ENGLISH
FOR THE
BUSINESS WORLD

Michael Dean

English for the Business World

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Course Organization

Major grammar problems like articles, prepositions and tenses are practised continuously throughout the book. They are not listed separately here except where tenses are treated individually. Practice for some of the grammar points will be found in the Teachers' Notes rather than in the units themselves.

	Title	Grammar	Functions	Business Area
Unit 1	Ranklin plc: Industrial Relations	simple present tense infinitive constructions *-ing* forms	praising I criticizing explaining contradicting compromising persuading I	company structure industrial relations union structure in a company personnel management production
Unit 2	A Buy-Out	comparison of adjectives word fields I *must/may/will*	comparing I emphasizing persuading II predicting I	industry structure technology buy-outs sales I
Unit 3	Which Video System? Research and Development	*there is/it is/this is* questions simple past	exemplifying describing I (people) contrasting narrating	research and development product rivalry licensing patents
Unit 4	A New Job: Purchasing and Production	negatives present perfect causative *have/get* present continuous	describing II a) your job b) a firm c) processes d) machines I	purchasing production market share job interview taking a guest round the factory
Unit 5	Chieftain and Seekmart: Market Research	adverbs reported speech passive *will/going to* *may/might*	requesting responding to requests persuading III describing III (future plans)	market research marketing sales II advertising I telephone language
Unit 6	Selling Computers to Doctors	*if* sentences I phrasal verbs position of adjectives and adverbs word order	small talk I stating an opinion describing IV (machines II)	computers sales III advertising II costing I
Unit 7	A Small Mail Order Business	relative clauses conditional *could/should/ought to*	giving advice responding to advice complaining dealing with complaints	setting up a business sales IV advertising III bank loans costing II

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	Title	Grammar	Functions	Business Area
Unit 8	International Comparisons	*get* comparison ditransitive verbs	predicting II comparing II a) industries b) types of economy c) countries praising II	competitiveness of industry national economic performance business lunches I
Unit 9	Oil	concession *will/won't*	cause and effect repeated or habitual activities promising threatening refusing	oil finance commodities inflation monetarism
Unit 10	Unemployment	complements a) clausal b) adjectival c) prepositional *if* II putative *should* progressive aspect	interrupting hypothesizing changing the subject keeping people to the point	unemployment Keynes' theories redundancy employment schemes training
Unit 11	Inflation	*for/considering* word fields II reciprocal pronouns conjunctions a) simple b) compound	agreeing disagreeing	inflation trades unions government and industry I meetings
Unit 12	Discussing Monetarism		asking for clarification a) of speech b) of writing small talk II conversation strategies	monetarism II trades unions government and industry II exchange rates inflation business lunches II

Introduction

Authenticity

The data in this book is genuine. The firms really exist and all the facts and figures were correct at the time of publication. Only the firms' names, the people and the data for the firm in Unit 7 have been invented. The roleplays involving firms are either situations that actually happened or have been verified as credible by experts in the particular fields of business concerned.

Overall Plan of the Book

There are twelve units. The first seven units are set in seven different industries and feature a variety of jobs within those industries. Units 8–12 deal with wider business and finance issues and focus more on social business English.

Each unit contains eight steps, described in detail below. The first four steps are short texts followed by exercises. Steps 5 and 6 are dialogues or talks and a drill on cassette. Step 7 is a writing exercise and Step 8 is a roleplay. The roleplay is the culmination of the unit. In it the learners use information from the four texts and the two cassette exercises to deal with a problem in their own way.

The Eight Steps in Detail

The Texts
Steps 1–4

Some of the texts are authentic and some are not. All of them have been treated in some way so that they are a language problem in themselves.

This has been done for four reasons. Firstly to avoid the impression that the learner is being given this information to teach him the subject matter. Secondly to give the learner a language task deeper and more searching than reading a text. Thirdly to involve the teacher in the learner's study of the text. And fourthly to get at problem language areas like prepositions and articles that benefit from repeated practice in different text contexts.

The Text Exercises
Steps 1–4

After each of the four texts in a unit there are several exercises. One of these exercises often tests comprehension and is occasionally used to convey new vocabulary or information that will be useful for the roleplay. Another is often a development exercise, which can be pairwork, a mini-roleplay or a problem solving exercise, and uses the text in some way. Some of the exercises are addressed to the learner and some to the teacher. There is more detail on this in the section on Principles, below.

The Dialogues, Talks and Drills
Steps 5 and 6

The dialogues or talks add to the information from the texts for later use in the roleplay, but the roleplay is still possible if they are omitted.

The Writing Exercises Step 7

By Step 7 the learner has been given all the information for the roleplay (sometimes by means of overtly pedagogic tasks) and it is from this point, the point of using the information, that Authenticity of Task is adopted as a principle. So the Writing Exercises are all memos, letters and reports of the sort that business people actually write.

The Roleplays Step 8

Here is a suggested Roleplay procedure:

Lesson 1: Learners plan their group's negotiating position. They take notes and if they wish they plan what they will say. Reference to the texts (which contain useful information) should occur spontaneously. The teacher monitors and advises the groups.

Lesson 2: The roleplay. The teacher monitors the roleplay using a Feedback Sheet. This is one possible Feedback Sheet:

Feedback Sheet

You said	You should have said	This was interesting

The teacher writes language errors as they are made in the roleplay in the 'You said' column. Any useful negotiating strategies or skilful use of a language function or good English in general is written down under 'This was interesting'. The middle column is left blank.

Lesson 3: Ideally, the Feedback Sheet is photocopied to the learners. If this is impossible, the teacher will have to read out the errors to the learners. The teacher and learners then correct the errors together and the learners all write the corrected version in the 'You should have said' column of their photocopied Feedback Sheet.

Points and Principles

1 Wherever possible, the teacher and learners are encouraged to adapt all the problems, pairwork, roleplays and even the grammar practice to the learners' own business situations.
2 All the units are at the same level and the teacher and learners are encouraged to skip from one unit to another, either for revision, supplementary work, or skim or scan reading from Texts where the language work has been completed.
3 Some exercises are addressed directly to the learner, in the traditional way. Other exercises, those marked with a Ⓣ, are mediated through the teacher. The Ⓣ sign refers the teacher to the Teachers' Notes. The exercises in these Notes are

designed to be flexible enough for the teacher to adjust them to the group's precise level and interests.

4 The eight steps per unit proceed in register from formal to informal. Some of the texts are from business journals and some deal with finance theory, but the learner is guided to use the information from them orally. In Steps 5 and 6, on cassette, the language is much more idiomatic.

5 The book aims at a mix between Authentic Tasks, Communicative Exercises and the accurate learning of relevant grammar and functions in as short a time as possible.

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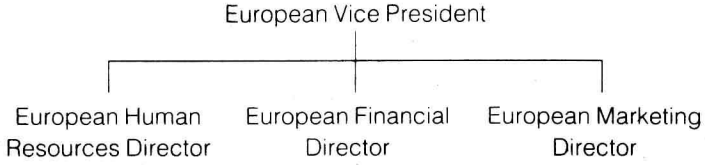
Unit 1 Ranklin plc: Industrial Relations

Text 1

Read the text and fill in the missing prepositions.

Ranklin plc makes *bonded abrasives. It employs 1,300 people. 850 ___1___ these are hourly paid and 450 are staff. The organization ___2___ the company is basically *line and staff. The company is divisionalized ___3___ Europe ___4___ product. So the main *plant is responsible ___5___ other plants in other countries, all working on the same product. The structure ___6___ the company ___7___ Europe is ___8___ follows:



The European Vice President reports ___9___ the President ___10___ the company ___11___ America.

Personnel, ___12___ course, comes ___13___ Human Resources. The structure ___14___ the Personnel Department ___15___ Ranklin is ___16___ follows:

bonded abrasives – kinds of stone that don't wear out easily, sometimes used for grinding processes in industry.
line and staff – line workers are people working on different production processes; staff do the same job to help all the line workers (e.g. wages staff).
plant – factory.

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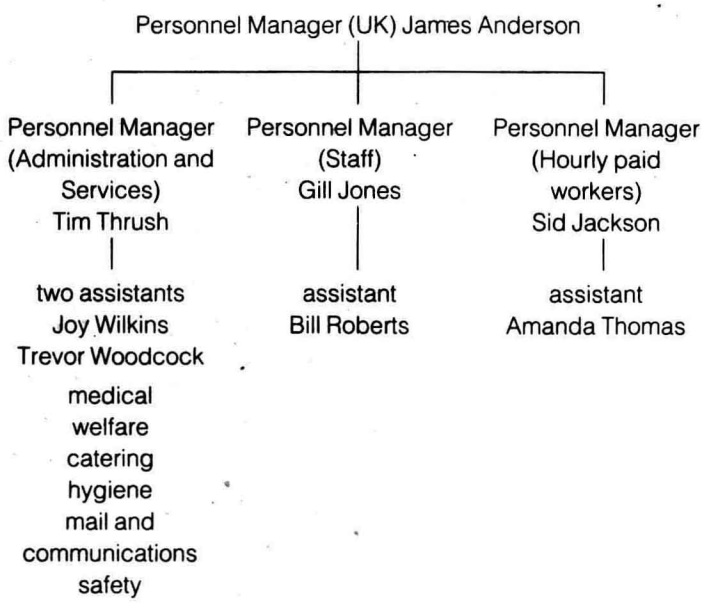

Practice Exercise 1A

You can use Text 1 to practise the third person singular *s*, simple present tense.

1 Drill using the Personnel Staff Chart:

A: Tim Thrush.
B: Tim Thrush reports to James Anderson.
A: Bill Roberts.
B: Bill Roberts reports to Gill Jones.
. . . etc.

and then:

A: Joy Wilkins.
B: Joy Wilkins looks after welfare.
A: Sid Jackson.
B: Sid Jackson looks after safety.
. . . etc.

Ⓣ 2 Construct a short text parallel to the given one, using all the third person singular sentences in the text. For example:

A: 'Ranklin plc makes bonded abrasives.' What does Jones Ltd make?
B: Jones Ltd makes chairs.

'Jones Ltd makes chairs' is the first sentence of your text. Now do the same with three or four other sentences. Each sentence should contain a third person singular verb.

Exercise 1B
True or False?

1 Tim Thrush reports to Gill Jones.
2 Sid Jackson is senior to James Anderson.
3 Some of the catering workers are hourly paid. This could lead to friction between Tim Thrush and Sid Jackson.
4 Some of the welfare staff are hourly paid. There is therefore some overlap between Tim Thrush's responsibilities and Sid Jackson's.
5 Tim Thrush handles any big changes that affect all personnel, like new employment legislation.

Exercise 1C
Development

Ⓣ 1 Draw a diagram of a department in a firm or a diagram of the school where you are learning English. It should be like the diagrams in Text 1. One or two of you explain your diagrams to the group, talking about the different jobs as well as who reports to whom; this will help you practise third person singular forms.

Ⓣ 2 Working in pairs, discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the departmental stucture shown in one diagram. Is there any overlap which could lead to friction? How could you improve the structure? Practise the following functions:

Praising:	*The structure works well.* *I think it's a good set-up.* *We're basically well organized in this department.*
Identifying weaknesses:	*The problem is here.* *This is what's wrong with it.*
Criticizing:	*There are too many . . .* *There's not enough . . .* *There's an overlap because . . .* *It would be much better if they . . .*

Now think of more examples in each category.

Text 2

Read the text using the correct form of the verb in brackets.

Ranklin plc ([1]regard) itself as efficiently *paternalistic, though the workers sometimes ([2]call) it a hard company to work for. The company ([3]pay) high wages and salaries for a high work flow. In other words they ([4]pay) well and ([5]demand) a lot of work in return. It's better ([6]have) two people ([7]work) hard and ([8]pay) them well than ([9]have) three people ([10]work) less hard for lower wages. At least that ([11]be) company policy. The production workers ([12]pay) on a piece work system, with incentives. The basic ([13]be) a work

paternalistic – acting like a father to the workers.

effort of ten units per hour. Any earnings above ten units ([14]attract) a 50 per cent bonus. So 11 units ([15]pay) at 11½. That ([16]be) 10 + 1 + 50% of 1 which ([17]equal) ½. 12 units ([18]pay) as 13, 13 units as 14½ and so on. There ([19]be) one inspector to every ten workers.

Practice Exercise 2A Ⓣ You can use Text 2 to practise infinitive constructions:

1 Look at the sentence that begins 'It's better *to have* two people . . .'. Use this table to make up similar sentences, e.g.:

It's not advisable to offer the bonus.

It's	better good advisable not advisable preferable usual	to	negotiate pay have agree work offer	an increase as agreed the bonus consultation quickly overtime piece work

2 Working in pairs, add another clause or sentence of your own to those from the table, e.g.:

It's not advisable to offer the bonus because we would run into liquidity problems.

Practice Exercise 2B Ⓣ You can also use Text 2 to practise *-ing* forms. Look at the phrase 'Three people working less hard'. Use this table to make up sentences with similar phrases.

The Personnel Manager	put off dislikes postponed risked avoided	issuing inviting negotiating provoking paying	the shop steward for talks with small groups the invitations the workers the incentive bonus

Now make up your own substitution tables for infinitives and *-ing* forms.

Swap it with someone else's and practise making sentences from that one.

Exercise 2C
Inference Questions

1 A worker goes home at midday on Wednesday, because he doesn't feel well. He's produced 200 units since Monday morning, 35 of them in three hours on Wednesday morning. If you were a Ranklin Personnel Officer, how many units would you count as extra? They work a seven-hour day at Ranklin.

2 In your opinion, why might the workers regard Ranklin's system as demanding?

3 What do you think the Inspector's job consists of? What are his problems likely to be?

Exercise 2D
Development

1 Work in pairs. Both of you are shop stewards representing the production workers. You are dissatisfied with the piece work system. You want a flat rate weekly salary. List and discuss arguments supporting your case. Make notes.

2 Work in pairs. Both of you imagine that you are James Anderson, Personnel Manager. List and discuss arguments supporting the present system of piece work. Make notes.

3 Work in pairs. The shop steward and the Personnel Manager discuss the best system of payment for Ranklin. Practise the following functions:

Explaining a case or system:	*What we are proposing is . . .* *We envisage . . .* *This would involve . . .*
Contradicting:	*Yes, but . . .* *I take your point, but . . .* *We don't see it that way . . .* *That's not the point . . .* *Look, surely . . .*
Compromising:	*Well, couldn't we combine . . .* *Couldn't we do both . . .* *OK, let's try and find a middle way.* *Is there any common ground here?* *Let's discuss this some more.*
Changing the direction of a discussion:	*Let's look at . . .* *Let's get onto . . .* *OK, shall we consider . . .*

Now think of more examples in each category.

Text 3

Read the text and put the sentences in the correct order.

[1]The electricians are in one union. [2]The turners and fitters, the tinsmiths, who manufacture special equipment, the joiners (wood-workers) and the bricklayers are all in various unions. [3]There are several different Trade Unions representing the skilled workers. [4]They work on lighting and machine maintenance. [5]The pipe fitters, who work on hydraulic presses, are in another union.

Exercise 3A
Matching.

Match each of the jobs in the left-hand column with one of the descriptions in the right-hand column.

1 joiner	A installs (fits) machinery
2 pipe fitter	B lays bricks
3 tinsmith	C is responsible for hygiene at the factory
4 turner	D negotiates with piece workers
5 bricklayer	E works with wood
6 Personnel Manager (Admin. and Services)	F files abrasive material
7 fitter	G negotiates with management
8 Personnel Manager (hourly paid workers)	H works on hydraulic presses
9 shop steward	I manufactures special equipment at Ranklin

Text 4

Read the text and put the sentences in the correct order.

[1]To avoid this they encourage the unions to get together and form a joint negotiating body. [2]When this happens, the Personnel Managers are faced with the problem of small group negotiations. [3]So each small union has its own Recognition and Procedure Agreement with Ranklin, but they get together in a Joint Negotiating Committee Agreement. [4]In some cases there are only 10 or 12 people in one union.

Exercise 4A
Development

The Personnel Department has been trying to get the piece workers into the Joint Negotiating Committee Agreement. The electricians object because the piece workers are unskilled and the electricians are skilled.

Write down some arguments to convince the electricians. These arguments are collected at a meeting of the Personnel Department. Working in small groups, decide what to say to the electricians.

You can use Exercise 4A to practise the following functions.

Persuading by appeal:
Could you help us out on this?
Frankly, we're in a bit of a jam.
Look, just this once . . .
We won't hold you to it next time.
Well, make an exception, would you?

Persuading by cajoling:
Isn't it clear that . . .
This is creating problems because . . .
This is making life difficult for us because . . .
If you don't agree, what will happen is . . .

Now think of more examples in each category.

Dialogue Exercise 5

This is a cloze. Listen to the conversation on the cassette several times straight through and write down the missing words. Save any questions that you want to ask until after you have done this.

The Financial Controller at Ranklin, Harold Scott, is talking to the Personnel Manager, James Anderson.

HAROLD: Hello Jim. Thanks for ___1___ over. Jim, we've just ___2___ a big order for ___3___ abrasive wheels. From the ___4___ East. Have you heard ___5___ it?

JAMES: No, I haven't.

HAROLD: ___6___, it's good news, of ___7___. But there's a nasty ___8___ deadline. In fact, to ___9___ the order at all we had ___10___ agree to *penalty clauses.

JAMES: ___11___ on.

HAROLD: Jim, the deadline ___12___ a production rate of ___13___ twelve and thirteen units ___14___ hour on this order.

JAMES: Come ___15___ Harold! The piece workers ___16___ accept that. Not in a ___17___ years.

HAROLD: I know. So ___18___ decided to pay them ___19___ bonus.

JAMES: Harold, you know ___20___ unofficial agreements cause trouble.

penalty clause – an agreement in the contract that the firm doesn't get as much money if the goods aren't produced on time.

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