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PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL, YEARS 4 - 7

TO BE INSERTED AFTER PAGE 23/13

IN

"HARMONIZED TIMETABLES AND SYLLABUSES"

(1972 edition)

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PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL, YEARS 4 - 7

OBJECTIVES TO BE REACHED AT THE END OF THE 7-YEAR COURSE

GENERAL REMARKS

1. The 4th and 5th years are a period of mainly linguistic consolidation. At this stage the teaching should concentrate on extending language skills, both in the fields of grammar and vocabulary, resulting in a greater degree of fluency and accuracy in both oral and written usage.
2. In the 6th and 7th years a stage has been reached at which it seems advisable to concentrate less on the linguistic aspect of language teaching. The age of the students makes it possible to deal with more complicated and abstract concepts, which should be gradually incorporated into the teaching.
3. After the 5th year, account should be taken of the fact that the students may choose English as a first, second or third foreign language. The difference lies in the eventual level of achievement, which thus implies different standards of valuation.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The skills mastered by the end of the course should include :

- a. the ability to communicate easily within those forms of spoken English which are generally accepted and on topics which are not too specialised in subject-matter or in language ;
- b. the ability to read and understand any text which is not too specialised in subject-matter or language ;
- c. the ability to write in present day English on subjects that do not involve a use of specialised language.

APPENDIX I

GRAMMATICAL NOTIONS

It seems natural that, as to grammar by far the greater part of the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th years should be devoted to the repetition, elaboration and extension of the items enumerated for the first 3 years with special attention to the following :

VERBS

To be added : Present Perfect Continuous

Past Perfect Continuous

Auxiliaries : can -- will be able to -- have been able to
may -- will be allowed to -- have been allowed to
must -- will have to -- had to -- have had to
dare

ARTICLES

Uses and omission of the indefinite article : He is a captain.

He is captain of the Illustrious.

He acted as a friend.

Uses and omission of the definite article : with abstract and material nouns :

History is bunk.

Butter is expensive.

with names of streets, parks
institutions :

He went to hospital.

He lives near Hyde Park.

with parts of the body :

He took him by the hand.

NOUNS

Pair: plurals : eg trousers, spectacles, scissors, etc.

Post genitive : a friend of my father's

(a friend of mine)

Genitive with time and distance : yesterday's paper

a two hours' walk

Partitive preposition : a pound of butter, a bottle of wine

Appositional preposition : the county of Kent

Some expressions with genitive : to my heart's content

at his wit's end

for art's sake, etc.

ADJECTIVES

Conversion : the rich, the blind.

PRONOUNS

Interrogative : who -- which : Who did that ? -- Which of you did that ?
what -- which.

RELATIVE CLAUSES

Position of preposition : I saw the man who (that, zero) you were talking about.

Continuative and restrictive clauses :

(a) My father, who is 78, is coming tomorrow.

(b) The man who(m) (that, zero) you see there is my uncle.

"Which" + "who(m)" not used after :

only, any, all, nothing, something, everything,
anything, superlatives

"What" = all that

"Which" referring to a whole sentence :

I have to go to school, which is rather unpleasant.

EXAMPLES OF USES OF VERB FORMS AND AUXILIARIES

to be added : further functions of "to be" + ing :

He is always grumbling.

: present perfect continuous :

He has been waiting all afternoon.

: past perfect continuous :

He had been playing the piano for an hour when I came in.

: present perfect passive :

He has been beaten.

: past perfect passive :

He had been beaten.

: future passive :

He will be beaten.

: conditional passive :

He knew that he would be beaten.

: present continuous passive :

My car is being repaired.

: past continuous passive :

I could not come because my house was being painted.

Further uses of auxiliaries :

Can : I can see a dog in this picture.

Can vs. May : We may put out chairs in the garden, and if so we can have tea there.

If you behave you may (can) go to the cinema tonight.

"Must not" vs. "need not/don't have to"

"Must" vs. "have to"

All people must die.

You must go now !

You have to leave now, if you want to catch your train.

"Must" vs. "should"

You must do your homework.

You should (ought to) do your homework.

"to be to"

I was to meet him at the station, but he wasn't there.

You are to do your homework now !

"Shall"

Shall I tell him ?

"Will"

He will sit there for hours.

"Would"

He used to sit down in that chair, and then he would sleep for the rest of the day.

Emphatic "to do"

I did tell you !

Do be quit !

GERUND VS INFINITIVE

I like to go to school.

I like going to school.

PASSIVE VOICE

Subject corresponding to direct object :

I beat my brother at tennis / My brother was beaten at tennis.

Subject corresponding to indirect object :

They gave him a medal / He was given a medal.

Subject corresponding to prepositional object :

We shall look into the matter / The matter will be looked into.

"Have" + object + passive past participle :

I had the house painted last year.

Special attention should be paid to the frequent application of the passive rather than the impersonal construction :

One should not do that / It is not done.

Passive gerund :

Your hair needs cutting.

It's not worth repeating.

SENTENCE STRUCTURE

Reported speech :

He said that he wasn't hungry.

He said that he hadn't seen it.

Indirect questions :

He asked us if we had been there.

He wondered who had done that, etc.

Inversion after initial negative sentence qualifier :

Only then did he believe me.

Never have I heard anything so ridiculous.

Conditional sentence :

I will tell you if you tell me.

I would tell you if you told me.

I would have told you if you had told me.

N.B. The examples given are not meant to be exhaustive. They only serve to remove any misunderstandings about the terminology.

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APPENDIX II

VOCABULARY

The student's knowledge of vocabulary at the end of the seven-year course should enable him to understand to a large extent spoken and written English of a non-specialised nature (but on the level of educated people), when used in accepted grammatical structures. He should also be able to use the language actively without seriously offending against accepted usage, so that he can make himself understood.

A distinction must be made between active, passive specialised or professional and sub-standard vocabulary.

Sub-standard (unconventional English, slang) is not taught as part of the official course.

Specialised vocabulary (both active and passive) cannot be taught in a secondary school except to a very limited extent, eg :

some grammatical terminology (Present, Passive voice, Auxiliary, etc)
some school terminology (oral exam, test-paper, etc).

It should be borne in mind that this vocabulary is only used to make teaching in English possible and its use should remain functional. Under this heading also comes some vocabulary in connection with the cultural content of the course (eg : Speaker, Public School, Life Peer, etc) and vocabulary in connection with the European context in which the pupils live.

For both the active and the passive vocabulary content of the course it should be borne in mind that for many students the European School is an intermediate step to higher education.

The passive vocabulary is increased by hearing and reading English and although it cannot be taught systematically it should be considered as an important element of the course.

It is essential that students should be encouraged to listen to English and read it outside the classroom. Students who take English as their first foreign language are required to submit a list of several articles and books read.

Active vocabulary : A definite list of the vocabulary the student is to master cannot be drawn up. It is suggested that a large degree of latitude should be left to the teacher responsible. As a rough guide-line, however, the following points should be observed :

1. Acquisition of vocabulary will progress gradually from the centres of interest (Years 1-3 inclusive) to more abstract and semantically more complicated concepts.
2. The vocabulary taught should, in principle, be based on frequency of occurrence. Between 2,000 and 3,000 semantic units would cover the general needs of an educated non-native speaker.
3. The structural words (eg particles, conjunctions, prepositions) should be known.
4. Special attention should be given to the so called "faux amis" (eg Fr actuel -- E. actual) in order to reduce misunderstanding and interference by the learner's other languages to a minimum.
5. The vocabulary taught should include the most frequent phrasal verbs (eg : to look at, to look for, to look into, etc) and idioms (eg : I'm fed up, on the face of it, etc).
6. Differences between British and, in particular, American English (spelling, usage, meaning) should be pointed out when they occur.

The level required of the students who take English as their first foreign language is higher than for those who take English as their second foreign language.

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APPENDIX III

SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND LITERARY ASPECTS OF THE COURSE

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL

A working knowledge of the more important aspects of the social and cultural life of the English speaking world contributes to a greater insight into modern life in general and into that of the English speaking world in particular. Furthermore it provides the foreign learner with necessary background information for the spoken and written language.

It should be borne in mind, however, that a knowledge of the various political, religious, legal and educational institutions is to be given as an aid to better understanding and not as an end in itself, so that detailed information on such matters must be considered as being outside the scope of the English courses at the European Schools.

LITERATURE

Literature is an essential part of Western civilisation and uses language as its medium of expression. It must, therefore, form part of the course for more advanced students. As it uses language with aesthetic considerations and is not exclusively concerned with communication in its narrower sense (the exchange of information) students should be given at least some insight into the literatures of the English speaking world. Studying literature in English will, moreover, enable students to become acquainted with literary values and literary conventions outside the limits of their own literature. A knowledge of literatures other than one's own contributes to a better understanding of "la condition humaine". It is obviously impossible to treat the whole of literature in the limited time available, whereas detailed literary analysis of even a limited number of works requires a specialised and difficult vocabulary and a profound familiarity with the language that cannot be expected from the foreign language learner before or even at the level of the final examination. Therefore, the student should in practice be made familiar with at least some works of literary merit, especially of the twentieth century, without being required to have a detailed knowledge of their possible interpretations and background.

When older works of literary value are discussed in class, care should be taken with the greatly increased linguistic difficulty of most of them.

Some comprehension of the importance of Shakespeare for the English speaking world and for literature in general must be considered as essential for a course that intends to give its students "access to a great heritage of literature".

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APPENDIX IV

NOTE ON THE FREQUENCY LISTS

Most course books available or suitable for secondary schools are based on the frequency counts for their vocabulary and structures.

The standard lists are :

Michael West : "General Service list" (Longmans) -- about 2,000 word meanings given.

Thorndike-Lorge : "Teacher's Word Book of 30,000 words" (Columbia University) -- meanings not supplied.

(The AA and A words in this list comprise the first 2,000 words. Words marked 49-40 extend this to about 3,000)

Erik Weis : "Grund- und Aufbau-Wortschatz" (Klett Verlag) -- with German translations

Wein/de Groot : "Engelse Woordschat" (Wolters-Noordhoff) -- with Dutch translations

Although these lists are useful it should be kept in mind that :

1. they are sometimes based on adult usage (especially Thorndike) ;
2. some were drawn up some time ago so that certain now more frequent words were less current then (eg pollution, atomic, nuclear) ;
3. that certain words with a low frequency (eg. "oral" in Throndiike between 8,000-10,000) are relatively frequent in the school context ;
4. not all lists distinguish the meanings which are most frequent ;
5. words may gain more frequent currency owing to political, economic or technological developments, etc (space, devolution, inflation).

This is clearly not an exhaustive list.

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