

# Functional ENGLISH

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CONSOLIDATION

Ronald V White

TEACHER'S BOOK

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## 1. Consolidation

Ronald V White

TEACHER'S BOOK

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RONALD V WHITE  
Reading  
September, 1978

# List of items covered in the students' book

## A. STRUCTURES

unit	function	topic	verbs
2 & 3	describing	people	present simple <i>is, has, enjoys</i>
4 & 5	describing	a place	present simple <i>is, has, sells</i>
6 & 7	giving directions	going somewhere	imperative <i>take, turn, walk, continue, leave, proceed</i>
8	describing	roles & routines	present simple <i>lives, has, attends, takes, spends, is, goes</i>
9	asking & answering questions	people	present simple
10 & 11	narrating	past events	past simple <i>arrived, travelled, stayed, reached, moved, visited, returned</i>
12 & 13	narrating	history of a place	past simple past perfect <i>had become</i>
14	narrating describing	events & places	past simple: active past simple: passive past continuous
15	asking & answering questions	past events	past simple <i>visit, see, go, spend, leave, stay</i>
16 & 17	describing	an object	present simple <i>is, is made of, is used for</i>
18	instructing	making something	imperative <i>fold, make, lift, pull, dial</i>

sentences	other features
subject + verb + completion subject + verb + object defining relative clauses	adjectives comparison prepositions: <i>in, at, on</i>
<i>there</i> + verb + completion	countable & uncountable nouns prepositions: <i>at, from, on, next to, opposite</i>
verb + object + adverbial continue + <i>to</i> + verb	prepositions: <i>at, in, on, from</i> adverbs: <i>left, right</i>
adverbial + subject + verb subject + adverbial + verb + object	frequency adverbials: <i>usually, sometimes, etc.</i>
verb + subject + completion	sub modifiers: <i>very, quite</i> age adjectives place adverbials: <i>near, opposite, between, on</i>
adverbial + subject + verb + object subject + verb + adverbial	sequencers: <i>first, then, next, etc.</i> prepositions: <i>at, to, for, from, in, by</i> adverbial of purpose: <i>to</i> + verb
adverbial + subject + verb + completion	time adverbial: <i>by</i> + date
as in earlier units on past tense	direct speech
helping verb + subject + main verb + object question word + above	place names prepositions: <i>at, by, with</i>
subject + verb + completion subject + verb + object	adjectives: <i>square, circular, etc.</i> measurement phrases: <i>in length, in depth, etc.</i> uncountable nouns classifiers: <i>plastic, silver, etc.</i> ; <i>heat-proof, etc.</i>
verb + object + adverbial	when adverbials

## B. INTERPERSONAL LANGUAGE

unit	function	language items
1	Introducing people	<i>Let me introduce ... How do you do? X is/works ...</i>
2	Telling someone about ourselves	<i>My name's X. I've a flat in ... I'm with ...</i>
3	Asking for & receiving information	<i>I'm trying to find ... He lives at ...</i>
4	Asking for & receiving information	<i>I'm looking for ... It's next to the ...</i>
5	Expressing dissatisfaction & making suggestions making apologies	<i>I'm very sorry about ... I wonder if you could ...</i>
6	Giving and accepting an invitation	<i>Are you doing anything ... ? I've got tickets for ... Would you like to ... ? I'd love to ...</i>
7	Refusing politely	<i>I'm afraid that ...</i>
8	Asking permission	<i>Could I bring ... ?</i>
9	Asking a favour	<i>I wonder if you could ...</i>
10	Apologising & accepting an apology	<i>I'm very sorry ... That's all right ...</i>
11	Expressing enjoyment	<i>I'm enjoying ... very much ... It's just the sort of ... I like.</i>
12	Withholding permission	<i>No, I'm afraid that + reason</i>
13	Agreeing	<i>I thought that ... The ... was excellent</i>
14	Contradicting	<i>Is he/she ... ? I thought he/she was ...</i>
15	Asking questions	<i>When/where did you + main verb</i>
16	Describing something	<i>It's a/an ... It contains ...</i>
17	Ordering something	<i>I thought of a/an ... What sort of ... ? size ... ? etc.</i>
18	Requesting services	<i>Would you mind + <b>Base</b> + ing?</i>

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## General notes

The two books which make up this course are intended to be evolutionary, not revolutionary. Experienced teachers will find much in both books which is familiar; but they will also find new ideas, new techniques and new content. The aim is to build upon teachers' and students' existing experience and competence and, indeed, it is presupposed that the student will already have been learning English for several years, probably following a course based on widely accepted structural lines. *Functional English* is not intended to dismiss what the students and teachers have already done. Instead, it is intended to move on to the communicative use of language which the students already have a knowledge of. The course is also intended to help remedy some of those areas of the language with which students all over the world have difficulty – notably verb and noun phrases.

### Functional, Communicative, Notional

The most widely practised method of English language teaching is based on two principles. Firstly, that the language can be described in terms of a set of structures, ranging from sentence patterns down to such simple elements as *a + singular count noun*. Secondly, that the student will learn these structures by a process of imitation and practice. In other words, that the student will acquire a set of language habits.

The structural method has often been combined with a situational presentation. According to this approach, the teacher (or textbook writer) selects a situation in which to present a given structure. At its best this approach is very successful; but at its worst, it leads to some grotesque misalliances between structure and situation. The problem is, of course, that the textbook writer has begun with a list of structures and then he has tried to find a use for them.

A functional approach begins with the use of the language and then looks at the structures which characterise that particular language function. By function, we mean the use of language for a given communicative purpose. For instance, we can easily distinguish two quite different functions (or purposes) in the following texts:

#### Text 1

Hold the hammer firmly. Mark the timber where you wish to insert the nail. Place the nail on this spot, holding it between your thumb and forefinger.

#### Text 2

In 1850, Dr Heinrich Barth travelled south from Tripoli to Agades. He stayed there for a long time. Then, from Agades Barth continued on his way south. After some time he reached Lake Chad.

We immediately recognise that in Text 1 the writer's intention is to give instructions on how to do something, while in Text 2 his intention is to narrate. How do we recognise these differences in purpose? The first clear indication is,

of course, in verb form and usage. In Text 1 the Base form of the verb is used, while in Text 2 the writer uses the **Base + ed** verb form. We associate the Base form with the imperative (that is, instruction), while the **Base + ed** verb form we generally associate with reporting what happened in the past, that is, narration. There are, of course, other language forms which we also associate with the functions given above. For instance, instructions are frequently characterised by the sentence pattern **verb + object + adverbial**, while narration is often characterised by the pattern **sequencer + subject + verb + object/adverbial**.

It is the ability to recognise such form/function combinations that enables the learner to understand both spoken and written language in use, just as an awareness of form/function combinations enables him to produce appropriate language. Indeed, appropriateness is an important aspect of a functional approach. It has long been recognised that language must match the situation in which it is used. Generally, it is when there is a mis-match between the two that we realise that something is wrong, though it isn't always possible to say exactly what it is. Current investigations into language and situation have helped to broaden our understanding of the relationship between language form and context of situation. A functional approach attempts to promote an understanding of this relationship and to teach an active use of language in which form and context are correctly matched.

The interest in appropriateness and the functions of language reflects one important aspect of current language teaching. Another important concern is in communication. To put it simply, communication takes place between two people when one of the pair doesn't know what it is that the other person is going to say or write. If the listener/reader knows in advance what it is that the speaker/writer is going to produce, then communication can hardly be said to have taken place.

For language to be communicative, there must be an 'information gap'. There must be an element of uncertainty. The element of uncertainty will be resolved by the communication between participants. A simple illustration will demonstrate this. When we ask a question we usually do so because we want to know something which we believe someone else knows. So, if I ask a stranger his name or where he is from, his reply will fill the gap in my knowledge, and communication will have taken place. If, however, I ask a fellow student what his name is and where he is from, it is unlikely that there is any information gap to be filled because I am very likely to know the answers to both questions already. Consequently, no communication takes place even if he takes the trouble to answer my inquiries. In this second situation, we have an example of pseudo questions and pseudo answers. A communicative methodology tries to do away with pseudo items, and it attempts to put the students in situations where they actually have to fill an information gap or solve a problem by using language communicatively.

Finally, language is used not only to express the user's purpose and to fill an information gap: it is also used to express a wide range of concepts or notions. These concepts include location, quantity, time, sequence, frequency and various types of relational meaning. Many such notions are expressed in most uses of language. In other words, they have a wide range of generality. And most language courses attempt to teach such notions, often as part of the work on a given grammatical structure. For instance, the concept of quantity is

usually dealt with in lessons on countable and uncountable nouns and the types of quantifier associated with them.

It is difficult to organise a course on purely notional or conceptual lines because such notions tend to occur as one component of a given function or series of functions. For instance, the concept of quantity can occur in the functions of instruction ('Take 250 grams of flour.') and description ('This car has a maximum payload of 430 kilograms.') Similarly, the concept of sequence is found in instruction ('First, open the door.'), description ('First the milk is delivered to a factory.') and narration ('First, we booked our seats.').

In Functional English such notions are incorporated within the functional scheme which forms the basis of the course.

## Organisation of Functional English

The list of functions covered in the course is given in the contents of the teacher's book. The core of the course is those functions which are associated with writing and reading and these include description, narration and instruction. Some functions, such as description, are further classified according to topic, so that we have description of things, people, places and processes. In addition to such writing/reading functions, there are a number of other functions which are commonly associated with the spoken language, such as seeking permission, inviting, apologising, agreeing and disagreeing, requesting assistance and so on. These functions are covered in the interpersonal language section of each unit.

The conversations or dialogues which form the basis of each interpersonal language item include functions other than the one being focused on in that particular lesson. This is because it is impossible to contextualise adequately any function without associating it with other language functions. For instance, the function of seeking permission will typically be associated with the functions of greeting, granting (or refusing) permission, thanking, explaining and saying goodbye. Each of these functions will occur as a move in a conversation, and it is this organisational aspect of spoken interaction which is highlighted in the course, particularly in Book 2.

The study of the organisation of both spoken and written language is another feature of current investigations into language, and it is an aspect which receives considerable attention in Functional English, particularly in Book 2. We know that writing consists not only of producing grammatically correct sentences, but also of producing inter-related sequences of sentences which are both grammatically and logically interconnected to form what is termed 'discourse'. The majority of the writing exercises in Functional English attempt to promote the production of discourse, while the speaking exercises are intended to develop an awareness of (and the ability to respond to) the inter-dependent and inter-related sequence of moves in a conversation.

Throughout the course, emphasis is placed on the association of form and function. It is known that one form may have many functions, and that any given function may take a number of different forms. Even so, the learner is hardly in a position to acquire a full range of forms because, of course, the learning burden would be tremendous. To ease his burden, a restricted set of forms has been selected for any given function in Functional English. For the

reading and writing exercises, the selection of these forms is based on information derived from the analysis of actual language, both by the author and by other writers. For the interpersonal language, the author has had to rely on his own introspection and the evaluation of other native English speakers.

Finally, the course has been devised in the belief that the learner should be asked to make an intellectual contribution to the learning process. This belief is reflected in many of the types of exercise which have been devised. It is also shown in the overt references to grammar throughout the course. There is some evidence that the experienced language learner likes to have some systematisation of the grammar of the language, and so some attempt has been made to provide this.

## Grammar

The grammatical system used in Functional English is adapted from that devised by M A K Halliday. The top level of the version used here is the sentence, which coincides with Halliday's 'clause'. There are other differences in terminology in order to reduce the number of new terms to a minimum. For instance, 'Predicator' has been replaced by 'Verb' as the name of a sentence element. Strictly speaking, the term 'Verb' belongs to a lower rank in Halliday's scale, but it has been preferred here on the grounds of simplicity and familiarity.

## Sentence Level

The sentence is made up of a number of elements, two of which are normally obligatory in an affirmative sentence. Others are optional, and in the case of adverbials, their position is variable. The basic affirmative sentence pattern is as follows, with optional elements in brackets.

(sequencer)	(adverbial)	subject	verb	(object) (completion)	(adverbial)	full stop
-------------	-------------	---------	------	--------------------------	-------------	-----------

The interrogative pattern involves a rearrangement of these elements:

verb	subject	(object)	(adverbial)	question mark
------	---------	----------	-------------	---------------

A characteristic of the interrogative in English is the use of a 'dummy' verb, *do*, so that the interrogative sentence pattern with a dummy verb is as follows:

verb	subject	verb	(object)	(adverbial)	question mark
------	---------	------	----------	-------------	---------------

These two types of question pattern are frequently referred to as Inversion Questions or as Yes/No Questions. The same basic pattern with the addition of a Question Word (Who, What, Where, Why, How) produces so-called Question-word Questions.

With transitive verbs an Object is obligatory in both affirmative and interrogative patterns, and in some cases two Objects (one Direct, the other Indirect) are usual. With a limited set of verbs (of which *be* is the most important) a Completion is generally necessary. Finally, the full stop is obligatory in written English, as is the question mark in written questions. With linked sentences the full stop is usually replaced by a comma.

## Group Level

At each sentence element (that is, Subject, Verb, etc.) we have one or other of a particular type of group: preposition, noun and verb. Sequencers are of two kinds: single words (such as *then, next, first*), and multiple words (such as *to begin with, after that*). Adverbials are of three main types: single words ending in *-ly* (such as *quickly*); single words without *-ly* (such as *fast, hard, well*); and multiple words, generally preposition groups (such as *on the left, to the centre, at the corner*).

Both the Subject and Object of a sentence are usually made up of nouns or pronouns, the nouns commonly occurring as part of a noun group. The noun group is itself composed of a number of elements, of which one – the Head Noun – is obligatory. Items preceding the Head Noun are called Modifiers. Here is the order of modifiers in the noun group:

MODIFIERS				head noun
determiners	ordinators	epithets	classifiers	
a, the	first biggest	splendid expensive	wooden English	ship car

The Head Noun can also be qualified, usually by a preposition group, and sometimes by a clause, thus:

the English car *with four doors* (preposition group)  
 the house *with a cherry tree* (preposition group)  
 the son *who lives in Reading* (clause)

The Verb element of a sentence is made up of at least one verb: the Head Verb. This, like the Head Noun, occurs as part of a group, the structure of which is as follows:

A modals	B forms of <i>have</i>	C forms of <i>be</i>	D forms of <i>be</i>	head verb Base Base + <i>ed</i> Base + <i>ing</i>
-------------	------------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	--

We never actually find a verb group consisting of all five elements, and even four item ones are rare.

There are selection rules governing the order and choice of forms and elements in the verb group. For instance, an item from position A is always followed by the Base form of whatever verb comes next, e.g.

should			go
should	have		gone
should		be	going

This and other selection rules can be summarised thus (where the arrow means 'is followed by'):

A	→	Base	e.g. should go, should have gone
B	→	Base + <i>ed</i>	e.g. have visited, had talked
C	→	Base + <i>ing</i>	e.g. is going
D	→	Base + <i>ed</i>	e.g. is placed

Modal verb groups are associated with the expression of attitude on the part of the user, particularly with regard to such things as possibility, obligation, necessity. Such verb groups are dealt with in Book 2.

Verb groups with *have* + **Base** + *ed* are associated with perfective aspect, that is, with actions completed (or perfected) in the past but whose effect is still true at the time of speaking or writing. The Past Perfect, with its implications of result, is dealt with in Book 1.

Verb groups of the *be* + **Base** + *ing* pattern are associated with the continuative aspect, notably the continuous tenses. Since these are usually over-represented in most structural courses, and because they are in any case of low frequency and utility, they are not given much coverage in this course.

The last type of verb group, *be* + **Base** + *ed*, is associated with the Passive Voice, which is dealt with in some detail in Book 2 in the context of describing processes.

In Book 1 a great deal of attention is given to finite verb forms, as follows:

form	example	tense usage	person & number
Base	<i>live, have</i>	present simple	1st, 2nd singular & plural
Base + <i>s</i>	<i>lives, has</i>	present simple	3rd singular
Base + <i>ed</i>	<i>lived, had</i>	past simple	all persons

The term 'Base' has been used to convey the idea of a basic item to which various additions are made. Some writers prefer to use the term 'Verb'. The **Base** and **Base** + *ed* forms are non-finite when they occur as the Head Verb in a complex verb group. The Past Participle, for instance, is non-finite **Base** + *ed*. Irregular verbs may have two different **Base** + *ed* forms, one finite (e.g. took), the other non-finite (e.g. taken). Some writers refer to the latter as the *-en* form, as in **Verb** + *en*. In order to emphasise the regularity of most verbs, I have retained **Base** + *ed* for both.

## Teaching Method

It is now widely accepted that the so-called four skills cannot (and should not) be taught in isolation. The lessons in Functional English are planned on an integrated basis, with provision being made for listening, reading, speaking and

writing, all four activities focusing on the same forms and function. Suggestions as to how this can be done are given in the teacher's notes, particularly in the detailed notes for the first few units of Books 1 and 2.

A feature of the method being advocated is the avoidance of questions by the teacher as a way of cueing the learner. Teachers, understandably, are very fond of using questions, and in many language courses are encouraged to do so with the result that much activity falls into what was earlier termed 'pseudo communication'. The effect can also be confusing for the learner when he is asked to 'provide full sentence answers' to questions which properly speaking require short answers. There is also another danger: the conflict of verb forms as between interrogative and statement can prove difficult. For instance, the question 'Does Damien live in London?' can produce the following response: 'Yes, Damien live in London.' Obviously this is not what the teacher wants to teach, and so questions of this kind are avoided in Functional English, and teachers are strongly urged to avoid such use of questions as well.

Indeed, there is a good case for the teacher trying to avoid intervening as much as possible and instead letting the students get on with the work in their own time. In fact, instructions and notes in the student's book are as explicit and as full as possible so as to allow the student to work by himself if he wishes. The teacher's role can therefore be one of classroom manager, helper and adviser. In this capacity the teacher will need to make sure that the students understand what to do. In order to do this he may have to make use of the mother tongue from time to time. If, for instance, the students have trouble in understanding the textbook instructions and explanations, the teacher's job will be to interpret these for them, if necessary by using the mother tongue. It is not the intention of the writer that English should be used at all costs in the English language classroom. If using English at all times means that the students do not understand what they have to do, then clearly a principle has been allowed to overrule common sense.

A number of teaching procedures are assumed and these are referred to in the teacher's notes. Here is a summary of these procedures:

*Class checking.* The teacher elicits answers from an exercise which has been completed by the students individually or in pairs or groups. Where appropriate, a blackboard (BB) table or visual is completed, with students contributing from their own completed work.

*Class work.* The teacher works through the exercise, following the instructions in the student's book eliciting items from the class. This may involve the completion of a table, diagram or map on the BB, with the students contributing items.

*Group work.* Small groups of up to six students collaborate on an exercise or task. Group work is indicated for exercises which require an investigation into some aspect of local life or follow up work related to the function and content of a given unit.

*Individual work.* Students work by themselves on an exercise.

*Pair work.* Generally two, sometimes three, students collaborate on completing an exercise. Pair work is the basis of all the interpersonal language items.

*Project work.* Group activity in which students research into a topic (such as sightseeing in their town or city) as a basis for a report parallel to a text studied in the unit concerned.

*Review the outcome of . . .* This involves class work, in which the teacher asks the class to tell him about the items concerned, based on a previous lesson or exercise. Only if the class is unable to recall the information or item does the teacher provide it.

In using the textbook, students are frequently instructed to mark a text in various ways. This is an important feature of the method, and should not be discouraged. If the students want to sell the textbook at the end of the year or if it is a school owned copy, tell them to use soft lead pencil which can easily be rubbed out. The completion of tables, maps and diagrams can be accomplished by telling the students to work on a copy in their own workbooks, thus avoiding the need to write in the textbook itself.

### **Lessons: Timing**

The teacher's notes indicate the number of lessons for each unit. Some of the detailed lesson notes also suggest time allocation for steps in each unit. These suggestions are simply that: they are not prescriptive. It is impossible to give suggestions which are appropriate for all teaching situations. You, the teacher, are the best judge of how much time to spend on each unit. You may, however, find the suggestions useful as a guide to the relative amount of time to be given to any one item in a unit.

### **Vocabulary**

The vocabulary of Book 1 has been restricted as far as possible to within a 3,000 word range. That of Book 2 is not controlled. In both books there are some vocabulary exercises, but on the whole there is little vocabulary work as such. This is because knowledge of vocabulary is often specific to a particular group of students. Also, it is probably more helpful to students in the long run if you encourage them to work out meanings of unfamiliar vocabulary from context. To do this, some knowledge of grammar seems to be essential, for one of the first things to decide in working out the meaning of a word is what part of speech it is. Here is a suggested approach to tackling unfamiliar vocabulary.

- 1 Does the new word remind you of any other word that you already know?
- 2 Are there any features of the word that enable you to classify it as a noun, verb, adjective or adverb, e.g. *-ion* = noun, *-ed* = verb, *-ful* = adjective, *-ly* = adverb?
- 3 Does the sentence still make sense if you use a word you know instead of the unknown one?
- 4 Which part of the sentence is the new vocabulary item in? (This will give a general indication of whether it is likely to be a noun or a verb.)
- 5 If it is in the Subject, Object or Adverbial part of the sentence, what item comes immediately before it? (A modifier, such as a determiner, will indicate that the word must be a noun.)
- 6 If there are other modifiers, what are they? (Classifiers will give a clue to the colour, shape or type of thing referred to. For instance, 'stone' in 'the



stone yingle' tells us something about the type of thing a 'yingle' is likely to be. *Dongles, glang, mendle, shimbled* and *yingle* are, of course, nonsense words coined for illustrative purposes.)

- 7 If it is a noun, is it singular or plural? Countable or uncountable?
- 8 If it is Subject or Object, what verb comes after or before it? Is it a verb usually associated with an animate Subject and an inanimate Object, for example, 'First, open the glang.' *Open* is usually associated with an inanimate Object. Also, we learn here that a 'glang' is something that can be opened.
- 9 If the unknown item is a verb, what type of Subject comes before it, and what kind of Object (if any) comes after it? Human, animate, inanimate?
- 10 What kinds of adverbial are associated with the verb? For instance, if we have 'He shimbled into the room' we know that 'shimbled' has something to do with movement into a room.
- 11 Are there any clues in other parts of the text? For instance, if we read in one sentence 'First, open the glang' and in the next sentence 'Empty the contents into a saucepan', we then know that a 'glang' is something which contains something else which can be emptied into a saucepan. Since we also know that a saucepan is conventionally used for heating food, then we can conclude that a 'glang' is probably a container for storing or preserving food.
- 12 Is the unknown item part of a set? E.g. 'The room was full of mendle: chairs, tables, desks, stools, sofas crowded every available inch.' Assuming that we know the meaning of at least some of the list of items in this sentence, we can work out that 'mendle' is a **general** term meaning furniture. The same is true of a specific term, e.g. 'Our journey involved using many kinds of vehicle: cars, trucks, dongles and even rickshaws.' We know that 'dongles' are a **kind** of vehicle.

Obviously you cannot go through all vocabulary in such a detailed fashion. Even so, it is a good idea to deal with two unknown items in such a way during the course of a lesson as a means of developing some vocabulary techniques among the students. It is also a good idea to train the students to use a good dictionary but only after they have made a good guess at the meaning of a new item by working through the sequence of steps outlined above. In some cases you may find it expedient to use translation, but this should be a last resort.

In any case, you should encourage your students to develop a toleration of uncertainty. In other words, they need to accept that they should be satisfied with much less than 100% understanding of anything – be it individual vocabulary items or a complete piece of prose. Even in our native language we tolerate varying degrees of uncertainty and, indeed, it is quite impossible to understand completely everything we hear or read. For understanding a new vocabulary item, much less than a complete definition of the term is usually sufficient. Further meanings of an item will be encountered on subsequent occasions, and in this way the item concerned accumulates meanings in a kind of snowball effect. This process of expansion and refinement in the range of meanings of a vocabulary item appears to be what happens in learning the native language, and it is a good procedure to follow in building up a vocabulary in a foreign language.