

FOCUS ON ENGLISH

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Introductory Notes

This book is the first in a series of four books written specially for secondary schools. Many special features, especially new international trends in the teaching of English, have been incorporated in the book to make it lively and stimulating to both the teacher and his pupils.

This book contains twenty Teaching Units and four end-of-term Test Units. Each Teaching Unit is divided into:

Comprehension
Language
Oral
Composition

Comprehension

The passages in this book have been very carefully written, selected and adapted from books, magazines, and newspapers for their variety and interest. Many of these passages have a Singapore or Asean background to foster greater interest in and understanding of the pupil's local environment and his neighbours. There are two types of questions at the end of each passage:

- (1) traditional or reflective questions which require complete but brief answers, thus developing the pupil's powers of understanding and expression, and
- (2) multiple-choice questions with four alternatives which test the pupil's understanding of things he reads.

Word study at the end of the passages involves vocabulary in context. The emphasis is on the meaning of words as used in the passages and usage of the words in other contexts. The study of idiomatic and figurative expressions is also included.

Language

A non-formal approach has been adopted wherever and whenever possible. Essential language items must undeniably be taught in order to develop writing skills, but the emphasis is always on functional grammar rather than traditional.

Oral

It is felt that insufficient emphasis is laid on oral work in the teaching of English. As such, this book attempts to fill this need by providing a great variety of oral exercises as well as situational dialogues and phonetics for practice.

Composition

The aims of this section are to teach the basis of organized writing as well as to make composition writing a pleasure. As much guidance as possible is given to the pupil without sacrificing originality in thought and expression. Generally, composition topics are related to the comprehension passages and language items covered in the units.

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The Comic Strip

One of the most popular forms of entertainment is the comic strip. Wherever we find newspapers, we can usually find cartoons or the comics.

- What is a comic strip? Basically, it is a series of drawings presented in frames or boxes called "panels". Certain characters appear and reappear in these panels, unfolding a story which may be complete in a day or may spread over a longer period of time in a sequence of episodes. The speech of each character appears in an outlined space called a "balloon".

The delightful thing about some of the comic strips is that while they appeal to readers of all ages and backgrounds, they also furnish language material that is useful. Many teachers use comic strips in their lessons.

- There are several reasons for their appeal:
- Comic strips contain easily understandable everyday speech.
 - They have simple, clear and attractive drawings.

- 20 (c) They can tell us something (often a great deal) about the culture of the society they represent.
- (d) They are short and complete enough to be read and understood quickly. The main point is often obvious and easy to grasp.

Exercise 1

Answer these questions.

1. What does the comic strip provide?
2. Where can we find comic strips?
3. In the comic strip shown, how many panels are there?
4. What is contained in a "balloon"?
5. Other than being a form of entertainment, what is another important use for the comic strip?
6. Of the four reasons given for the appeal of a comic strip, say which one is most relevant under these situations:
 - (a) when you are looking at a foreign language comic strip.
 - (b) when you are reading an adventure strip in an English paper.
7. What is the moral in "NOL"?
8. What does "NOL" tell about the society represented? Look at the pictures carefully before you answer.

Exercise 2

Choose the best answer.

1. The author
 - A thinks that comic strips are useful.
 - B thinks comic strips are entertaining.
 - C advises everyone to read comic strips.
 - D wants more comic strips in newspapers.
2. Episodes in sequence
 - A tell the same story.
 - B have different characters.
 - C are necessary.
 - D are related to each other.
3. Many teachers use comic strips
 - A because they entertain students.
 - B to teach language.
 - C to be popular with students.
 - D all the time.

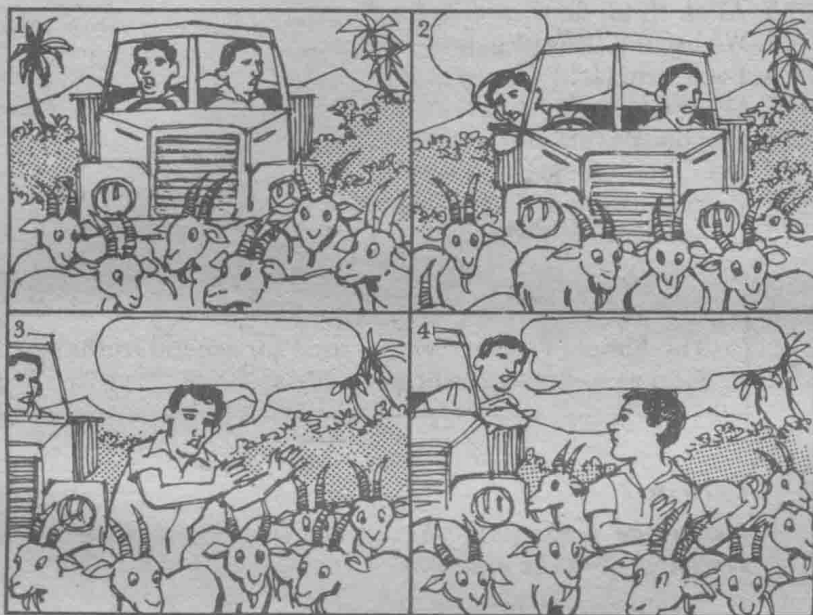
Exercise 3

Answer the following questions.

1. What is the difference between a comic and a cartoon strip?
2. Name other popular forms of entertainment.
3. Fill in the blanks.

The space in each panel contains the speech of the which appear. In "NOL" each panel contains only one This keeps the drawings simple and

4. Complete this comic strip below with words of your own in the balloon space given.



LANGUAGE

A Simple Present Tense

Verbs in the simple present tense may be in the singular or plural.

Plural

Certain characters

We

You

They

Verb

appear

go

furnish

have

Singular

Each character
He
She
It

Verb

appears
goes
furnishes
has

Exercise 1

Use the correct simple present tense form of the verb in brackets. Then complete the sentences.

1. Comic strips (contain)
2. A comic strip (contain)
3. Aisah (find) Mathematics hard
4. We usually (find) English easier
5. Each strip (tell) a story
6. My teacher (use) comic strips
7. The panels (unfold) a story
8. Everybody (enjoy) comics
9. Both young and old (enjoy) comics
10. He (need) to improve

The Simple Present Tense is used for general truths or facts as well as for habitual actions.

Exercise 2

Match the verbs with the occupations listed, then make sentences as in the example.

postman – deliver

A postman delivers letters to our house every day.
(habitual)

Postmen deliver letters to the general public. (general truth)

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. pilot | 6. mechanic |
| 2. tailor | 7. student |
| 3. traffic policeman | 8. doctor |
| 4. chauffeur | 9. salesman |
| 5. baker | 10. interpreter |

- | | |
|-----------|--------|
| drive | sew |
| bake | sell |
| study | direct |
| fly | repair |
| interpret | cure |

B Negative Sentences: Not

Exercise 1

The following verbs are commonly used with "not" to form negative sentences. Add "not" to each of them, then give the short form as in the examples.

		short form	
		(no short form)	
am	am not	isn't	
is	is not		
1. are	7. do	13. would	19. ought
2. was	8. does	14. can	20. need
3. were	9. did	15. could	21. dare
4. have	10. shall	16. may	
5. has	11. should	17. might	
6. had	12. will	18. must	

Exercise 2

Make the following sentences negative. If they do not contain any of the words listed above, use "don't" or "doesn't" as in the example.

Miss Wong *is* a student. She *goes* to school.

Miss Wong *isn't* a student. She *doesn't* go to school.

1. I visit my sister every week.
2. The children are happy with their presents.
3. It is a long ride to Kuala Lumpur.
4. We are ready to go.
5. His father misses his letters very much.
6. I am hard of hearing.
7. There are too many difficulties to overcome.
8. I have some books for you. (use *any*)
9. Do you want to speak to him?
10. He is still on the telephone. (use *anymore*)
11. The girls are with someone. (use *anyone*)
12. He is somewhere in the garden. (use *anywhere*)

C Question-tags

These are tags added to a statement for emphasis.

You have a pen. (*statement*)

You have a pen, haven't you? (*question-tag "haven't you?"*)