

# WE'RE IN BUSINESS

English for commercial practice and international trade



# **WE'RE IN BUSINESS**

English for commercial practice and international trade

Teacher's Book

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Longman 

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## COURSE CONTENT

**We're In Business components:**

Students' Book (SB)

Teacher's Book (TB)

Workbook (WB)

Cassette of listening exercises 

Two cassettes of laboratory drills (LD)

Other abbreviations used in the TB to save space are:

LD1 - laboratory drills tape-script (in TB)

T teacher

S student

SS students

T-S teacher-student (see note on pairwork on TB pages xvii-xx)

*We're In Business* is a course in English for commercial practice and international trade at early intermediate level.

The course is aimed at SS embarking on the study of English for a business career. It can be used either as a sequel to *We Mean Business* or independently of it. The starting level is post-elementary/early intermediate. However, SS with a greater knowledge of English will also find this book useful as an introduction to the business and commercial information it contains.

The course is designed to provide between 60 and 90 contact hours plus homework, although the amount of time it takes to cover the material will vary from class to class and will depend on whether the additional exercises and optional material are used.

**Language content**

The grading of the language content is structural, each structure being contextualised in a specific situation and expressing a specific language function. The practice of question forms (which are often neglected in T-S interaction) is greatly increased by the emphasis throughout the course on pairwork. SS are also expected to give short natural answers to questions, rather than 'full sentences' for the sake of extra structure practice which would be highly unnatural. The structural approach is simplified by the introduction of only one main concept at a time for any structure and the emphasis throughout is on the acquisition of relevant and useful language practised in a meaningful context.

Much of the classwork is designed to improve SS' communicative ability, fluency and oral mastery of the language. However, throughout the course, there are also exercises which highlight the skills of reading, writing, listening and pronunciation. The aim within each unit has been to provide a variety of interesting exercises which lend themselves to stimulating classroom

exploitation, but which are flexible enough to be used in a variety of teaching systems. Suggestions for presentation and exploitation of the material, suitable h/w activities and further activities are given in the TB. The contents list sets out the language content of the course in detail and the aim of each exercise is stated in the TB.

### Business and commercial content

Business English is the language used by people involved in business. Commerce is the study of the procedures which are followed in trade and related activities. This book combines a course in commercial procedures (and an introduction to the related vocabulary) with practice of the written and spoken language typical of business people. Throughout the course there is an emphasis on helping SS understand why the commercial procedures are as they are (they have all evolved from the needs of people engaged in trade). This will help SS (a) remember the information and (b) reconstruct any information they might forget. The commercial and business language is simplified; introduced gradually and then recycled and revised throughout the course.

Particular attention is paid to the introduction, and understanding, of a wide range of documentation (which SS are otherwise unlikely to see) and to the accompanying correspondence. A substantial number of forms are in the WB, to give SS the opportunity to practise filling them in.

Many TT of commercial English have a literary or academic, rather than a commercial background. If you are unsure of the business or commercial content, work through the exercises in the SB as if you are a S (a) to familiarise yourself with the information and (b) to give you an idea of how difficult or easy the exercise might be for the SS. Then read the additional background information in the TB. Remember that the commercial information in this book is deliberately simplified. Once SS are familiar with the basic information and vocabulary in this book they will find it easier to cope with the complexities of each subject area they need to study in depth later.

Note that the commercial content of this book is accurate according to British law at the time of going to press. However laws change, practice changes with time and procedures vary from country to country and even between companies.

For further practice in office skills and numbers see *Office Practice* (Longman *World at Work* Series) by the same author and *Count Me In* by Steve Elsworth (Longman). For more specialised subjects see *Import Export* by Vicki Hollett and *Banking* by Lynne Rushton and Tony Hopwood (both in the Longman *World at Work* Series). These books are all at early intermediate level and their design and methodological approach is consistent with that in this course.

## INTRODUCTION

### We're In Business: Students' Book

The SB contains 15 main units, three consolidation units and the listening cassette tapescript. The contents list reproduced in both SB and TB details the language and business content of each unit.

**Main units:** The first exercise in each main unit introduces the main topic and language area exploited more fully in the rest of the unit. The linguistic and commercial information is then built up gradually while practising a variety of language skills and giving SS experience of some of the sorts of tasks which they are likely to be asked to perform if they work in a business environment.

The main language points are summarised in the language notes at the end of each unit. SS can be directed to the language notes to learn selected items before they are presented or practised in class or they can be studied after the classwork (where the emphasis is on communicative oral work) to help SS grasp the grammatical 'rules' and patterns in the language. These notes only reflect language presented in each unit and frequently simplify the grammatical content to make it more accessible to SS, so they cannot be considered comprehensive or an alternative to a grammar book.


**Consolidation units:** These three units are based on 'news items' taken from the 'radio' (on cassette) and 'newspaper cuttings'. They revise and consolidate structures and lexis presented in previous units in the context of world and local news. No new structures are presented in these units, but SS are exposed to a wider business context and a greater range of vocabulary. They also include a number of 'articles' in the form of cartoons or puzzles. SS can be left to enjoy these alone (the answers are given in the TB for interested SS) or they can be exploited in class. The focus in these units is on the receptive listening and reading skills.

Newspapers and radio news programmes are a rich source of business language frequently available to foreign learners in their own countries, yet both are difficult to understand without help. The consolidation units provide a graded introduction to the news media and many of these exercises could be adapted to exploit real programmes and articles.

**Cassette tapescript:** SS should be discouraged from reading the tapescript until after they have done the relevant listening exercises. Scripts are printed in full only if they are not included in the body of the SB (the introductory exercises for each unit, for example, are not printed again in the tapescript). Certain of them are printed only in the TB to stop SS taking answers directly from the tapescript.

There is also a word list containing the commercial vocabulary introduced in the book and a list of the irregular verbs used in the course.

### We're In Business: Recordings

**Listening cassette (SS):** The listening cassette is an integral part of the course, as throughout there is a systematic approach to improving the listening skill. To improve SS' ability to cope with the spoken English they are likely to encounter in real life, some of the characters speak with a slight regional or American accent, but none of these is strong enough to interfere with understanding. On the cassette are recorded the introductory exercise in each unit plus all other listening exercises marked in the SB and TB with the symbol .

**Laboratory drills cassette:** The LDs are designed to be used in a laboratory where SS can record their responses on tape, but they can also be used in a listening laboratory or in the classroom. The drills are three-phase: prompt, space for SS' response, correct response. The pace of the drills varies, but all the sentences are spoken at a natural speed for native speakers. This may seem fast to foreign learners at first, but they are more likely to achieve natural intonation patterns if they try to imitate the models exactly. All the drills are spoken in a standard southern educated English accent, although different male and female voices are used for variety.

Drills have the same number as the exercise they refer to. Not all exercises are exploited with a drill and some exercises have more than one drill (numbered A, B, C etc). There are no drills relating to the consolidation unit exercises. The LDT is in the TB and the recorded examples for each drill are printed in the SB immediately after the related exercise. Some of the drills are comprehension exercises relating to the SB and SS are sometimes referred to prompts in the exercises, so they should always take their textbooks into the laboratory with them. However, since the drills are to improve oral/aural competence, whenever possible SS should do the drills with their books closed.

Although the drills are an optional part of the course, they are recommended for use with SS or classes who benefit from individual reinforcement of language. The drills allow SS to concentrate on oral precision, especially where the emphasis in classwork is on communication. Not all classes will need to do every drill and the T is recommended to choose those drills most relevant to his/her own SS. Different SS could well do different drills according to their particular needs and problems (the aim of each drill is stated in the LDT).

Drills can be done before or after classroom practice, but the structures and vocabulary they contain should be presented

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before they are attempted. TT should refer to the LDT in the TB before SS do the drills as they do not always follow the same format as the classroom exercises and may need particular preparation. TT might also use the LD cassettes in class as a model for intonation patterns, the pronunciation of names etc.

To save space, examples (which are repeated on the cassettes) are not written out again in the LDT

### We're In Business: Workbook

Although the WB is an optional course component in that its main function is to consolidate and give further practice in the language and business content presented in the SB, it is strongly recommended that SS use it since it also contains several forms and documents which could not be reproduced in the SB for reasons of space.

The WB also contains three tests to correspond to the consolidation units in the SB. These cover structural items in previous units and may be used either to check attainment after the course of study or to diagnose areas of weakness.

After each test is a list of the commercial vocabulary introduced in the previous five units in case SS want to write their own explanatory notes.

### We're In Business: Teacher's Book

The TB contains:

- Course contents list

- Introduction: Course content

- Notes on methodology and contents

- 18 units to correspond to the 18 units in the SB and WB, each containing:

- Contents list for the unit
- Answers and teaching notes
- Suggested additional activities
- LDT and notes on LD (except for consolidation units)
- WB answers

For ease of reference, answers are written immediately after each exercise heading. Where the exercise follows the same format as the LD, the T is referred to the LDT for answers, but sample answers to free writing exercises such as letters and reports are intended as a guide only. The aim of each exercise is stated before any teaching suggestions and where exercises may not in themselves be sufficient presentation of new language, a method of presentation is suggested. Although the teaching suggestions reflect how the course was intended to be used, TT should exploit the material in any way appropriate to their SS.



Language explanations are given as a guide to the level of explanation necessary for SS. They are simplified and necessarily incomplete, so TT are recommended to use a grammar book such as *A Communicative Grammar of English* by Geoff Leech and Jan Svartvik (Longman) for further reference.

Although the medium of instruction is intended to be English, there are places in the course where certain vocabulary items are most simply explained by translation. With multi-national classes, SS should be allowed to use native-language-English dictionaries at this point. As much as possible, though, SS should be referred to a simplified English-English dictionary such as the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*. The T is recommended to spend some time familiarising the SS (perhaps with the help of the accompanying booklet) with this invaluable source of self-help. The *Longman Dictionary of Business English* may also prove useful to SS and T.

## INTRODUCTION TO METHODOLOGY

The following notes explain some of the ideas underlying the material in this course and give suggestions for exploiting the material to best advantage.

- The medium of instruction in the SB is English and the course was designed to be taught in English.
- The course aims to give SS as much opportunity to speak as possible so there are numerous exercises which require pairwork and groupwork. The T should also get into the habit of *eliciting* information from the SS by asking judicious questions rather than telling them everything. Eliciting also has the advantage of checking whether the SS have understood as you go along.
- SS are expected to take responsibility for their own learning, to be self-reliant and to *think* about what they are learning. The T can encourage this attitude by giving them *time* to think before demanding answers and asking questions rather than telling them information.
- If SS are speaking more, they are likely to make numerous mistakes. If the T is not to discourage them from speaking, correction should be kept to a minimum when the aim of the exercise is fluency and the expression of ideas, but can be quite strict when a new language item is being practised.
- When any new item is being taught (be it language or commerce) the book aims to *elicit* from the SS what they know already, get them to *extend* this knowledge by thinking more closely about it and then adding something new. This can be achieved by asking questions about the SS' own experience, then asking 'loaded' questions which lead SS logically to the right answer and finally to giving further information.

Suggestions for specific types of question are given in the TB in the detailed notes after the relevant exercises.

One technique for encouraging SS to think about a subject and to pool the collective knowledge of the class (often surprisingly comprehensive) is *brainstorming*. This involves asking SS to work in small groups and come up with as many ideas as they can in a short time (three to five minutes) on a given subject (eg *cheques* in Exercise 2.8). Each group then quickly explains its ideas to the rest of the class. The conversation can be in the SS native language and the emphasis is on the pooling of the ideas rather than the accuracy of the language.

Working on the assumption that SS should be able to understand more than they can write or say (they can to some extent control and simplify the language they produce, but they have no control over the complexity of written and oral material they

are likely to come across), most of the listening material and some of the reading texts in the course are graded at a higher level than the language SS are expected to produce. To counterbalance this and to make the language more accessible, the exploitation exercises are deliberately simple.

Most of the exercises are designed to encourage SS to skim for general meaning or to scan/listen for specific information. In both cases, SS should not worry about words and expressions they do not understand as long as this does not interfere with the task they have to do. Essential vocabulary that SS need to know (and which may have to be pre-taught) in order to carry out the task is stated in the relevant TB notes. TT should not translate the text.

The aim of the course is not that SS should acquire the accent of a native speaker, but that they should be readily understood by other speakers of English. There is not time in a course of this nature to cover in detail all aspects of pronunciation, but this book does try to awaken an awareness of those aspects of pronunciation which prove the greatest barrier to communication. The aim has been to integrate the teaching of pronunciation with other aspects of language and it will help SS if each new structure is presented with a definite stress and intonation (the LD cassettes can be used to provide a model). The emphasis should be first that SS can hear and identify aspects of pronunciation and then that they try to imitate them. The model provided on the LD cassettes is an educated southern English accent. Phonetic script is not used much in the course, but TT might wish SS to understand the phonetic script used in their dictionaries. In this case, the T can introduce the script gradually as work is done on individual sounds.

### Puzzles

There are a number of word puzzles in the book which some TT may feel to be unnecessarily frivolous. In fact, although they are meant to be fun and to enliven what can be quite a dull subject, they do have a serious methodological value. They all encourage SS to concentrate on the form and meaning of specific vocabulary and many of them require SS to look back at a reading text or document and think carefully about the meaning of words in context.

### Pairwork

Many of the exercises in this course are marked to be done in pairs. Some of the reasons for this are:

- When practising structures, a stimulus and response more closely resembles a conversation than the series of unconnected utterances in most drills. SS are helped to retain the meaning of a structure when it is in context (even a minimal context). This feeling is enhanced by giving SS a choice of response wherever possible.

- Two SS working together are more likely to arrive at correct utterances or solutions than individual SS working alone (as the English saying goes: Two heads are better than one).
- SS can frequently learn as well from one another as from the teacher.
- If SS work together you remove the testing element (with possible failure in front of classmates) that always exists when SS are asked to work alone. This usually has a good effect on SS' confidence and thereby on their linguistic performance. (SS are still required to work individually and produce correct written work for h/w.)
- The whole class gets the chance to practise new structures several times in a short space of time rather than the common T-S situation where a maximum of six SS say sentences while the rest of the class loses interest.
- The focus of the lesson is moved away from the T, which is good for the sake of variety, but also because it puts the responsibility for learning more obviously where it belongs - on the SS.
- The T is free to move around the class helping SS with learning difficulties.

In order to achieve this happy state, there are several simple rules to follow. Everyone must know the form and meaning of the structure they are practising, so this must have been presented beforehand (suggestions are given in the TB) or must be evident from the exercise itself. SS must also be clear about the exact form of the exercise and what they are expected to do, so the stages of setting up pairwork must make this evident:

- Indicate the exercise in the book.
- Give the first stimulus and elicit the correct response from a S (T-S). Give the second stimulus and elicit the response from another S.
- Indicate two other SS (who are not sitting next to one another) to give the next stimulus and response (S-S, also called 'open pairs'). Indicate two other SS sitting apart to do further stimuli-responses.

Up to this stage it is important that everyone hears and pays attention to what is said and that the T corrects SS who make mistakes with the form of the drill or with the structure.

- Indicate that SS work in pairs with the person sitting next to them (SS-SS, or 'closed pairs'). Make sure that SS know to take turns so that both get a chance to say the stimuli and both to say the responses.

It is not necessary to work through the whole exercise before SS work in closed pairs. Once a couple of examples have been done, SS should be able to work out further examples for themselves. Occasionally move SS round so that they work with

different partners (a) for variety and (b) so that stronger and weaker SS can help or learn from one another.

### Controlled dialogues

Short dialogues are introduced as language which SS might find useful. It is therefore important that they know them by heart and do not simply read them from the book (which also encourages poor intonation). Some dialogues are presented as such, some drills are really in the form of short dialogues and some of the sections from the introductory picture dialogues (or from the tape) are also suitable to teach to SS. With any dialogue, **make sure SS are familiar with the main four or five lines by following this procedure** (the example is taken from the introductory dialogue to Unit 5):

- Make noise of ringing phone and mime picking up receiver. Elicit suggestions from SS as to what you answer, eg *Mrs X here/76543* (your telephone number) etc. Pick up one acceptable form and ask individual SS to repeat the line.
- Indicate one of the SS to say the line to you and reply with: *Oh hello. Can I speak to Lis please?* (T-S). Repeat this with another S. Drill this second line with all the SS at once. Then you say the first line to a S who should reply with line two.
- Indicate two SS who should say the lines to one another (S-S). Practise these two lines with as many SS as you feel necessary.
- Bring the attention back to yourself and say line one to a S who replies with line two. You then introduce line three in its rightful position: *I'm afraid she's not here at the moment. Can I take a message?* Drill this line on its own, then practise the three lines T-S-T and then S1-S2-S1.
- Bring the attention back to yourself. Indicate a S to say line one to you. Reply with line two so the S says line three, then introduce line four (*No. I'll ring her back later.*) and practise as above.

Once the SS know the four lines you can introduce substitutions, alterations or additions.

For longer dialogues you can allow SS to make notes of the most important words in each line as a memory-jogger.

An alternative presentation is to give one half (alternate lines) of the dialogue to half the class to learn and prepare and the other half to the rest of the SS (you will need to work with both groups at this initial learning stage). SS then mingle (as in a whole class activity - see page xx) and say the dialogue with SS from the other group until they have heard it often enough to have learnt the other half. You can move around the class and help out with obvious difficulties. SS can then try saying the half of the dialogue they did not learn originally until all the SS can take either part.

## Groupwork, whole class activities, roleplay, simulations

With all these activities, as with pairwork or groupwork of any kind, the important thing is that SS know (a) what it is they are supposed to be doing, how they can do it and what the aim of the activity is, ie the rules of the activity (b) the language they need to do it. Note that all the SS are working at the same time and that the T is free to move round the groups giving help or noting language errors which may need work later.

When SS are working in small groups (eg Exercise 9.10), the ideal number of people in each group is probably between four and seven. The T should also decide which SS to put together – sometimes random groups, sometimes brighter SS with slower SS so that they can help or learn from one another, sometimes same ability groups together so brighter SS can go further ahead while slower SS are forced to rely on themselves more etc.

To arrange random groups, decide how many groups you want (eg 5 groups of 6 SS). Ask SS to number off round the class from 1 to 5, 1 to 5 etc until everyone has a number between one and five. Then tell all the number ones to get together as a group, all the number twos to be another group, etc. (If you later want these groups to form new groups, eg 10 groups of three SS, ask them to number off again from 1 to 10, 1 to 10 etc group by group. SS then move to their new groups with people of the same number.)

In a *whole class activity*, all the SS move around the classroom to come into contact with as many other SS as possible with whom to practise specific language in a short time (a maximum time for this kind of activity is ten minutes). This is a *practice* activity so it is essential that the language has been pre-taught.

A big advantage of this kind of activity is that SS seem content to repeat phrases again and again in order to complete the task where they would be bored by saying the same phrases three or four times in a more conventional drill. Whole class activities can also have a revitalising effect on a class which has been sitting still for a long period of time.

The two problems which TT frequently mention in connection with pairwork, groupwork and whole class activities are noise and discipline. All language TT can differentiate between 'productive sound' and 'unproductive noise' and so step in to help SS who do not appear to be working on the task in hand. Given that it is generally accepted that SS need a great deal of practice if they are to learn a language effectively, the problem is mainly one of convincing colleagues that these activities are the most effective and efficient ways of giving large numbers of SS maximum practice in minimum time. Colleagues rarely question the efficacy of chorus-drilling, which, while it is not a

technique to be ignored, is not as effective as these other three. Similarly, there will always be some discipline problems whatever teaching techniques you employ. In order to minimise the disruptive effect on the rest of the class, SS who will not join in with these activities can be given extra written work to do alone while the other SS carry on with their tasks. The SS being disciplined still have the chance to practise language (in a different way) and perhaps they will decide that the other activities look more fun and so opt to join in productively on subsequent occasions.

*Roleplay* involves SS in acting out situations from outside the classroom in order to practise the language they will need when they are in that situation. It does not involve any great acting ability, nor does it imply that SS have to 'learn lines'. SS will have to roleplay in a *simulation* which is the contrived situation, a sort of game. The rules for all the simulations in this book are given clearly in the SB and any particular information is given in the TB. Apart from this follow the basic rules for setting up any kind of activity where SS are left to themselves. Although all the SS are working at once, it is possible to stop all the groups except one so that everyone concentrates on the work of these few SS for a short while. See also the note after Exercise 9.10 on TB page 75 about individual SS swapping roles in the middle of a conversation.

### Oral (and written) presentation

In business (and in commercial English examinations) people are frequently expected to be able to present information clearly. However when people present information orally they can react to some extent to the reaction of their listeners so if people seem not to have understood the speaker might explain again in different words or give examples to make the point clear. Because a reader can go back and read a written text as often as necessary to get the information, a written text is generally shorter and written without repetition. SS are given a number of chances to practise giving oral presentations (with written back up) throughout the course and it is not necessary for every S to give a presentation every time. However the more presentations each S does, the better they will become at them. All the SS should do the suggested written back up.

Do not tell the SS in advance who will be giving the presentations so that they all prepare them. Do also tell the SS to note the instruction in the SB not simply to read a prepared passage. They can make notes to remind themselves of the main points they want to make, but they should be prepared to put the ideas into English while they are talking.

There is enough information in the SB for SS to be able to give a short presentation on the given subjects, but you could also

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encourage SS to research additional information or use diagrams on the board to make their talk more interesting.

### **Extra teacher preparation**

Exercises which may need preparatory work or setting up by the T before the lesson are listed below:

Exercise 2.9 A simulation: Buying and selling

Exercise 3.12 Oral (and written) presentation

Exercise 4.7 Correspondence

Exercise 4.11 A simulation: Broking and underwriting

Exercise 6.11 Oral (and (written) presentation

Exercise 7.12 Oral presentation

Exercise 8.10 Oral (and written) presentation

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Exercise 9.10 Roleplay

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