



RATIONALE

Introduction

Advanced English B2 is a blended-learning course designed for students working towards achieving the B2 level for English as described by the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The B2 level refers to independent users of the language who can understand main ideas of complex texts, can interact fluently and spontaneously with native speakers, can produce clear, detailed texts on a variety of subjects, and can present a point of view on a range of subjects. The course develops students' knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, as well as their proficiency in reading, listening, speaking, and writing. It is made up of online and printed materials.

There are 12 modules in both the online and printed materials. Ten of the modules, covering a variety of themes and content areas, contain reading texts and questions, vocabulary practice, grammar explanations and practice, and presentation and practice in listening, speaking and writing. The other two modules are review modules.

The module themes are the same for the online and print components of the course, but the reading and listening texts, vocabulary and grammar activities are different.

1. Travel & Tourism
2. Man & Animal
3. Education
4. Food & Nutrition
5. Entertainment
6. Review 1 – Modules 1-5
7. Media Today
8. Family Relationships
9. The World of Sports
10. Nature & the Environment
11. Changes & Challenges
12. Review 2 – Modules 7-11

Each online module contains five situations: Reading, Listening, Speaking, Writing (corresponding to the four areas of English language proficiency), and a Language Review. The print materials aligned to each module have five sections: Reading, Listening, Speaking, Writing, and Assessing Your Learning. These afford further opportunities for learning and practice by offering additional texts, activities, and tasks. All online activities are checked automatically, giving students the chance to correct themselves. The print materials include an Answer Key with an answer analysis for the Reading and Listening, as well as a model plan for Writing which can be found in the Teacher's Zone.



It is recommended that students work with both the online and print materials in each module. As a blended-learning course, it is designed to allow both independent online learning and in-class work. The online materials are best suited for independent work with minimal teacher guidance, while the print materials can be done as teacher-led lessons or independently by the students, or in a suitable combination as the teacher sees fit. Since the online component is the focal part of the course, it is recommended to work first with the online materials of the module and then to follow up with the print materials, especially if the students are working independently throughout the course. However, it is possible to reverse this order as each of the components, online and print, is self-standing.

Reading

The reading texts are representative of a variety of text types: full-length articles, factual accounts, narratives, and short texts. Students are exposed to relevant reading comprehension strategies such as reading for main ideas and details, following the development of events by paying attention to text cohesion and coherence, understanding the meaning of words from context, inferring, and recognizing opinion, attitude, and point of view.

In both the online and print components of the course, vocabulary relevant to understanding the reading text is presented and practiced before reading. Most of the targeted lexical items are at B2 level. Some lexical items that are related to the topic but are from a higher level may be presented for active practice, but in most cases these are glossed (at point of use online, or in the Glossary on the relevant printed page) and are not included on the active list.

Each reading text is followed by a reading comprehension activity based on one of three task types: multiple choice, multiple matching, or gapped text. The reading text in the print materials also has open-ended questions for class discussion or for students to think about if working independently. Reading strategies relevant to each text are explained online. Tips relating to each activity type and/or to specific questions are presented in the print materials, together with a summary of each reading strategy.

In every module, the reading comprehension texts become the springboard for acquiring, practicing and applying level-appropriate vocabulary, as well as for the presentation and practice of key grammar points.

Vocabulary

The lexical items include both individual words and phrases. For each reading text, 6-8 families of words were chosen as the focus for word expansion. Similarly, one or more groups of phrasal verbs, collocations or expressions were chosen for vocabulary expansion. Students learn between 50 and 60 lexical items in each online module and in each print module. Students working online can further review and practice vocabulary in the general Wordlist, filtered by module and situation, or as an overall list of words. All vocabulary practice done online includes pronunciation practice and feedback.



Grammar

Two grammar points are presented in each module, reflecting specific grammatical structures and functions found in each of the reading texts. The first grammar point usually relates to a set of tenses or a main structure such as the passive, reported speech, or conditionals. The second focuses on topics such as prepositions, adjectives and adverbs, inversions, or tag questions. The same grammar points apply to both the online and print components of a given module, but the examples and activities differ. In this way, the program as a whole provides opportunities for reviewing and revisiting the grammar topics in a contextualized way. Expanded explanations are presented in the Grammar Index along with additional grammar practice for each topic.

Listening

A variety of listening genres are presented in the course, including interviews, talks, short monologues and conversations. Each listening task, in both the online and print materials, is preceded by a short introduction to the topic and a listening strategy. Students get ready for the listening task by practicing a listening strategy such as highlighting keywords. The listening comprehension questions are based on three task types: multiple choice, sentence completion, or multiple matching. Opportunity is given for students to analyze their answers in relation to the script by looking at the correct answers in the listening script. The questions appear alongside the script with tips analyzing the answers and the corresponding strategies.

Speaking

Speaking is practiced in one of four contexts: personal interviews, comparing pictures, collaborative decision-making and discussion. The speaking tasks are based on a variety of speaking skills, such as comparing and contrasting, speculating, expressing an opinion, and agreeing and disagreeing. Each online speaking situation or equivalent section in the print materials begins with a short introduction to the topic and a presentation of the lexical items needed for the activity.

In the online component, the lexical items are presented in a Words screen that includes topic and functional vocabulary. Students are presented with two pre-speaking activities, one of which is recorded and focuses on accuracy, and one which offers students more extended language. In the final online activity, students listen, read and record themselves. Please note that there are 10 additional speaking tasks in the Teacher's Zone.



Writing

The writing tasks focus on a variety of genres, including essays, articles, formal and informal emails or letters, reviews, and reports. Each task begins with an introduction to the topic or the genre. Students get ready by analyzing a plan based on a model for that genre. They learn, practice, and apply relevant writing strategies. The writing preparation continues with a presentation of the topic vocabulary and expressions relevant to the genre. The writing task itself takes students through a number of steps that are important to the writing process, such as analyzing the task, brainstorming ideas, following a detailed plan, and editing with the help of a checklist. A second model is provided for further support.

Language Review and Assessing Your Learning

Each online Language Review has three activities, focusing on the vocabulary, grammar and skills that have been taught in the module. These activities give students the opportunity to review what they have learned in the module. In the print component of the program, the section Assessing Your Learning presents the content of the module and allows the students to check what they have learned.