

Text to Note

Study Skills for Advanced
Learners

**Alex Adkins and
Ian McKean**

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Introduction

What this course is

Text to Note is a course for those who are studying or intend to study another subject through the medium of English. It concentrates on the following skills needed for study.

1. Understanding and interpreting written texts and non-verbal information such as charts, diagrams, graphs and flow charts.
2. Understanding short lectures on subjects related to the reading texts.
3. Making notes based on the reading and the lectures.
4. Using these notes to perform a range of tasks.

It also gives opportunities for discussion both about the completed tasks and the topics on which the units are based.

Text to Note is intended to encourage the learner to become increasingly independent in using the techniques of study. Some of the support given in earlier units (especially in note-making) is later taken away and, although the book is not structurally graded, there is an overall increase in the difficulty of the texts and tasks.

Who it is for

The course is for learners whose English is at or above upper-intermediate level (the level of the Cambridge First Certificate in English) and who need either to learn the skills of study or to learn how to use familiar skills in the unfamiliar medium of English, either in Britain or elsewhere.

It is suitable for those about to begin or already engaged in courses in further and higher education and also for students preparing to take the JMB – the Joint Matriculation Board's Test in English (Overseas).

What it contains

Text to Note does not aim to teach any subject or subjects as such. It is organized around a variety of topics, chosen to be of interest to a wide range of people.

Certain patterns of thinking, speaking and writing are typical in many areas of study. Among the most common are:

1. Description.
2. Sequencing: describing processes; giving instructions; narrating events.
3. Comparison.
4. Classification.
5. Cause and effect.

Each unit involves one or more of these patterns. Most contain more than one. The language needed for expressing each of these cognitive operations often shows certain typical markers and structures (for instance, 'first', 'then', 'after that' are common sequence markers; a sentence pattern such as 'While . . . , on the other hand . . . ' is normally used to contrast two points).

The talks are recorded on cassette; the tapescript is on pages 106–119.

Units 1 and 2

These are introductory units to encourage the effective use of monolingual dictionaries (especially learners' dictionaries) and to introduce the basic skill of making notes. Unit 2 (Note-making) is designed to provide continuing support to the student, who should refer to it throughout the course.

Unit 3 – 15

Each of these begins with a reading passage on a particular topic, followed by exercises to develop understanding and tasks based on the information given. For certain exercises, locations in the reading passage are indicated by paragraph and then by the line within it. The purpose of this is to encourage the learner to appreciate the role of the paragraph as a unit in written discourse. There is then a short lecture on the same or a closely related topic. The lecture is usually in three parts and is accompanied by note-making exercises. Further tasks follow, some related specifically to the lecture, others depending on an understanding of both the reading passage and the lecture.

Units 16 – 20

The main differences in these units are:

1. The lecture is at the beginning. A very brief outline of its content is given but no further assistance is offered. In this way, the note-making task moves closer to the learning context the student will meet beyond the language class.
2. The reading passages are from authentic sources and are thus more unpredictable in style and difficulty.

Types of activity

Reading

1. Pre-read (Units 3–15)

The purpose of this is to direct the student's attention to the topic, thereby stimulating interest and establishing existing knowledge.

2. Content Skim (Units 3–20)

This is the first exercise to follow the reading passage. Its form varies but it is always intended to develop an overall grasp of the passage, its structure and the key points within it. It also serves to develop the skill of reading at speed.

3. Comprehension Scan (Units 3–20)

This encourages a more detailed appreciation of the text. In some cases it concentrates entirely on direct content judgments (especially of the true/false/insufficient evidence type); in others it aims to develop understanding above sentence level by asking the student to supply the references of pronouns or identify the significance of certain discourse markers.

Listening

4. Decoding (Units 3–15)

One of the problems faced by a non-native speaker when listening to a talk or lecture is that of actually identifying what is being said. This is particularly true of English, where weak forms and contractions are very frequent in the structural parts of the language. Effective understanding depends both on knowledge of what *could* be said and on familiarity with the phonological patterns of connected speech. The gap-filling exercises which accompany Part 1 of these lectures are to help the student in this area of difficulty. They concentrate on the recognition of structural elements but also include certain key lexical items, primarily to reinforce grasp of sound-spelling correspondences. Initial decoding exercises are provided in Unit 1.

5. Controlled Note-making (Units 3–15)

In this type of exercise, an outline of the notes is provided, following the general pattern set out in the unit on note-making (Unit 2). The notes are

then completed during the relevant part of the lecture.

6. Guided Note-making (Units 3–15)

Here, only headings are given for the notes and the student must then make decisions as to what and how much to write.

7. Free Note-making (Units 16–20)

No framework is given for the notes on each lecture and the student is entirely responsible for the form and content of his or her notes.

Note In all cases it is very important that the students have time, before hearing each part of the lecture, to read through the incomplete notes to make sure that they understand what is given. Before completing the decoding exercise, they should try to anticipate, from their knowledge of English, what some of the gap-fillers are likely to be. Also, they will very probably need to hear each section of the lecture more than once. In later units they might be allowed to hear the lecture only once but then, after each part, ask the teacher for information they did not gather. The teacher, in the role of lecturer, would then repeat the required information, preferably in a slightly different form but, of course, with identical content.

Tasks

These complete each unit by giving the students opportunities to practise their skills through fulfilling various tasks in relation to the topic of that unit. They are very varied in form and purpose but certain types recur:

classifying

identifying (often in the form of labelling)

describing

comparing/contrasting

defining

sequencing

following instructions

writing (this task heading is always used where a piece of continuous prose is required, regardless of the functions or operations involved)

A further note to the teacher

This is a skill-based, not a content-based course. The topics have been chosen to be of general interest and at a level which neither excludes those who know little about a particular subject nor insults those who do know about it. Technical terms, where used, are explained or their meanings are clear in context. It is, however, very important that you should be aware of cases where you need to provide support before, during or after a unit. This support may include the pre-teaching of lexical items (especially as a preparation for the lectures) and practice in the recognition and use of structural items and discourse markers. Some of these are indicated at the end of the book, but only you can know precisely the needs of your students.

Note that locations in the reading passages are indicated by paragraph and the line within it. Many students do not realise the importance or structured nature of the paragraph as a unit of meaning. By getting used to seeing paragraphs rather than sentences as the important building blocks in a text, they will learn to read and write more effectively.

The units may vary slightly in the amount of time needed to complete them satisfactorily. On average, two 2 hour sessions per unit should be sufficient. Writing tasks may be completed outside the classroom.

Study is largely a private activity but there are many opportunities in this book for students to work together. Note-making and other tasks should normally be completed by the student working independently, but checking and

deciding on points about which there is disagreement may fruitfully be done in pairs, groups or by general discussion. Some topics may themselves generate debate or the desire for follow-up activities and these provide opportunities to practise speaking skills.

Students should be encouraged to use good monolingual learners' dictionaries. Unit 1 familiarises them with the basis for the effective use of these. When the students have done their best to deduce the meaning of an unfamiliar word from its context, they should feel free to refer to the dictionary.

A note to the student working alone

This course is designed with your needs in mind as well as those of students in class-based courses. This means that, wherever necessary, instructions are given clearly so you know what to do although there is no teacher to ask. The course gives you an opportunity to practise many of the skills you will need in order to study a subject in English. It does not contain traditional language exercises. Make sure you have a good dictionary, of the kind recommended in Unit 1, and a good grammar to refer to when your existing knowledge is not enough. You will need the cassette of the lectures and the tapescript that goes with it. Even without the cassette, however, there are parts of each unit (those based on the reading passage) that you can work with, but the cassette is really necessary if you want to get the best out of this course.

Tapescript

The tapescript of all the talks is at the end of this book.

Key

A Key with answers and suggested answers to the exercises in *Text to Note* is available separately.

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Unit 1

Using Your Dictionary

If you are serious about wanting to learn a language, it is essential that you get for yourself a good dictionary. A pocket dictionary is all right for quick reference when you are moving around and a bilingual dictionary can also be helpful. But you will be helped most to build up your vocabulary in English by studying definitions and explanations *in English*. Excellent dictionaries for the learner are available. They are compiled with your needs in mind and they give a great deal of information about the pronunciation, meaning and usage (grammar) of words and phrases.

In order to use your dictionary effectively, you should make yourself familiar with its apparatus – the system of symbols and abbreviations used in the entries. You will not all have the same dictionary, so this course cannot give you practice in using any particular one. On the other hand, it is possible in this unit to help you understand some of the features of the language better and to illustrate the information contained in a dictionary by giving an example. As you increase your understanding of the language and your skill in using a dictionary, you will feel greater confidence and learn better.

Listening and Pronunciation

In English, the relation between spelling and pronunciation is complicated, but there are clear patterns and rules. Whenever you look up a word in the dictionary, check the pronunciation, look at the word and say it several times. Most dictionaries use a form of the phonetic alphabet. Here are the symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet and words to illustrate the sounds.

1. Look at the symbols while you listen to the tape and repeat the words.

vowels and diphthongs

/i:/ see	/ɜ:/ fur
/ɪ/ sit	/ə/ about, butterfly, paper (the weak sound which is very common in unstressed syllables)
/e/ ten	/eɪ/ wage
/æ/ hat	/əʊ/ home
/ɑ:/ arm	/aɪ/ time
/ɒ/ not	/aʊ/ cow
/ɔ:/ saw	/ɔɪ/ boy
/ʊ/ foot	/ɪə/ fear
/u:/ do	/eə/ there
/ʌ/ nut	/ʊə/ pure

consonants

/p/ pat	/tʃ/ chip	/s/ sip	/n/ now
/b/ bat	/dʒ/ job	/z/ zip	/ŋ/ sing
/t/ tear	/f/ fan	/ʃ/ ship	/l/ load
/d/ dear	/v/ van	/ʒ/ vision	/r/ road
/k/ cold	/θ/ thick	/h/ hope	/j/ yes
/g/ gold	/ð/ that	/m/ man	/w/ was

A dictionary also shows which syllables of words are stressed. Here is one way of marking the main (primary) stress:

/ɪk'sperɪmənt/ (experiment)

The vertical line indicates that this word is stressed on the second syllable: experiment.

2. Here are some more words. Listen to the tape and repeat the words.

/ˈmaɪkrəʊfɪlm/	(microfilm)	/prɪˈzɜ:v/	(preserve)
/ˈkju:bɪkl/	(cubical)	/prezə'veɪʃn/	(preservation)
/ˈkrɪstəlaɪz/	(crystallise)	/prɪˈzɜ:vətɪv/	(preservative)
/ɪk'spləʊʒn/	(explosion)	/ˈsekɹətɹɪ/	(secretary)
/ɪn'spekt/	(inspect)	/sekɹə'teəriəl/	(secretarial)
/prə'pɔ:ʃn/	(proportion)	/ˈmɪstəri/	(mystery)
		/mɪ'stɪəriəs/	(mysterious)

Notice that a change in stress often goes with a change in the pronunciation of some vowels as in *preserve* and *preservation*.

Now practise reading these words and phrases. Check your performance by listening to the tape. Pay special attention to the stresses and the weak forms in unstressed syllables. The words and phrases are printed in the key.

/ti:/	/wɜ:dz/
/ə 'kʌp əv 'ti:/	/'freɪzɪz/
/hi: wɒnts ə 'kʌp əv 'ti:/	/'wɜ:dz ən 'freɪzɪz /
	/ər ɒn 'peɪdʒ 'ten/
/θri:/	/ðə 'wɜ:dz ən 'freɪzɪz ə ɒn 'peɪdʒ 'ten/
/'tʃæptə 'θri:/	
/ɪn 'tʃæptə 'θri:/	
/'daɪəgræm/	
/ðə 'daɪəgræm/	
/ðə 'daɪəgræm ɪn 'tʃæptə 'θri:/	

3. Grammatical or structure words (such as articles, prepositions and pronouns) are usually unstressed. This can make it difficult for the learner to hear exactly what is being said. Some of your note-making tasks will give you practice in hearing these small but essential words (Decoding exercises). If you have problems here, this exercise will help you to identify them. Listen to the tape and write down what you hear. The answers are in the key.

1.
2.
3.

4. time
5.
6.
7. I saw
8. I saw
9. I saw
10. The chemical water.
11. The chemical water.
12. The chemical water.
13. The chemical water.
14. The chemicals water.
15. Not separately, same time.
16.
 this tank
 first solution
 second.
17.
 careful
 mixed up
 do
 explode.
18.
 last part,

 call the supervisor.

Word Building

In English, words are formed from other words in two ways:

- By joining existing words, e.g. class + room = classroom. *Classroom* is a compound word; it is formed by compounding.
- By adding syllables to the beginning or end of a word, e.g. in + effect + ive = ineffective. *Ineffective* is formed by derivation. *In-* and *-ive* are affixes. *In-* is called a prefix and *-ive* a suffix. Generally suffixes change the grammatical class of words (effect = n.; effective - adj.) but not the basic meaning. Prefixes, on the other hand, usually change the meaning.

Here are some common prefixes. Dictionaries usually list these and their meanings:

(negation, not, opposite)

non-	nonsense, non-toxic
dis-	displace, displease
mis-	mislead, misprint
im-	improbable, immobile
in-	insoluble, inoperative
il-	illegitimate, illogical
ir-	irreplaceable, irregular
un-	unbroken, unavoidable

(one)

mono-	monochrome, monorail
-------	----------------------

(two)

bi-	bicycle, bisect
-----	-----------------

(three)

tri-	tricycle, triangle
------	--------------------

(again)

re-	relocate, rejoin
-----	------------------

(change or across)

trans-	transform, transport
--------	----------------------

(out of or former)

ex-	extract, ex-president
-----	-----------------------

Note Not all words beginning with these syllables include these meanings. Even so, if you become familiar with such prefixes — there are a number of others not noted above — you will have another resource for discovering the meanings of unfamiliar words.

Here are some common suffixes, listed according to their grammatical functions:

Nouns

-er, -or	researcher, supervisor
-ist	economist, geologist
-ance, -ence	endurance, permanence
-ment	displacement, government
-ness	hardness, brittleness
-ity	rarity, activity
-ion	connection, provision
-ing	building, meeting

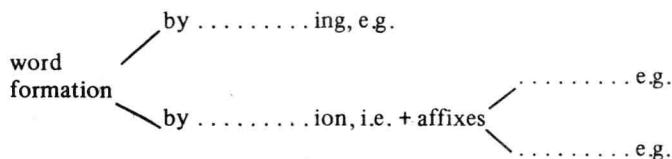
Adjectives

-able, -ible	controllable, edible
-less	wingless, colourless
-ly, -y	lively, hardy
-ive	destructive, active
-ant, -ent	resistant, permanent
-ing	flying, hardening
-ed	hardened, purified

Verbs

-en	harden, darken
-fy, -ify	liquify, solidify
-ate	amalgamate, compensate
-ise, -ize	sterilise, randomize

4. From what you have read about word building in this unit, complete the following classification



5. With the help of your dictionary, write down single words in the blank spaces below. Take care to note any changes in spelling.

- a) To make beautiful. = to
- b) Someone who investigates. = an
- This person's tasks and activities. = his
- c) The property of being flexible. = its
- d) He likes to destroy things. = He's a person.
- e) The slow-worm is a kind of lizard without legs. = It is a lizard.
- f) The heat will make the wax soft. = It will it.
- g) As the wax becomes soft, it changes colour. = The wax changes colour.
- h) When it is soft, the wax is brown. = The wax is brown.
- i) The fact that it is soft makes it suitable. = Its makes it suitable.

6. With the help of your dictionary, write down the grammatical class of each of the words in the left-hand column and in the right-hand column write down the changed form indicated in the brackets.

e.g. erupt	(v.) eruption (noun)
activity	() (adjective)
forecful	() (verb)
audible	() (n.)
aggression	() (adj.)
expand	() (adj.)
red	() (v.)
pressure	() (v.)
cherhist	() (n.)

7. Here is a specimen entry from a dictionary. Study it with the help of the notes below to see what kind of information it gives you. Notice changes of pronunciation and stress in derivatives.

dic-tate /dik'teɪt/ US: 'dɪktet/ vi 1 [VP6A, 2A, 14] ~ (to), say or read aloud (words to be written down by another or others): *to ~ a letter to a secretary. The teacher ~d a passage to the class.* 2 [VP6A, 14] ~ (to), state with the force of authority: *to ~ terms to a defeated enemy.* 3 [VP3A] ~ to, order: *I won't be ~d to, I refuse to accept orders from you.* □ n /'dɪkteɪt/ (usu pl) direction or order (esp given by reason, conscience, etc): *the ~s of common sense. Follow the ~s of your conscience.*
dic-ta-tion /dik'teɪʃn/ n 1 [U] dictating; being dictated to: *The pupils wrote at their teacher's ~.* 2 [C] passage, etc that is dictated.
dic-ta-tor /dik'tetə(r)/ US: 'dɪktetər/ n ruler who has absolute authority, esp one who has obtained such power by force or in an irregular way ~ship /-ʃɪp/ n [C, U] (country with) government by a ~
dic-ta-torial /dɪktə'tɔːriəl/ adj of or like a ~: ~ial government; overbearing; fond of giving orders: *his ~ial manner.* **dic-ta-tori-ally** /-əli/ adv

- a) The dot in the middle of the headword shows where you can break it up if you wish to write part of it on a new line.
 b) US: In American English, the stress is on the first syllable.

- c) vt, vi. It is a verb and can be used transitively or intransitively.
[VP6A, 2A, 14] This refers you to the list of verb patterns and shows that you can use this verb in one of three ways:
He dictated a letter. [6A]
He dictated. [2A]
He dictated a letter to his secretary. [14]
but not *He dictated her a letter.
- d) Three definitions are given. The second one follows the grammatical patterns 6A and 14. The third one follows a new pattern, 3A (i.e. verb + preposition + object): He tried to dictate to me.
- e) ☐ This symbol shows a change of grammatical class. **Dictate** as a noun is stressed on the first syllable.
- f) Notice that **dictation** can be either an uncountable (mass) or a countable (count) noun. The former use is much commoner and therefore is mentioned first.
Both: The next task is dictation. [U]
and: I will return yesterday's dictations. [C]
are possible.

8. Study the entry for **dictator** to see what information is given.

Unit 2

Note-making

To study effectively you must be able to make effective notes. One of the aims of this course is to make you an effective note-maker. *You should study this unit frequently as you work through the book.*

Good notes require speed
 accuracy
 clarity

Note-making is a two-stage process:

1. the notes are taken from
 - a) a piece of writing
 - b) what someone saysor they are written as a plan of
 - c) what you want to write
 - d) what you are going to say;
2. the notes are read and used later.

There are three elements in good note-making.

what you do (activity)	how you do it (skill)
1. ●reading/listening and planning	●accurate analysis of text and planning
2. ●note-making	●rapid note writing
3. ●note reading and development as writing or speaking	●accurate and easy read- back

Look at this example of how notes are taken from a short lecture (a spoken text), then used in the writing of a report.

Text

- 1 Our first experiment illustrating expansion through heat requires the apparatus before us: a ring on a metal stand, a metal ball and a Bunsen burner. Having lit the Bunsen, you see how easily the ball can be passed through the ring. It doesn't touch any part as it goes through. Now, I'm taking it out and
- 5 applying heat from the burner. I'll do that for several seconds . . . Well, let's see what happens when I try to pass the ball through the ring this time. The metal ball will not go through. Since the ring has remained untouched by the heat, we must conclude that the ball has increased in volume, that is to say, it has expanded.

Apparat.	a) ring on stand b) metal ball c) Bun. burn.
Exper.	1. cold ball passed through ring 2. ball heat. sev. secs. 3. " wd. not go through 4. ∴ vol. of ball ↑ — i.e. ball expand.

Lab report

Expansion of Metal

Apparatus	The apparatus consisted of a ring on a stand, a metal ball chained to the top of the stand, and a Bunsen burner.
Experiment	First, the metal ball was passed through the ring without touching any part of it. Then, heat from the Bunsen burner was applied to the ball for several seconds. When an attempt was then made to pass the heated ball through the ring, it was found that it would not go through.
Conclusion	The heat had caused the volume of the metal ball to increase through expansion.

We have looked at the three basic skills of note-making. Here they are related to their sub-skills.

Skill

Sub-skill

