

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME FOR ENGLISH AS A FIRST
FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN THE FOURTH AND FIFTH YEARS OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL

TO BE INSERTED AFTER PAGE 130/29

IN

"HARMONIZED TIMETABLES AND SYLLABUSES"

(1972 edition)

Approved by the Board of Governors at its Ostend meeting
on 25 and 26 May 1976

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME FOR ENGLISH AS A FIRST FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN THE
FOURTH AND FIFTH YEARS OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL

1. INTRODUCTION

2. OBJECTIVES

3. METHODOLOGY

Listening

Spoken English

Reading

Writing

Evaluation and Assessment

4. CONTENT

Appendix on Additional Reading Material

I. INTRODUCTION

The programme for the fourth and fifth years is provisional. The compi' lack of previous experience in this area means that its suggestions must be experimental and that individual teachers must be allowed to interpret them with a certain degree of freedom.

Bearing this in mind, however, there are arguments in favour of limiting fourth- and fifth-year ~~work to one~~ book of the core-course for each year. Thus fourth-year children would work on L.G. Alexander "Look, Listen and Learn" Book 2 and each teacher would be expected to undertake additional consolidation work without actually starting on Book 3 of the course until the fifth year. This leaves ample scope for the individual teacher to exploit and extend the scheme while he limits himself to "a book a year".

II. OBJECTIVES

Fourth year

The fourth-year course should aim at a controlled increase in structures and vocabulary with constant revision of the patterns encountered in the first three years.

The reading and writing scheme should consolidate the basic skills of understanding and speaking already acquired and reinforce the new patterns. Pupils should be prepared for more advanced and varied reading in the fifth year. A pleasant and spontaneous atmosphere should, however, continue to prevail.

Fifth year

The course should now take into consideration the child's gradually maturing interests.

Progress is achieved through a change in subject matter, in centres of interest and in the method of presentation. Consolidation and expansion in the form of guided reading and writing should lead to a more creative use of the language.

By the end of the fifth year the pupil should have attained a level of proficiency in English, that will enable him, within his range of interest and experience, to communicate intelligibly and confidently in simple English.

During these two years attention should continue to be paid to developing the pupil's knowledge of the social and cultural background of the English-speaking world.

3. METHODOLOGY

(General recommendations)

Listening

The importance of listening as a key-activity in the language-learning process has been referred to in the General Introduction to the programme for the first three years (see page 130/14).

During the fourth and fifth years, pupils must be given the opportunity to listen to more difficult language with increasing emphasis on comprehension through context. The use of an audio-visual method demands especially attentive listening. Lexical items and structures are presented in the form of dialogues, plays, stories, poems, songs, rhymes and games. The pupils must be encouraged to listen carefully to others using the language, individually and in group, in order to promote accuracy and self-correction. Much of this practice can be given in an interesting way through group activities. A variety of aural and visual aids (such as the "Language Master", tape-recorder and head-phones, record-player, film-strip, radio and where possible, the language laboratory) is necessary in order to promote interest and good listening.

Spoken English

The over-all objective of teaching spoken English is the facilitation and extension of communication.

The immediate aims are ready comprehension and fluent, clear speech.

Good speech depends on attentive listening and understanding.

Pronunciation : In practice, pupils will tend to copy their teacher's pronunciation and other speech characteristics.

The variety of vowel sounds peculiar to the English language should be taught in all their natural forms (e.g. unstressed vowel-sounds such as the neutral vowel - etc). The same applies to consonants that offer particular difficulties.

Teachers should pay special attention to the varying difficulties which arise out of differing linguistic backgrounds.

Stress and Intonation : Differences in stress and intonation should be kept in mind by the teacher, and emphasised when this is appropriate. Pupils must be given practice in saying phrases and sentences so that they acquire a feeling for what might be called "contextual stress" ; failure to achieve this certainly retards their comprehension of every-day English speech, and may restrict their own spoken English to a stilted variety.

While Primary School children may well be too young to cope with (or need) intonation pattern drills, they do need, by the fourth and fifth years, to recognise that there are intonation patterns, so that they may perceive them when they hear English spoken, and begin to associate these patterns with meaning. Such patterns require to be demonstrated, and pupils taught to pronounce them correctly.

Method : The teaching of spoken English should make use of all forms in which English is used orally, keeping in mind the children's age group and interests.

Reading

The purpose of reading in English is manifold. Reading can be a means of obtaining a great deal of pleasure in any language, and this is equally true of reading in a foreign language. However, reading for these classes should be

much more than merely a source of pleasure : it is a very important way of consolidating structures and vocabulary already encountered orally. Reading is also a means of introducing new themes and expanding structures and vocabulary.

Later reading will become a means of gaining factual information, of appreciating literature and of generally helping the children who study English as a "living language" to understand the cultural background of the English-speaking world.

Therefore, it is important that the children should enjoy reading and develop good reading habits as early as possible.

Reading is not an entirely new skill to these children, since they have been reading in their mother tongue for at least three years. The teacher should be aware of those children who already have reading problems in their own language. Difficulties arising out of unfamiliar vowel- and consonant-combinations need special attention (see also under "Spoken English").

Reading is a skill which has to be mastered fairly early in most courses (e.g. L.G. Alexander : "Look, Listen and Learn" Book 1, Unit 14 -- third year). Courses usually recommend the parallel use of "link readers" at various set stages. Therefore, a classroom library should be started with structured readers, and also with suitable reading schemes used in the teaching of English mother-tongue, sometime during the fourth year. Use should be made of as much reading material as possible to consolidate words met and also to vary the pace and form of a lesson (see appendix on suitable additional reading material such as flash-cards etc),.

In the fourth and fifth years opportunities for reading beyond the structural readers provided should be given to those children who are able.

Reading should go outside their active use of the language. By the end of the fifth year it is to be hoped that a broad range of suitably selected books will be available for use in either the suggested library or in a "book corner". Additional reading schemes and reading material in general would have to be checked for lexical problems, new structures, reading age and interest level.

The reading in the fourth and fifth years should lead to a more confident use of the language. At the same time, it is important that reading be guided and that adequate steps be taken to ensure that the children comprehend what they read. All forms such as silent personal reading, group-reading and reading aloud need to be encouraged. The teacher has to ensure that the intonation and rhythm of the language are not lost through hesitation and that pronunciation remains of an acceptable standard. Reading should be regarded as an important means of broadening the pupil's command of English, of helping to develop fluent writing and of extending his general knowledge and his background knowledge of the English-speaking world.

Writing

The skill of writing will have been introduced in a simple form during the third year.

Written work must at all times during the primary course, follow the mastery of the spoken word and familiarity with the reading of the word.

Reading and writing skills are inextricably woven, and although reading will precede writing skills, the intense enthusiasm of most children to write down what they can read should not be totally ignored or worse still actively discouraged.

Flash cards will have been used in the third year and a careful selection of these will provide a sound introduction to the skill of writing. Used as simple captions for drawings in scrapbooks, for example, these familiar words will soon be fluently, confidently and correctly written. The "Pupil's Workbook" of the core course (Workbook II) can then be tackled with more confidence and success.

Phonetic spelling lists and simple dictations based upon these will prove a useful reinforcement to writing skills. Towards the end of the fourth year the children should have mastered the writing skills to the point where simple "guided" composition -- perhaps allied to pictures -- should be introduced. The transition from fourth to fifth would see the introduction of simple written comprehension.

The final stage, at the end of the fifth year, would be the introduction of

free creative writing, in which the pupil is, by the use of known structures and vocabulary, able to express himself in good, fluent, simple English. Correction of written work should be dealt with promptly and constructively i.e. positively rather than negatively. The merits of occasional selective marking need to be considered.

Evaluation and Assessment

The recommended core-course provides built-in techniques for evaluation and assessing the pupil's progress.

If these are found to be inadequate the teacher must devise his own method of continuous assessment of both oral and written work. Such assessment should indicate difficulties met by individual pupils and suggest relevant reinforcement work.

Provision should be made for pupils who have not reached the level required ; either because they are late beginners or have individual difficulties.

*

*

*

4. CONTENT

The syllabus

The syllabus for years four and five is contained in the core-course (L.G. Alexander "Look, Listen and Learn, Books 2 and 3). The grammatical structures are clearly indicated in the Teacher's books for this course. It is advisable to follow the order indicated, although teachers are free to present and supplement the work in their own way.

The children are expected to understand the structures and use them confidently and fluently in a variety of situations. They should also be able to understand and practise them in the newly-acquired skills of reading and writing.

The greater part of the pupil's work is still oral, however.

The Structures

In Book 2, lessons 1-16 the structures and vocabulary already learnt in Book 1

are revised. (including : Present Continuous, Present Simple, "going to" future etc.).

Lessons 17-43 continues the revision while at the same time some new structures are introduced.

In lesson 43 the Past Simple is introduced and in Lesson 85 the Present Perfect. These two tenses are revised and contrasted.

By the end of Book 2, the pupils should have a good basic knowledge of the language and the four most frequent tenses.

Book 3 covers an Intermediate Stage and contains revision lessons (1-16) and more advanced structures (e.g. auxiliaries, Present Perfect Continuous, Past Continuous, Conditional 1, and some relatives etc).

By the end of this year the children will have acquired a good standard of English.

The Vocabulary : a complete list of the vocabulary covered is given at the end of the Teachers Books.

Suitable songs and stories are also included. The individual teacher is advised to supplement this material as he wishes.

APPENDIX ON ADDITIONAL READING MATERIAL

1. Posters and Postcards with titles on them are displayed around the classroom.
2. The Blackboard. Children often want to use and write a word which they can pronounce.
3. Drawings which are done by the children can have captions under them.
4. Scrapbooks can be made and arranged by the children. Captions can be written or cut out to put under the pictures.
5. Calendars with English scenes, names, and dates in English can be hung on the walls.
6. Wallcharts which are used for language teaching may have some written words on them.
7. Flashcards can have both pictures and words written on them.
These may be used in several ways :
 - a. to teach new language structures
e.g. Have you got a dog ? (word plus picture)
 - b. to play team games by giving instructions.
e.g. Touch the table. Go to the door.
 - c. to play team games, matching words to pictures.
8. Children's Games with pictures and words printed on them.
 - a. Bingo or Lotto can be played by pupils in groups with the teacher (or a pupil) calling.
 - b. Dominoes can be played in groups first with the numbers on one side, and then with the pictures and words on the other side (animals, Disney characters).
 - c. Jigsaw puzzles can be played in groups too. Words can be printed or struck on certain pictures.
 - d. Snap can be played in twos or more.
 - e. Happy Families. This is especially suitable for names and professions.
 - f. Junior Scrabble. Suitable for fourth and fifth years.
 - g. I-Spy etc. etc.
9. Comic Strips and Cartoons from newspapers, comics or magazines, cut out

or copied by the teacher.

10. Graded Readers (e.g. Longmans or Ladybird) may be used for private, group or class reading for 10-15 minutes per week.

These may be used in the following ways :

- a. for comprehension aural and written.
 - b. for four-line dialogues and intonation practice.
 - c. for acting scenes.
 - d. for consolidating structures already learnt and therefore they must be suitable for the level of the class.
11. Other Readers e.g. traditional stories. These can be used at the teacher's discretion and provided they are suitable for a younger reading age.
 12. Songbooks can be used, if the children have already learnt and sung the songs before.

*

*

*