

UNIT 1 Bridging the Gap

Recommended Prior Knowledge GCSE/IGCSE/O level at minimum Grade C in the appropriate language.

Context

This Unit should be seen as a bridging Unit to move to A level and AS from GCSE/IGCSE/O level. It establishes starting points and begins to set targets. The aims are both motivational, to engage the students in their new course, and diagnostic, seeking to establish current levels of skills and knowledge before moving on.

Outline

The content focuses on a limited range of topics which establish a direct link with GCSE/IGCSE/O level. The progression in text-type and length, skills development and grammatical knowledge should be read in conjunction with the relevant sections of the Introduction to the Teaching Syllabus. The resources listed there are also recommended for subsequent Units of this syllabus.

	Learning Outcomes	Suggested Teaching Activities	Resources
1	Build on prior knowledge of lexis and grammar to establish confidence and motivation for the next stage.	<p>(a) Start with theme “the day I got my results”. Allows students to revisit the language of daily routine, but careful questioning can elicit more detailed, extended responses that go beyond the limits of GCSE/IGCSE/O level. Scope for introducing adjectives and emotions. Use dictionaries to extend vocabulary. After oral brainstorming, students produce a piece of narrative and descriptive writing with an account of how they reacted, what results were, how they celebrated, other people’s reactions etc.</p> <p>(b) Develop ability to talk spontaneously by “fun” activities and games, e.g. definitions, role-plays.</p> <p>(c) Revise knowledge of GCSE/IGCSE/O level grammar. Stage 1 and Stage 2 type grammatical activities to establish levels of knowledge.</p>	<p>See chapter 3 “Bridging the gap” in <i>Getting to grips with grammar</i> by Ted Neather, CILT, 2003</p> <p>See also other titles in the Advanced Pathfinder series from CILT.</p> <p>Consult website www.cilt.org.uk</p>

	Learning Outcomes	Suggested Teaching Activities	Resources
2	Acquaintance with lexis and structures of a range of listening and reading texts presenting the Topic focus.	<p>Topic focus 1: Human relationships (family; generation gap; young people)</p> <p>Texts (Reading and Listening) Sequential, Descriptive; predominantly concrete vocabulary with expression of opinion. Length 100-150 words.</p> <p>Introduction of appropriate lexis and structures for dealing with texts chosen.</p> <p>See Introduction, Section 6, Teaching methods: Stage 1 Encounter with the text.</p>	<p><i>Developing Learning Strategies</i>, Barry Jones, CILT, 2001</p> <p>The following Lingu@net sites give links to many language teaching sites</p> <p>www.linguanet-europa.org</p> <p>www.linguanet.org.uk</p>
3	Listening and speaking practice	<p>Teacher questions/student response is a useful way to give some listening practice and to guide students' oral responses.</p> <p>The crucial element in developing interactive listening and speaking skills is work in pairs or small groups, in particular,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Simple interviews ▪ Student exchange of views <p>Students do not usually have much to say about a topic before they have been given some language and ideas as a starting point. So it is important that acquaintance with the topic through reading or listening materials comes first. Confidence is the key to oral performance and can be developed by moving from more controlled tasks through to more open-ended tasks.</p> <p>Here is a suggested sequence for this early stage of the course, focusing on personal information and the family:</p> <p>(a) Group oral work. Students circulate and put questions to other members of the class: where they live; what family do they have; what they like doing in spare time; what music they like etc.</p>	<p><i>Advancing Oral Skills</i>, Anneli McClachlan, CILT, 2001</p> <p>www.bbc.co.uk has current news items in a wide range of languages</p>

		<p>(b) Pairs work to practise a variety of question forms. Consult with partner to prepare an interview and decide how to form questions on a variety of personal and family topics.</p> <p>(c) Change partners and now conduct the interview which has been prepared.</p> <p>(d) Within the context of the topic, students first prepare individually to expand their views and give fuller answers about, for example, the generation gap, young people today etc. To help them with their preparation, the teacher provides some key phrases for expressing opinions and views, so that students have a framework. At this stage opinions will still be at quite a superficial level. This preparation leads to the first exchange of views, in groups of 3-4. It is best, at this stage, for one student to act as chair, and put questions to the others. In this way, it is not possible for an individual to keep out of the debate.</p>	
4	Reading practice and developing grammatical awareness	<p>For reading development see Section 6 (Teaching Methods) of Introduction: Stage 2 Collecting information and language.</p> <p>Individual and group tasks for getting to grips with the text. In order to develop awareness and recognition of grammatical structures, students are asked to find and underline examples of a particular structure.</p>	<p><i>Reflections on Reading (from GCSE to A Level)</i> Ed. M. Grenfell, CILT, 1995</p>

5	Developing writing skills	<p>For Grammar practice see Section 7 (Types of Grammar practice) of Introduction.</p> <p>Manipulation and controlled drills. Guided grammar practice.</p> <p>Having learned to recognise a structure, students need to produce examples of it. At this stage, the examples are prepared by the teacher and must be carefully controlled. For example, the teacher provides a model where a positive statement is rephrased as a negative.</p> <p>Micro-writing Any form of brief writing, up to 50 words maximum and within a well-defined context may be described as micro-writing. There is a close relationship between the writing skill and the reading passages already encountered as they offer source material for vocabulary and expressions. The link between oral activities and writing is also close.</p> <p>At this stage, students' writing must be within carefully controlled limits. Forms of free composition at this stage lead to unnecessary errors. Short paragraphs on limited themes can consolidate accuracy.</p>	<p><i>Getting to grips with grammar</i>, Ted Neather, CILT, 2003</p> <p><i>Writing</i> (Oxford English Resource Books for Teachers) Tricia Hedge, OUP, 1991</p>
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