

FIRST CERTIFICATE SKILLS

Saxon Menné

Teacher's Edition



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Introduction for the teacher

As the teacher's notes in this book are so detailed, and are facing the relevant student's page, it is not the aim of this introduction to describe in detail the teaching strategies appropriate for each of the course components. It will simply give an overview of the course, and comment on the underlying approach.

Course description *First Certificate Skills* is a one-book exam course (with Teacher's Edition and cassette of listening practice and dialogues for speaking practice) containing thirty units of material. It can be used on intensive courses lasting, for example, a hundred hours, or on longer courses extending over, for example, one or two years. It caters for the exam syllabus before and after 1984.

The components are language practice, exam training, vocabulary building and language skills training. These are integrated in every unit under a topical theme, and are carefully and necessarily steeply graded. Even the most basic structures are revised and exam skills taught, as the course has been designed for weaker candidates who need to work up to the level required for the exam, and for potentially good candidates who, for example, sometimes misread questions or make elementary structural mistakes. To cater for both these types of candidate, the contents of each unit have also been carefully balanced, so that weaker learners can concentrate on the basics while better candidates can extend their vocabulary or improve a particular skill. As the course progresses, the overall emphasis shifts and the shape of the material develops as follows. Unit 1 serves three main purposes: an introduction to the course and the exam, revision of the most basic exam skills and language structures, and a simple diagnostic test in each of the four language skills so that teacher and learner can assess the latter's performance. Units 2–11 present and teach all the exam skills needed for First Certificate, revise basic structures and provide plenty of scope for vocabulary building. Units 12–20 train exam skills while featuring remedial work on a wide range of structures and usage. Units 21–30 extend language and exam skills

while moving from teaching to testing material, ending with mock exam questions. The balanced, varied and graded contents of each unit therefore cater for mixed ability groups, and even for learners who are not taking the exam but find themselves in an exam class for administrative reasons.

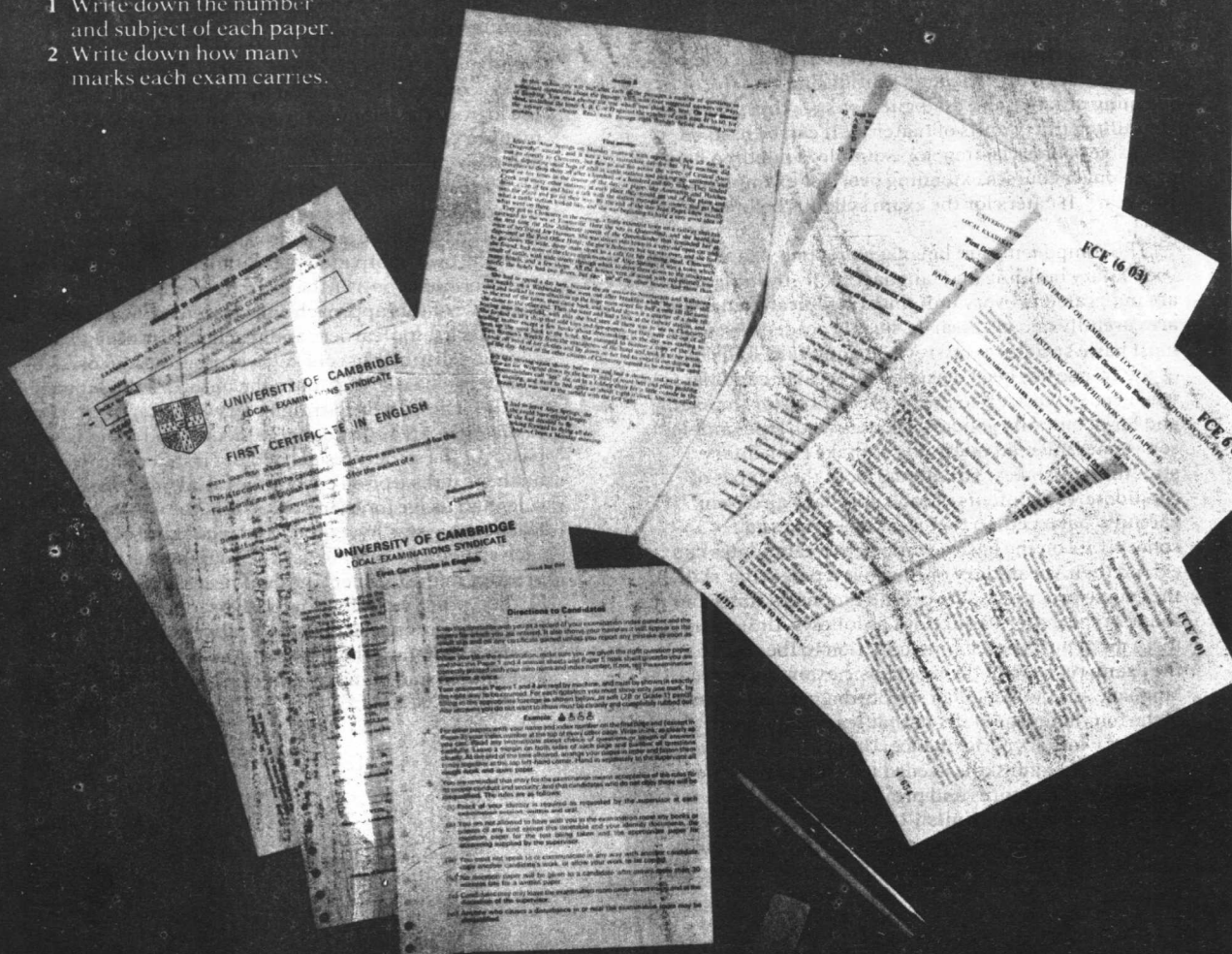
Approach Throughout the course, learners are trained and encouraged to stand on their own feet: to think out the logic of the language system for themselves, to monitor every aspect of their performance, to reconsider and develop their language learning and exam skills. They are, therefore, as self-sufficient as possible by the time of the exam. This approach also reassures and at the same time challenges a wide range of types of learner from the over-motivated and diffident, to the assertive and over-confident, or the flagging and depressed. Evidence of this approach can be seen in the detailed contents list for learners and teachers, headings, rubrics, and the self-study lists of key words at the end of each unit. It is also a key factor in the nature of the language practice component. Straight-forward exercises are used to diagnose areas of student difficulty and to revise the basics of the structures needed in First Certificate. A further exercise often encourages students to reassess rules and usage for themselves. It is the role of the teacher to assess how much and what kind of practice each structure needs, to use the suggestions for further practice in the teacher's notes if necessary, or to provide further, possibly individualized, practice as appropriate. Language practice is, therefore, always geared to student needs, is of manageable length, and so is easily assimilated and of maximum impact.

1 Exams

Listening

Listen to the information about the First Certificate exam.

- 1 Write down the number and subject of each paper.
- 2 Write down how many marks each exam carries.



Exam training

Understanding instructions

Language training

Identifying

Following spoken instructions

'A' and 'an'

Simple present tense

Vocabulary

gap	practise (vb)	requirements
italics	practice (n)	leaflet
brackets	misunderstand	persuade
phrase	lose marks	information
replace	gain marks	seriously
exactly	give details	(delayed)
write in full	aloud	barely
		(enough)

Listening

Step 1 Tell students that this unit will give them the basic information **they need** about the exam. Ask them to look at the **listening exercise**. Check they all know what to do.

Step 2 Play the tape three times. Tell the class to listen to the first reading while looking at the picture of the papers, to take notes during the second reading, and to complete or check their notes during the third reading. Pause at the end of each section of the recording during readings two and three.

Step 3 Split the class into pairs. Say *Discuss with each other, in English, what you understood and what you have written*. Go round to check how well they followed the passage and to answer any questions on the exam.

Step 4 Go through the answers with the whole class.

Tapescript

A I want to take First Certificate, I think. Could you tell me what it's like?

B Yes, of course. It's not too bad, really. There are five papers. Paper 1 is the reading comprehension

paper. It tests your vocabulary and how well you read English. Paper 2 is called the composition paper. You write quite simple essays, a letter or a description for example, of 120–150 words each. Paper 3 is the grammar and usage paper, and is called Use of English. You do various grammar exercises and a summary or some similar type of exercise. Paper 4 is listening comprehension and paper 5 is an oral exam.

A And what about marks?

B Well, if you mean how important is each paper, then the first three papers are the most important. They each take 25 per cent of the total marks. Listening and speaking each get half the remaining 25 per cent. From 1984 it'll be a little different though, and the oral becomes more important.

A Oh, how's that?

B Well, each paper except the listening one takes about 22 per cent of the total marks. So listening gets about 12 per cent of the marks. Or looked at another way, the first three papers take two-thirds of the marks, the other two take one-third, with speaking twice as important as listening.

A It doesn't sound too bad. I think I'll have a go.

B Good for you!

Exam training

Step 1 Tell the class to read the introduction silently. Explain that every unit in this course trains one or more exam skills.

Step 2 Ask someone to read the introduction aloud.

Step 3 Ask the following questions.

Which exam skill are you going to practise?

What is it easy to do wrong?

What are the three things you must do now?

Step 4 If students hesitate, ask someone to read the instruction aloud. Then repeat the questions in Step 3.

Step 5 Ask someone to read out question 1.

Ask *What is the answer here?*

Step 6 When you are sure they understand the task, split them into pairs or small groups. Say *Please discuss and do the rest of the exercise together.* Go round, and assess how easy or difficult each student is finding the reading. Take notes about individual students if necessary.

Step 7 When they have finished, go through the answers with the whole class.

Answers 1b 2c 3b 4b 5b 6b

Step 8 Ask the whole class the following questions.

What key words did you underline in 1?

In 2? etc.

Suggested key words in the first text are: write, three, between 120 and 150, each.

Exam training

The first thing to practise is reading exam questions. It's easy, when you read quickly, to misunderstand or forget something. In every exam, some people answer questions in the wrong way, and so they lose a lot of marks. Here is a set of instructions and questions for the composition paper. Read each one, write down the important words in it, and then choose the statement that matches it best.

Write three only of the following composition exercises. Your answers must follow exactly the instructions given, and must be of between 120 and 150 words each.

- 1 The instructions are to write a maximum of
 - a 150 words on the whole paper.
 - b 400 words on the whole paper.
 - c 650 words on the whole paper.

You have been asked to organize a tour by motor coach through several countries, lasting two weeks. Write a detailed list, to be handed to members of the party, of the proposed route, timing, requirements for the journey and any other information you think the travellers will require.

- 2 You must write
 - a a programme for the tour organizer.
 - b a letter to the tourists.
 - c a programme for the tourists.

In some countries food supplies are barely enough to feed growing populations. How do you think this problem could be solved?

- 3 You must write
 - a a description of some poor countries.
 - b suggestions for feeding the world's population.

Your brother is undecided about taking a new job. Write the conversation between you and him in which you try to persuade him to take the job. Write in dialogue form, giving only the name of each speaker followed by the words spoken.

- 4 You must write
 - a a dialogue where your brother gives you advice.
 - b a dialogue about your brother's future career.

While you were on your way to an important appointment something happened which seriously delayed you. Say what you did to get to the meeting, and also to inform those concerned that you would be late.

- 5 You must write
 - a the conversation you had when you were late for a meeting.
 - b a story about being late for a meeting.

You have been asked to write a leaflet which is enclosed with a new product (camera, electric appliance, toy, prepared food, etc.) explaining how it is to be used and mentioning its special advantages. Write the leaflet, naming the product and the manufacturer, and giving any details you wish.

- 6 You must write
 - a a leaflet persuading people to buy something.
 - b a leaflet describing how to use something.

Speaking

Paul and Kirsten are students at a university.
Kirsten sees Paul.

KIRSTEN Paul, coming to the pub? What's that?

PAUL It's a book.

KIRSTEN I can see that! But you never read books.

PAUL There's an exam on Thursday.

KIRSTEN I know, but it's only an oral exam. That's easy.

PAUL It's still an exam, and I want to give a good impression.

KIRSTEN Forget it, and come to the pub.

PAUL Oh, go away! You're a bad influence on me.

KIRSTEN Well, you want to practise speaking, not reading.

PAUL That's true, I suppose.

KIRSTEN Coming, then? .

PAUL OK.

KIRSTEN What's the book about, anyway?

PAUL It's about how to do well in interviews and exams. It's very useful.

KIRSTEN Let's see what you say on Thursday!

1 Read the dialogue aloud in pairs.

2 Answer these questions.

1 Does Kirsten want to study?

2 How much does Paul usually read?

3 Is there a written examination on Thursday?

4 Does Paul stay and read his book?



Speaking

Step 1 Tell the class to look at the illustration. Ask the following questions.

How old are these people?

Where are they?

What are they doing?

Step 2 Tell someone to read the introduction to the dialogue aloud. Ask the following questions.

What are their names?

What do they do?

Step 3 Play the recording of the dialogue (or read it aloud) with you taking one part, and a student taking the other. Answer any questions on vocabulary.

Step 4 Split the class into pairs, and ask them to read the dialogue aloud to each other. Listen for the types of problem they have in reading aloud.

Step 5 Ask them, in the same pairs, to answer the comprehension questions in exercise 2.

Step 6 Go through the comprehension questions with the whole class.

Step 7 If you wish, use the taped dialogue for further practice of intonation, pronunciation, vocabulary or structure appropriate to the needs of the group.

Vocabulary

Step 1 Tell the class to look the exercise. Check that they understand what they must do. Find the first phrase with the class.

Step 2 Tell students to do the exercise individually or in pairs. Check their answers.

Answers 1 a bad influence on me 2 an oral exam
3 to give a good impression 4 's true, I suppose
5 is the book about

Language revision

Step 1 Introduce exercise 1 and ask students to complete it in small groups. Go through the answers with the whole class.

Answers 1 an, a 2 an, a 3 a, an 4 an, a

Step 2 Ask students to discuss exercise 2 in pairs and to find the answer, which is 2d.

Step 3 If exercise 1 and 2 went easily and quickly, proceed to step 4. If there were doubts, you can now explain that the 'a/an' rule is not simply one of writing, but one of pronunciation. Refer to 'an hour' as opposed to 'a half hour'. For further practice, put these on the board, without the article.

(a) house (an) umbrella (a) Member of
(an) hour (a) European Parliament
(a) U.F.O. (an) Egyptian (an) M.P.
(a) one-way street

Arrange for students to work in pairs, and tell them to say the words to each other and decide which take 'a' and which take 'an'.

Step 4 Introduce exercise 3 and ask students to do it in pairs. Assess their performance and particularly their spelling. Go through the answers with the whole class.

Answers does, goes, studies, has, tries, suggests, plays, watches, closes, says, passes.

Step 5 Ask students to do exercises 4 and 5 in groups of four. Help the class to formulate the rules, which are as follows. Most verbs add 's'. The exceptions are: 'is' and 'has', which are irregular; verbs ending in 's', 'sh', 'z' or 'o', which add 'es'; verbs ending in a consonant (b, d, t, l etc.) plus 'y', which change the 'y' to 'i' and add 'es'. If further practice is necessary, put some or all of the following verbs on the board.

do	wash	push	dance	carry
ask	please	arrange	pay	buy
pass	hope	have	fly	copy
watch	sing	be	play	destroy

Ask the class in pairs or groups to write the third person spelling for them. Check their answers.

Writing

Step 1 Tell the class to look at the exercise. Ask the class for suggestions for the first two lines of the dialogue.

Step 2 Ask students to complete the whole dialogue in pairs.

Step 3 Correct any mistakes in their writing and let at least one pair act out their dialogue in front of the class.

Step 4 Finally, explain that this course will train students in all the exam and language skills they need and will revise the major structures and vocabulary areas they are expected to know. Answer any questions about the course or the exam.

Vocabulary

Find a phrase in the dialogue that can replace the words in *italics*.

Example

We're doing *a test* *an exam*

- 1 She's *not good for me*.
- 2 It's just a *speaking test*.
- 3 He wants *people to be impressed by him*.
- 4 That *seems correct*.
- 5 What is *the subject of the book*?

Language revision

- 1 Complete the sentences using 'a' or 'an'.
 - 1 It's ... oral exam, not ... written one.
 - 2 It's ... easy exam, not ... difficult one.
 - 3 It's ... European exam, not ... American one.
 - 4 It's ... hour exam, not ... half-hour one.
- 2 Which is true?
 - a 'An' comes before a written vowel.
 - b 'An' comes before a capital letter.
 - c There is no logic about using 'an'.
 - d 'An' comes before a spoken vowel.

- 3 Write out this text in full, putting in the correct form of the verbs in brackets. Remember to write clearly.

Paul ... (DO) not usually read a lot. More often, he ... (GO) to the pub. The only time he ... (STUDY) hard is when he ... (HAVE) an exam. At least, he ... (TRY) to study. But if a friend ... (SUGGEST) that he ... (PLAY) a game of cards with them, or ... (WATCH) something interesting on television with them, or anything, then he ... (CLOSE) his books and ... (SAY) he will join them. That may be why he ... (PASS) so few exams!

- 4 Divide the verbs in Exercise 3 into two groups:
 - 1 those ending in 's' in the third person singular of the simple present.
 - 2 those ending in 'es' in the third person singular of the simple present.
- 5 Write down as many spelling rules as you can for the ending of the third person singular in the simple present tense.

Writing

In pairs, complete this dialogue. Remember to write clearly.

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| A There's a test ... | A I'm not ... |
| B Really? ... | B Don't worry, ... |
| A No, ... | A ... |
| B ... | |

Vocabulary

gap	practise (vb)	requirements
italics	practice (n)	leaflet
brackets	misunderstand	persuade
phrase	lose marks	information
replace	gain marks	seriously
exactly	give details	(delayed)
write in full	aloud	barely (enough)