

PRACTICE AND PROGRESS

L. G. ALEXANDER

AN INTEGRATED COURSE
FOR PRE-INTERMEDIATE STUDENTS



New
Concept
English

To the Teacher

Language Learning at the Pre-Intermediate Level

General Principles

Traditional methods of learning a foreign language die hard. As long ago as 1921, Dr Harold Palmer pointed out the important difference between understanding how a language works and learning how to use it. Since that time, a great many effective techniques have been developed to enable students to learn a foreign language. In the light of intensive modern research, no one would seriously question the basic principles that have evolved since Palmer's day, though there is considerable disagreement about how these principles can best be implemented. Despite the great progress that has been made, teachers in many parts of the world still cling to old-fashioned methods and to some extent perpetuate the systems by which they themselves learnt a foreign language. It may, therefore, not be out of place to restate some basic principles and to discuss briefly how they can best be put into effect in the classroom.

Learning a language is not a matter of acquiring a set of rules and building up a large vocabulary. The teacher's efforts should not be directed at informing his students about a language, but at enabling them to use it. A student's mastery of a language is ultimately measured by how well he can use it, not by how much he knows about it. In this respect, learning a language has much in common with learning a musical instrument. The drills and exercises a student does have one end in sight: to enable him to become a skilled performer. A student who has learnt a lot of grammar but who cannot *use* a language is in the position of a pianist who has learnt a lot about harmony but cannot play the piano. The student's command of a language will therefore be judged not by how much he knows, but how well he can perform in public.

In order to become a skilled performer, the student must become proficient at using the units of a language. And the unit of a language is not, as was once commonly supposed, the word, but the sentence. Learning words irrespective of their function can be a waste of time, for not all words are equal. We must draw a distinction between *structural* words and *lexical* items. Words like *I, you, he* etc. are *structural*. Their use can be closely defined; they are part of a grammatical system. Words like *tree, plant, flower* etc. are purely *lexical* items and in no way part of a grammatical system. From the learner's point of view, skill in handling structural words is the key to mastering a language, for the meaning that is conveyed in sentence-patterns depends largely on the function of the structural words that hold them together.

It is possible, though this has yet to be proved scientifically, that every student of a foreign language has what might be called a 'language ceiling', a point beyond which he cannot improve very much. If we accept this supposition, our aim must be to enable every student to learn as much as he is capable of learning in the most efficient way. The old-fashioned translation and grammar-rule methods are extremely wasteful and inefficient, for the student is actually encouraged to make mistakes: he is asked to perform skills before he is adequately prepared. Teachers who use such methods unwittingly create the very

problems they seek to avoid. At some point in the course their students inevitably become incapable of going *on*: they have to go *back*. They have become remedial students and the teacher is faced with the problem of remedying what has been incorrectly learnt. No approach could be more ineffective, wasteful and inefficient.

The student should be trained to learn by making as few mistakes as possible. He should never be required to do anything which is beyond his capacity. A well-designed course is one which takes into account what might be called the student's 'state of readiness': the point where he can proceed from easy to difficult. If the student is to make the most of his abilities, he must be trained to adopt correct learning habits.

What has to be Learnt?

The student must be trained adequately in all four basic language skills: *understanding, speaking, reading and writing*. In many classroom courses the emphasis is wholly on the written language. The student is trained to use his eyes instead of his ears and his inability to achieve anything like correct pronunciation, stress and intonation must be attributed largely to the tyranny of the printed word. If the teacher is to train his students in all four skills, he must make efficient use of the time at his disposal. Efficiency presupposes the adoption of classroom procedures which will yield the best results in the quickest possible time. The following order of presentation must be taken as axiomatic:

Nothing should be spoken before it has been heard.

Nothing should be read before it has been spoken.

Nothing should be written before it has been read.

Speaking and writing are the most important of these skills, since to some extent they presuppose the other two.

Learning to Speak

The traditional 'conversation lesson' is of no value at all if the student is not ready for it. It is impossible for any student at the post-elementary level to take part in discussions on topics like 'The Cinema Today', for his ideas quite outstrip his capacity for expressing them. The student must first be trained to use patterns in carefully graded aural/oral drills. Only in this way will he finally learn to speak.

Before considering how this can be done, it should be noted that the patterns in a language fall into two distinct categories: *progressive* and *static*. For instance, learning how to answer and to ask questions involves the use of *progressive* patterns. They are *progressive* because the student's skill in handling these complex forms must be developed over a long period, beginning with a simple response like 'Yes, it is' and culminating in complex responses like 'Yes, I should, shouldn't I'. A *static* pattern, on the other hand, like the comparison of adjectives can be taught in a limited number of lessons, not over a long period.

Progressive patterns should be practised through comprehension exercises which require the student to answer and to ask questions which become increasingly complex as the course proceeds. The student should be trained to give tag answers; make negative and affirmative statements to answer double questions joined by *or*; answer general questions which begin with question-

words like *When, Where, How* etc. ; and at each stage, the student should be trained to ask questions himself. It is obvious that these skills cannot be dealt with in one or two lessons: the student requires practice of this kind in *every* lesson.

At the same time, static patterns should be practised by means of drills which make use of language-laboratory techniques. In each of these drills, the teacher seeks to elicit a particular kind of response. He provides the student with a stimulus to elicit the new pattern in a series of oral drills until the student is able to respond accurately and automatically.

Students may also be trained to speak through oral composition exercises where they are required to reproduce orally a passage of English they are familiar with. At the outset, the student should practise reproducing narrative and descriptive pieces. At a much later stage, he will practise reproducing the substance of an argument. When he can do this well, he will be in a position to converse on set topics which deal with abstract ideas. By this time he will be able to express himself with confidence and will make relatively few mistakes.

The techniques used in speech training at the pre-intermediate level may be summarized as follows:

Drilling in progressive patterns.

Drilling in static patterns.

Practice in oral composition.

Learning to Write

The same sort of careful grading is required when we attempt to teach students to write. We must again begin with the simplest form of statement. Students are all too often plunged into composition work long before they are ready for it. At some point in a course, the teacher may decide that it is time his students attempted to write a composition, so he sets a short narrative or descriptive piece and hopes for the best. This is a random, hit-or-miss method which creates enormous remedial problems and produces disastrous results. If a student's sole experience of written English has been to fill in blank spaces in tailor-made sentences, it is wildly unreasonable to spring a composition subject on him and then expect him to produce correct and readable prose. As with premature discussions on set topics, all we are doing is to encourage him to make mistakes. And it is no good hoping that after a few years of this (involving massive correction on the part of the teacher) the student will somehow improve on his own. Very few students are sufficiently conscientious or highly motivated to examine in detail their own corrected written work. Even if they did, there is absolutely no guarantee that they will not go on making the same mistakes. Writing skill can best be developed through carefully controlled and graded comprehension/précis exercises. Précis writing is not a sterile academic exercise useful only for examination purposes. It can be used effectively to develop a student's writing ability. At the pre-intermediate stage, the student must learn how to write simple, compound, and complex sentences and to connect ideas from notes. Controlled précis writing will enable the student to master each of these difficulties and bring him to a point where he will be capable of writing a composition with a minimum of error.

The main stages in training the student in the written language at the pre-intermediate level may be summarized as follows:

Practice in writing simple sentences through controlled comprehension/précis exercises.

Practice in writing compound sentences through controlled comprehension/précis exercises.

Practice in writing complex sentences through controlled comprehension/précis exercises.

Practice in connecting ideas from notes that have been provided.

The Teaching of Grammar

In traditional textbooks, all information about sentence patterns is presented in the form of 'rules' which the student applies in a series of disconnected sentences by filling in blank spaces, or by giving the correct form of words in brackets. It has become abundantly clear that this approach to language-learning is highly ineffective. It encourages the teacher to talk *about* the language, instead of training his students to use it. The emphasis is on written exercises. The greatest weakness in this approach is that the student cannot transfer what he has learnt from abstract exercises of this kind to other language skills like understanding, speaking and creative writing.

A new pattern should not be presented as the exemplification of some abstract grammar-rule, but as a *way of saying something*. No further explanation or elucidation is necessary. The student is trained to use correct forms automatically, rather than by applying 'grammar logic'. Where explanation is necessary, it can be done by relating a new pattern to one that has already been learnt. If, for instance, the student has learnt the use of 'must', he can be taught the use of 'have to' by being made to see a meaningful relationship between the two.

Students working at the pre-intermediate level may be given exercises in recall, that is, relating language difficulties to a particular context they know well. In this way they will be trained to use correct forms instinctively. The teacher is, incidentally, saved the trouble of correcting exercises, since, for the most part, the passages do this for him.

Traditional filling-in-the-blank exercises still have a place in a modern course, but with one important difference: they should not be used as a means of teaching new patterns, but as a means of consolidating what has been learnt. They are an end, not a means to an end. In this respect, they are extremely useful in tests and can be employed for diagnostic purposes or to enable the teacher to assess terminal behaviour.

The Multi-Purpose Text

In order to do all the exercises outlined above, the student must work from specially-written texts. Each text must be used to train the student in the following skills:

Aural comprehension.

Oral practice (*progressive* and *static* patterns).

Reading aloud.

Oral composition.

Dictation.

Controlled comprehension, précis and composition practice (simple, compound and complex sentences).

Written grammar exercises in recall.

We might call these specially-written passages *multi-purpose texts*, since they are used as the basis for a variety of exercises which aim at developing a number of skills simultaneously.

If these texts are to be suitable for so many purposes, they must be specially devised. The new patterns that are to be taught must be *contextualized*, that is, they must be built into each text. These reiterated patterns should be unobtrusive: their use should strike the listener as being inevitable rather than artificially superimposed. *There is also another very important requirement: the texts must be interesting or amusing so that they will entertain the student, hold his attention, and minimize the inevitable drudgery involved in drill work.* If the texts are accompanied by illustrations, they will be even more appealing. At the beginner's level, illustrations are more functional than decorative. At this level, the reverse is true: the pre-intermediate stage marks a transition from audio-visual techniques to audio-lingual ones.

Speed and Intensity

Traditional courses are often divided into 'lessons', but these 'lessons' do not take into account what can be done in an average teaching period of forty-five minutes or an hour. They simply consist of 'an amount of information' and may run on for a great many pages. In the classroom, one of these 'lessons' might drag on for weeks because so much has to be done.

A lesson must be precisely what the word implies: an amount of material that can reasonably be covered in a teaching period, possibly with additional material which can be done as homework. In other words, a lesson must be considered as a unit of instruction and no more. Now it is extremely difficult for the course designer to decide what can be done in an average period. Obviously a class of bright students will cover more ground than a class of less able ones. This problem can be overcome if the lesson contains material which can be omitted at the discretion of the teacher, providing that these omissions do not hamper the students' progress.

Levels

For purely practical purposes, students attending language schools have to be classified in terms of knowledge and achievement. It might be worth noting that a full-scale course would resolve itself into three parts, each of which would consist of two stages:

Stage 1 : Pre-elementary level.
Elementary level.

Stage 2 : Pre-intermediate level.
Intermediate level.

Stage 3 : Pre-advanced level.
Advanced level.

About this Course

From Theory to Practice: Basic Aims

This course attempts to put into practice all the theories about language learning outlined above. Briefly, the aims may be stated as follows:

1. To provide a comprehensive course for post-elementary adult or secondary students. The course contains sufficient material for about one and a half academic years' work. It is assumed that the student will receive about four hours' instruction each week i.e. four one-hour lessons on four separate occasions, or two 'double periods' each consisting of two hours or ninety minutes. If we take the academic year to consist of thirty-six weeks, there will be sufficient material in this course for fifty-four weeks' work. The student will receive most of his training in the classroom and will be required to do a little extra work in his own time.

2. To train the student in all four skills: *understanding, speaking, reading, and writing*—in that order. In this respect, the course sets out to do two things: to provide material which will be suitable for aural/oral practice and which can at the same time be used to train the student systematically to write English.

3. To provide the student with a book which will enable him to *use* the language.

4. To provide the teacher with well-co-ordinated and graded material which will enable him to conduct each lesson with a minimum of preparation. As many of the exercises are 'self-correcting', the teacher will, incidentally, be relieved of the arduous task of correcting a great many written exercises.

5. To enable the teacher and the student to work entirely from a single volume without the need for additional 'practice books'.

6. To prepare the ground for students who might, at some future date, wish to sit for academic examinations like the Cambridge Lower Certificate. This aim must be regarded as coincidental to the main purpose of training students in the four language skills.

7. To provide the teacher with recorded material which can be used in the classroom and language-laboratory. It must be emphasized, however, that this is in no way a full-scale language-laboratory course. It is essentially a classroom course, designed primarily for teachers who have no access to a language laboratory. The recorded drills are only intended for teachers who make use of a language-laboratory at regular or irregular intervals to supplement work done in the classroom.

For Whom the Course is Intended

This course should be found suitable for:

1. Adult or secondary students who have completed *First Things First: An Integrated Course for Beginners*, or who have completed *any* other elementary course.

2. Students in need of remedial work: e.g. students who did English at school and now wish to take it up again; students who have begun English several times and never got beyond the point of no return.

3. Schools and Language Institutes where 'wastage' caused by irregular

attendance and late starters is a problem. The course is so designed that it will enable hard-pressed or erratic students to catch up on work they have missed.

4. Post-elementary students who wish to study on their own.

How Much Knowledge has been Assumed?

The material in *First Things First*, the beginners' course which precedes this one, has been designed to 'overlap' this course. Students who have completed it will have no difficulty whatever in continuing where they left off.

Students who have learnt English from other elementary courses and now wish to continue their studies with this course should have a fair working knowledge of the structures listed below. The list may look formidable, but close inspection will reveal that there is nothing in it that would not be found in the average elementary course. In any case, most of the knowledge that has been assumed is revised in the course itself.

It should be noted that a distinction has been drawn in the list between *active* and *passive* knowledge. A student has *active* command of a pattern if he can use it in speech or writing. He has *passive* command of a pattern if he can understand it when he hears or reads it, but is, as yet, incapable of using it. In the list below, this distinction is drawn by the following designations: ability to recognize and to form (*active* knowledge); ability to recognize (*passive* knowledge).

Assumed Knowledge

1. Elementary uses of the verbs *be* and *have* in the present and past.
2. The Present Continuous: ability to recognize and to form.
3. The Simple Present: ability to recognize; to form with *s*, *es*, or *ies* in the third person.
4. The Simple Past: ability to recognize and to form with common regular and irregular verbs.
5. The Past Continuous: ability to recognize.
6. The Present Perfect (Simple): ability to recognize.
7. The Past Perfect: ability to recognize.
8. The Future: ability to recognize and to form with *going to*, *shall* and *will*.
9. Auxiliary Verbs: elementary uses of *can*, *may* and *must*. The ability to recognize the forms *could*, *might* and *would*.
10. The ability to form *questions* and *negatives* with auxiliary verbs including *do/does* and *did*. The use of interrogative pronouns and adverbs.
11. The ability to answer questions beginning with auxiliary verbs and question words.
12. Adverbs: ability to form with *-ly* and *-ily*. The ability to recognize exceptions like *well*, *hard* and *fast*.
13. Articles: definite and indefinite. Elementary uses of *a/an* and *the*. The use of *some*, *any*, *no*, *much*, *many*, *a lot of* with countable and uncountable nouns.
14. Nouns: the ability to form the plural with *-s*, *-es*, *-ves*; common irregular plurals: *men*, *women*, *children*, *teeth* etc.
15. Pronouns: personal, possessive, reflexive. Apostrophe 's'.
16. Adjectives: elementary uses. Regular comparison; irregular comparison: *good*, *bad*, *much/many* and *little*.
17. Prepositions: the use of common prepositions of *place*, *time* and *direction*.

18. Relative Pronouns: the ability to recognize and to use *who/whom, which* and *that*.

Miscellaneous Features

19. This/that; these/those.
20. Elided forms: it's, I'm, isn't, didn't, etc.
21. There is/it is; there are/they are.
22. The imperative.
23. The days of the week, dates, seasons, numbers, points of time (today, yesterday, tomorrow, etc.).
24. Telling the time.

The Components of the Course

The course consists of the following:

- One text-book (to be used by teachers and students).
- Four $4\frac{1}{4}$ in. (11 cm.) long-playing tapes (length: 600 feet), recorded at $3\frac{1}{4}$ i.p.s. (9.5 cm. p.s.), on which the multi-purpose texts have been recorded.
Eight 5 in. (13 cm.) long-playing tapes (length: 900 feet), recorded at $3\frac{1}{4}$ i.p.s. (9.5 cm. p.s.), on which drills have been recorded.
- Recorded drills: Tapescript.
- Supplementary written exercises: Multiple choice.

A Description of the Course

General Arrangement of Material

This course is divided into four Units each of which is preceded by a searching test. Each Unit consists of twenty-four passages which become longer and more complex as the course progresses. Detailed instructions to the student, together with worked examples, precede each Unit.

The passages are multi-purpose texts. Each passage will be used to train the student in the following: aural comprehension; oral practice (*progressive* and *static* patterns); reading aloud; oral composition; dictation; controlled comprehension, précis, and composition practice (simple, compound and complex sentences); written grammar exercises in recall.

Instructions and Worked Examples

These precede each Unit and should be read very carefully. The successful completion of this course depends entirely on the student's ability to carry out the instructions given.

Pre-Unit Tests

A searching test, based on material already studied, precedes each Unit. This will make it possible for students to find their own level and enable them to begin at any point in the book. At the same time, the student who works through the course systematically from beginning to end is not expected to make too sudden a jump between Units. The tests should enable the teacher to assess how much the students have learnt. If they are found to be too long, they should be divided into manageable compartments.

The Passages

An attempt has been made to provide the student with passages which are as

interesting and as varied in subject-matter as possible. Each passage contains examples of the language patterns the student is expected to master. It will also be used as the basis for all aural/oral and written work. The approximate length of the passages in each Unit is as follows:

Unit 1 : 100 words.

Unit 2 : 140 words.

Unit 3 : 160 words.

Unit 4 : 180 words.

Oral Exercises

Oral exercises are not included in the book itself and must be supplied by the teacher. They may be along the lines suggested in the section on *How to Use this Course*.

Comprehension and Précis

The aim has been to train the student to make statements which are based directly on the passages he has read. The student is required to derive specific information from each passage (comprehension) which he will put together to form a paragraph (précis). The amount of help he is given to do this gradually diminishes. In these exercises, the student will incidentally gain a great deal of experience in coping with one of the biggest difficulties in English: word order. Here is a brief outline of what is required in each Unit:

Unit 1 : The passages contain mainly compound sentences. The comprehension questions have been designed to elicit *simple* statements which will be put together to form a précis and composition.

Unit 2 : The passages contain mainly complex sentences (though not necessarily difficult ones) and the comprehension questions are designed to elicit *simple* and *compound* statements. These will be put together to form a précis of the passage.

Unit 3 : The comprehension questions are designed to elicit *simple*, *compound* and *complex* statements. These will be put together to form a précis.

Unit 4 : The student will practise writing all three types of statement by using connecting words to join ideas. The ideas are derived from each passage and will be joined together to form a précis.

Composition

Composition exercises, which are introduced in Unit 2, run closely parallel to work that is being done in comprehension and précis. From Unit 3 onwards, these exercises are based on ideas suggested by the passages. This will relieve the student of the added burden of having to find something to say when he is struggling to express himself. The arrangement is as follows:

Unit 2 : Exercises in writing compound statements.

a Passages 25-36: selecting correct verbs and joining words.

b Passages 37-48: joining simple statements to make compound statements.

Unit 3 : Alternating exercises.

a Joining ideas to make compound or complex statements.

b Joining simple statements to make compound or complex statements.

Unit 4 : Joining ideas to write two short paragraphs (a total of about 150 words).

Letter-writing

Work in letter-writing is begun in Unit 2 and difficulties concerning layout and subject-matter are introduced gradually. This course deals with personal letters only. The exercises have been graded as follows:

Unit 2: The Heading.

Unit 3: The Salutation and the opening paragraph.

Unit 4: The Body, the Subscription, the Signature and the Postscript.

Key Structures and Special Difficulties

A distinction has been drawn between absolutely essential grammar (Key Structures) and difficulties in usage (Special Difficulties). No attempt has been made to deal with every aspect of grammar. All information about Key Structures and Special Difficulties is derived directly from each passage. Grammatical terminology has not been used at all. New items are presented in the form of sentence patterns. Where explanations are necessary, this has been done by relating a new pattern to one which the student already knows and by providing numerous examples, not by abstract description and 'grammar rules'.

Filling-in-the-blank exercises are given to consolidate what the student has already learnt and practised orally. They cannot be used to teach new patterns. There are also numerous exercises in recall where the student is required to relate language difficulties to a passage he knows well. These grammar exercises are presented as part of a real context, not in disconnected sentences. By referring to the passage, the student can find out immediately whether he has grasped the new patterns. The teacher is also saved the trouble of correcting exercises of this type, since, for the most part, the passages do this for him.

The way the Key Structures have been arranged is one of the most important features of this course. The Key Structures have been presented in what might be called 'concentric cycles', the basic idea being that no new concept should be introduced without reference to what has been learnt so far. This concentric arrangement makes provision for constant revision of the most difficult sentence patterns. The following outline will make this clear:

Unit 1 (Passages 1–24): Key Structures are dealt with at an elementary level.

Unit 2 (Passages 25–48): Exactly the same ground is covered at a slightly more difficult level.

Unit 3 (Passages 49–72): The same ground is covered yet again at a still more difficult level.

Unit 4 (Passages 73–96): The Key Structures are revised.

Cross-references

Cross-references have been included to enable the student to refer to material he has already learnt and to draw useful comparisons. In the text, cross-references are in heavy type and are indicated in the following manner:

a **KS** (=KEY STRUCTURE). These letters are followed by a page number and sometimes a paragraph reference: e.g. **KS 47b**.

b **SD** (=SPECIAL DIFFICULTY). These letters are also followed by a page number and sometimes a paragraph reference: e.g. **SD 52c**.

The Tapes

Two sets of tapes accompany the course for use in the classroom and the language laboratory.

(a) Four $4\frac{1}{4}$ in. (11 cm.) long-playing tapes.

On these, the ninety-six multi-purpose texts have been recorded at slightly less than normal speed (120 words per minute). These tapes are intended for use in the classroom when the teacher is carrying out the aural/oral procedure suggested for each lesson. The recorded passages may therefore be used for aural comprehension and repetition work. The teacher may, however, choose to work without these tapes if he wishes—in which case he will have to read the contextualized pieces himself.

(b) Eight 5 in. (13 cm.) long-playing tapes.

On these, selected drills have been recorded for use in the classroom and language laboratory. There are ninety-six drills in all, each of which lasts approximately for $3\frac{1}{2}$ minutes. They are intended for teachers who have access to a language laboratory and who make use of it at regular or irregular intervals. It is essential to introduce the drills in the classroom before they are practised in the laboratory.

The drills are four-phase: *stimulus/response/correct response/repetition*. They are based entirely on the Key Structures and Special Difficulties introduced in each lesson. The vocabulary used in the drills is drawn from the course itself.

The drills have been published in a separate book which is available to teachers. Detailed information about the drills and suggestions on how they may be used will be found in the introduction to this publication.

Vocabulary Range

Structures permitting, the vocabulary in Units 1 and 2 is based largely on the General Service List of English Words, compiled and edited by Dr Michael West. From then on, the range is unrestricted—within, of course, reasonable limits, and gradually becomes more difficult.

How to Use this Course

TEACHERS! PLEASE READ THIS INTRODUCTION CAREFULLY!

Allocation of Time

Ideally, two classroom lessons of approximately 50 minutes each should be spent on each text. The first lesson should be devoted to Guided Conversation; the second to Composition and Language Study. This means that there is enough material in this book for approximately 200 lessons (including tests). However, you may choose to spend only *one* classroom lesson on each text—in which case, *every* lesson may be devoted to Guided Conversation and a selection of written exercises may be set as homework. Your first task is to decide how much time you have in your programme in relation to the material available in the course.

The suggestions given below outline the basic steps in each lesson. You may decide to follow them closely, adapt them to suit your style of teaching, or reject them altogether—BUT PLEASE READ THEM FIRST!

Lesson 1: Guided Conversation

Books Required:

Practice and Progress (for teachers and students)
Recorded Drills Tapescript (for teachers only)

The Stages of the Lesson

1 Aural/Oral Presentation:	about 15 minutes
2 Question and Answer Practice:	about 10 minutes
3 Pattern Drill:	about 5 minutes
4 Oral Reconstruction:	about 10 minutes
5 Talking Points, Singing, Games, Story-telling, etc:	about 10 minutes

Let's see what each step involves:

1 Aural/Oral Presentation:

- a Listening* (Books shut)
- b Intensive Reading* (Books open)
- c Listening* (Books shut)
- d Chorus, Group and Individual Repetition* (Books shut) (This step is optional.)
- e Reading Aloud: Chorus, Group or Individual* (Books open)

a Listening (Books shut). Play the recording or read the passage once. The students should *listen* and try to understand as much as they can.

b Intensive Reading (Books open). Read the text in small units (e.g. a sentence at a time, or less) making sure the students *really* understand it. Rather than give direct explanations, try to get as much information as possible from the students. (Think of it as 'a corkscrew operation'!) Explanations should be given entirely in

English, but don't carry direct-method teaching to absurd lengths. If your students fail to understand in spite of all your efforts, translate briefly and move on. Remember, if you don't translate a particular difficulty, then someone in the class will!

c Listening (Books shut). Play the recording or read the passage once more.

d Chorus, Group and Individual Repetition (Books shut). These are *optional* activities at this level, and in any case should be confined to (say) Unit 1 only (the first 24 texts). If you conduct repetition exercises, first ask the *whole* class to repeat the text after you. Next divide the class into three groups and repeat the text *once more*. Finally, ask individual students round the class to repeat the text.

e Reading Aloud: Chorus, Group or Individual (Books open). How you conduct this depends on the size of the class. If it is a very large class, chorus and group reading is appropriate; if it is a small class (up to 20 students) individual reading may be more suitable.

The entire Aural/Oral Presentation should not occupy more than about 15 minutes. **DON'T SPEND TOO MUCH TIME ON ANY ONE ACTIVITY!**

2 *Question and Answer Practice:*

Question and answer practice should be based mainly on the text. However, you may vary this with questions which relate to the student's own experience. If you find it difficult to ask questions spontaneously, prepare yourself in advance. Five types of exercise are suggested, but this is by no means a rigid pattern. Questions should be asked individually round the class—preferably at speed. About half a dozen questions relating to each type should be sufficient. The five types are as follows:

a Yes/No Tag Answers

b Questions with Who

c Negative and Affirmative Statements

d General Questions: When, Where, Why, How, etc.

e Asking Questions in Pairs

a Yes/No Tag Answers. Train the students to listen to the *first* word in your questions and to use *the same word* (where applicable) in their answers. (All examples are based on Text 4.)

Teacher: *Have you received a letter from your sister?*

Student: No, *I haven't*.

Teacher: *Have you received a letter from your brother?*

Student: Yes, *I have*. etc.

b Questions with Who. Train the students to supply the correct auxiliary verbs in their answers. Note that *Who . . . ?* is only used as a subject.

Teacher: *Who's received a letter?*

Student: *I have*. etc.

c Negative and Affirmative Statements. Train the student to make negative and affirmative statements by asking double questions joined by *or*.

Teacher: *Have you received a letter from your brother or your sister?*

Student: *I haven't received a letter from my sister. I've received one from my brother*. etc.

d General Questions: When, Where, Why, How, etc. Train the student to provide natural answers to general comprehension questions.

Teacher: *Who've you received a letter from?*

Student: My brother. etc. (*Not: I have received a letter from my brother.*)
e Asking Questions in Pairs. In order to understand the function of question words well, the student should be trained to ask questions in pairs. In this way he will learn that the addition of a question word in no way affects the form of the question. Intensive training of this sort prevents the student from using incorrect forms like 'Where he went?' etc. The student first asks a question using an auxiliary verb. Then he asks *precisely the same question* preceding it with a question word.

Teacher: Ask me if I've received a letter from my brother.

Student: Have you received a letter from your brother?

Teacher: Who . . . (Always provide the question word.)

Student: Who have you received a letter from? etc.

3 Pattern Drill:

Drill the main language point which has been introduced in the text. Use the publication entitled *Practice and Progress, Recorded Drills: Tapescript* for this purpose. Here, for instance, is part of the drill which relates to Text 4:

Teacher: Have your breakfast.

Student: I've already had my breakfast.

Teacher: Tell him to leave.

Student: He's already left.

Teacher: Tell her to comb her hair.

Student: She's already combed her hair. etc.

The students may be trained to answer in chorus or groups, or the drill may be conducted a number of times rapidly round the class with individual students responding. If a language-laboratory is available, this will be adequate preparation for further practice. However, it must be stressed that a laboratory is by no means indispensable: it is quite possible to do all the drilling live in the classroom. Alternatively, teachers who have tape-recorders may choose to play the taped drills in class.

4 Oral Reconstruction:

Write a number of brief notes ('key words') on the blackboard summarizing the subject-matter of the text. Now invite individual pupils to reconstruct the text by referring to the notes. The students should be encouraged to speak without interruption for up to a minute at a time and should try to use as many as possible of the expressions, structures etc. of the original story. Here, for instance, are some notes which relate to Text 4:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 Letter—brother—Tim. | 6 Bought—Australian car—Alice |
| 2 In Australia. | Springs—small town—centre. |
| 3 Been there—six months. | 7 Visit Darwin. |
| 4 Engineer. | 8 From there—Perth. |
| 5 Big firm—visited different places. | 9 Never before—trip—exciting. |

5 Talking Points, Singing, Games, Story-telling, etc.

The final part of the Guided Conversation Lessons should be devoted to free conversation. Where the text immediately suggests a subject or subjects for general discussion, individual students should be invited to speak impromptu. Here, for instance, are a few talking points suggested by Text 4:

- a Do you know anyone abroad? What can you tell me about him/her?

- b What do you think (Australia) is like?
- c Which country would you like to visit and why?
- d Tell me about your job.

Obviously, not all texts provide suitable material for conversation. Where a general discussion is not possible, the lesson may end with any one of the following activities:

a *Singing*: Teach the class traditional or modern British and American songs. Any good song book may be used for this purpose. For instance:

Lee and Dodderidge: *Time for a Song* (Longman)

Dakin: *Songs and Rhymes for the Teaching of English* (Longman)

b *Games*: Well-known parlour games like 'Twenty Questions' are always popular with students. A book like *Language-Teaching Games and Contests* by W. R. Lee (O.U.P.) is full of excellent ideas.

c *Story-telling*: You may occasionally read a story to the class—providing it is roughly within the students' structural/lexical range. Many of the titles in the series Pleasant Books in Easy English Stages 1–4 (Longman) are suitable for this purpose.

Lesson 2: Composition and Language Study

As has already been indicated, this entire lesson may be omitted and a selection of written exercises may, instead, be set as homework. If this approach is adopted, then the Précis and Composition exercises *must always be set*. Needless to say, more satisfactory results will be obtained where a complete classroom lesson can be devoted to written exercises.

Books Required:

Practice and Progress (for teachers and students)
Supplementary Written Exercises (for teachers and students)

The Stages of the Lesson

- 1 Comprehension/Précis/Composition/Letter-writing
- 2 Key Structures
- 3 Exercises
- 4 Special Difficulties
- 5 Exercises
- 6 Dictation
- 7 Multiple Choice Questions

No specific suggestions are made regarding the amount of time to be spent on each part of the lesson as this will be found to vary greatly.

1 Comprehension/Précis/Composition/Letter-writing

These exercises must never be omitted as they are part of a carefully planned guided summary and composition scheme which evolves progressively through *Practice and Progress* and *Developing Skills*. As the exercises are largely self-correcting, it will be sufficient to check that they have been done. Go round the class while the students are writing and help individuals.

2 Key Structures

This part of the lesson should be devoted to a *brief* explanation of the main grammar points that were presented in the text. Grammatical information should be considered a means to an end, not an end in itself. Technical terms have been deliberately excluded: *it has been left to the teacher to decide how to present the grammar*. This, in turn, will depend wholly on the class. In the case of students who are familiar with the grammar of their own language, there is no reason why the teacher should not make use of technical terms. In the case of students who are wholly unfamiliar with grammatical concepts, no technical terms should be used at all. The aim behind all the explanation should be to reinforce theoretically what the student has already practised orally. It is best to avoid sweeping 'rules' and to confine the study of grammar to the points presented. Additional information can be obtained from any standard textbook: e.g. W. S. Allen: *Living English Structure* (Longman).

3 Exercises

These should be tackled in writing. They will provide further reinforcement of the grammar that has just been presented.

4 Special Difficulties

A brief explanation regarding the special lexical/structural difficulties should now be given. Where appropriate, you may draw a brief contrast between the problem presented in the text and a similar problem in the mother tongue.

5 Exercises

These should now be tackled in writing to reinforce what has been taught.

6 Dictation

Depending on the amount of time available, dictations should be given frequently. A few sentences taken from a passage the students have already studied may be dictated. The students may correct their own work by comparing their version with the passage.

7 Multiple Choice Exercises

These will be found in the separate publication, *Supplementary Written Exercises*, and may be tackled in class or as homework.

Homework

The written exercises become more demanding and time-consuming as the student progresses through the course. At a later stage, exercises which have not been completed in class may be set as homework.

Pre-Unit Tests

These should always be set before the students move on to a new Unit.

Additional Reading Material

It is essential for the students to read as much as possible in their own time. Students only find reading an irksome task when they attempt to read books which are too difficult for them. The books the students should read must be simplified and well within their range. Longman Structural Readers series is recommended for this purpose. A set of readers may accompany each of the Units in this book: