ask the class to repeat it. Then give prompts that can be substituted as follows:  
*History is a very important subject at school.*  
*useful*  
*History is a very useful subject at school.*  
*isn't*  
*History isn't a very useful subject at school.*  
*university*  
*History isn't a very useful subject at university.*  
*Drama*  
*Drama isn't a very useful subject at university.*
- **Prompts**  
These can be given orally or they can be written on the board. They are particularly good for practising question forms:  
*Nursery / young children?*  
*Is a nursery school for young children?*  
*When / take / A levels?*  
*When do you take A levels?*

### Setting up tasks

The teaching notes for many activities begin with the word *Set ...*. This single word covers a number of vital functions for the teacher, as follows:

- Refer students to the rubric, or instructions.
- Check that they understand **what** to do: get one or two students to explain the task in their own words.
- Tell the students **how** they are to do the task, if this is not clear in the rubric (as individual work, pairwork, or group work).
- Go through the example, if there is one. If not, make it clear what the **target output** is: full sentences, short answers, notes, etc. Many activities fail in the classroom because students do not know what they are expected to produce.
- Go through one or two of the actual prompts, working with an able student to elicit the required output.

### Use of visuals

There is a large amount of visual material in the book. This should be exploited in a number of ways:

- **before** an activity, to orientate the students; to get them thinking about the situation or the activity and to provide an opportunity for a small amount of pre-teaching of vocabulary
- **during** the activity, to remind students of important language
- **after** the activity, to help with related work or to revise the target language.

### Pronunciation

Only the speaking section of each theme directly focuses on oral production. In this section, you must ensure that all the students in your group have reasonable pronunciation of all target items. Elsewhere, in the other skill sections, it is important that you do not spend too long on oral production. However, do not let students get away with poor production of basic words, even if the focus of the lesson is not speaking.

### Comparing answers in pairs

This activity is suggested on almost every occasion when the students have completed an activity individually. This provides all students with a chance to give and to explain their answers, which is not possible if the teacher immediately goes through the answers with the whole class.

### Monitoring

Pairwork and group work activities are, of course, an opportunity for the students to produce spoken language. This is clearly important in the speaking section but elsewhere, these interactional patterns provide an opportunity for the teacher to check three points:

- that the students are performing the correct task, in the correct way
- that the students understand the language of the task they are performing
- the elements which need to be covered again for the benefit of the whole class, and which points need to be dealt with on an individual basis with particular students.

### Feedback

At the end of every activity there should be a feedback stage, during which the correct answers (or a model answer, in the case of freer activities) is given, alternative correct answers (if any) are accepted, and wrong answers are discussed.

Feedback can be:

- high-speed, whole class, oral – this method is suitable for cases where short answers with no possible variations are required
- individual, oral – this method is suitable where answers are longer and/or where variations are possible
- individual, onto the board – this method is suitable when the teacher will want to look closely at the correct answers to highlight points of interest or confusion.

Remember, learning does not take place, generally speaking, when a student gets something right. Learning usually takes place after a student has got something wrong and begins to understand why it is wrong.

### Confirmation and correction

Many activities benefit from a learning tension, i.e., a period of time when students are not sure whether something is right or wrong. The advantages of this tension are:

- a chance for all students to become involved in an activity before the correct answers are given
- a higher level of concentration from students – tension is quite enjoyable!
- a greater focus on the item as students wait for the correct answer
- a greater involvement in the process – students become committed to their answers and want to know if they are right and if not, why not.

In cases where learning tension of this type is desirable, the detailed teaching notes say *Do not confirm or correct (at this point)*.

### Highlighting grammar

The expression *Highlight the grammar* is often used in the teaching notes. This expression means:

- Focus the students' attention on the grammar point, e.g., *Look at the verb in the first sentence.*
- Write an example of the target grammar on the board.
- Ask a student to read out the sentence/phrase.
- Demonstrate the grammar point in an appropriate way (see below).
- Refer to the board throughout the activity if students are making mistakes.

Ways of dealing with different grammar points:

- for **word order**, show the order of items in the sentence by numbering them, e.g.,  

1	2	3	4
<i>They</i>	<i>often</i>	<i>have</i>	<i>a special party.</i>
- for **paradigms**, show the changes with different persons of the verb, e.g.,  

<i>I</i>	<i>go</i>
<i>He</i>	<i>goes</i>

### Self-checking

On a few occasions during the course, the teaching notes encourage you to ask the students to check their own work. This can be done by referring students to the full transcript at the end of the course. This is an excellent way to develop the students' recognition and correction of error. Listening, in particular, obviously happens inside someone's head, and in the end each student has to understand his/her own error or misunderstanding.

### Gap fill

Filling in missing words or phrases in a sentence or text, or labelling a map or diagram indicates comprehension of both the missing items and the context in which they correctly fit. It is generally better to provide the missing items to ensure that all the required items are available to all the students. In addition, the teacher can vary the approach to gap fills by sometimes going through the activity with the whole class, orally, pens down, then setting the same task individually. Gap fills or labelling activities can be photocopied and set as revision at the end of the unit or later, with or without the missing items box.

In *Progressive Skills in English*, gaps often contain the same kind of word (e.g., nouns) or the same role in a sentence (e.g., the subject) in order to reinforce word class and syntax.

### Two-column activities

This type of activity is generally better than a list of open-ended questions or gap fill with no box of missing items, as it ensures that all the target language is available to the students. However, the activity is only fully effective if the two columns are

dealt with in the following way. Ask students to:

- **guess** the way to complete the phrase, sentence or pair
- **match** the two parts from each column
- cover column 2 and **remember** these parts from the items in column 1
- cover column 1 and **remember** these parts from the items in column 2.

Additional activities are:

- students test each other in pairs
- you read out column 1 – students complete with items from column 2, books closed
- students write as many of the items as they can remember – Course Books closed.

### Ordering

Several different kinds of linguistic elements can be given out of order for students to arrange correctly. The ability to put things in the correct order strongly indicates comprehension of the items. In addition, it reinforces syntactic structure, particularly if:

- you present a number of jumbled sentences together with the same underlying syntax
- you keep elements of each phrase together, e.g., *in the UK* rather than breaking everything down to word level.

This type of activity is sometimes given before students listen or read; the first listening or reading task is then to check the order. To make the exercise more enjoyable, and slightly easier, it is a good idea to photocopy the items and cut them into strips or single words. Students can then physically move the items and try different ordering. The teacher can even make a whiteboard set of sentences and encourage students to arrange or direct the arrangement of the items on the board.

### Tables and charts

Students are often asked to transfer information into a table. This activity is a good way of testing comprehension, as it does not require much linguistic output from the students at a time when they should be concentrating on comprehension. Once the table has been completed, it can form the basis of:

- a checking activity – students compare their tables, note and discuss differences
- a reconstruction activity – students give the information in the table in full, in speech or writing.

### Error correction

It was once thought that showing students an error reinforced the error, and that students would be even more likely to make that error in the future. We now know that recognizing errors is a vital part of language

learning. Rather than reinforcing the error, showing it can serve to highlight the problem much better than any number of explanatory words. Students must be able to recognize errors, principally in their own work, and correct them. For this reason, error recognition and correction activities are occasionally used.