# Grave's "Coursebooks" (*adapting)
(Please answer in **full sentences** and **in your own words**)

1) What does SARS mean?

2) Before an activity, the T needs to determine if Ss understand the instructions and are ready to do the activity because: "[S]imply telling the learners what, how, and why of an activity doesn't prepare them. They need to demonstrate either verbally or in action that they have understood" What can Ts do to check and clarify their verbal instructions? How can Ts check to see if Ss understand the activity? Give a clear example or examples.

3) Explain what the authors means by: "Any activity actually has three parts: Preparation, implementation, and follow-up" How does this relate to what you have learned in TELS 1&2; especially in terms of the activity route map? Does the Korean educational system allow for this? Why or why not?

# Coursebooks

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## At the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

**Goals**

✔ **analyze** how a coursebook is organized and what it emphasizes.

✔ **devise** ways to adapt or supplement an activity for a specific group of learners using techniques such as personalization and format shifting or by introducing supplementary material.

✔ **explain** how you would prepare learners to do an activity, how you would monitor them, and how you would follow up the activity.

# 1. What is a coursebook?

**Coursebooks** are prepackaged, published books used by the students and teacher as the primary basis for a language course. Coursebooks range from those that are broadly focused on developing all language skills to those that focus on a specific skill such as writing, or specific area such as hotel management. In addition to the student book, coursebook packages may include audio-cassettes or CDs, videos, workbooks, CD-ROMs, test packages and Internet materials. They almost always include a teacher's guide. In this chapter, we will focus on the student book, since it is the one component most likely to be used by all the students in the classroom. Examples will be taken from integrated skills coursebooks that are intended primarily for learners in countries where English is not a national language.

A coursebook is a learning tool shared by teachers and learners that can be used in systematic and flexible ways. In order to use a coursebook systematically and flexibly, it is important to understand how it is put together and how it can be adapted to meet the needs of your particular learners. The coursebook provides a plan for learning, a visible outline of what is to be learned in the classroom, as well as a bank of resource material and ideas (Acklam, 1994). What happens in the classroom fills out and transforms the outline into learning experiences for the students.

# 2. Background to the design and use of coursebooks

Most people who have studied a foreign language have used a coursebook at some point in their studies. The way coursebooks look and what they contain go hand and hand with the prevailing ideas at the time they were published about how languages are best taught and learned. Up until the mid-twentieth century, language books were used mainly in academic settings in order to understand the written texts of the target language. This approach, which is still common in academic settings today, is called the **grammar translation** approach. Coursebooks contain long reading passages, with vocabulary glossaries and grammar notes in the students' mother tongue. Students are tested on their ability to translate texts with lexical and grammatical accuracy. In the 1960s and 1970s, the focus shifted from grammar translation and its emphasis on written texts to **audiolingualism,** which focused on the spoken language. (See the chapters on methodology and grammar, this volume.) Audiolingualism was an outgrowth of **behaviorist** theories that learning is habit formation, the result of response to stimuli. Language coursebooks used dialogues, pattern practice, and substitution drills in which the teacher provided a stimulus such as a sentence beginning

with *they* and a cue *she,* and the learners provided a response sentence, changing the subject from they to she. **Structural linguistics,** which views language as a system, reducible to a finite set of grammatical structures, also had a strong influence on language texts. For example, *English 900,* a series first published in 1964, contained 900 sentences. By mastering the sentences, one was supposed to have mastered the language.

In the 1970s and 80s, there was a shift toward the **notional-functional approach,** championed by the Council of Europe (e.g., Van Ek and Alexander, 1975). Language was understood to be used for purposes, or functions, such as expressing opinions, and to talk or write about both abstract and concrete topics, or notions, such as time and weather. Communication took precedence over grammar. Coursebooks began to emphasize functional language as well as pair work and group work activities in which learners used the language to communicate with each other.

The development of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) also influenced the kinds of materials that were published. EAP coursebooks focus on the development of one or two skills, such as writing or reading for academic purposes. ESP coursebooks focus on the development of specific workplace skills such as public health administration. EAP and ESP coursebooks use authentic material such as newspaper articles and other source materials. The use of authentic or quasi-authentic materials is also common in current coursebooks in order to simulate the use of language in real contexts.

Other approaches to teaching languages have questioned the effectiveness of coursebooks. The introduction of **task-based language teaching** in the 1980s challenged the very use of coursebooks. In task-based approaches, language is learned through negotiation with other learners in problem-solving or task-management situations that focus on meaning, rather than form, not through learning prespecified grammar, functions or notions. Tasks can range from discussing the effectiveness of an advertisement and reporting on the discussion to designing an original advertisement. Because coursebooks specify language to be learned, they were seen as incompatible with this approach. However, many current coursebooks now include tasks or projects to stimulate interaction and negotiation among learners.

Other critics have charged that, because a coursebook specifies what is to be taught and learned, it becomes an operating manual that the teacher and students follow unquestioningly. It leaves little room for decision-making and adapting to the needs of the particular group. (See, for example, Swan, 1992.) Proponents of using coursebooks have argued that they provide a needed structure for interaction in the classroom and that learners see the textbook as a guide that helps them organize their learning and provides security (Hutchinson and Torres, 1994). One purpose of this chapter is to help teachers understand how to take advantage of what a coursebook has to offer and not feel dominated by it.

Think back on your own experience learning with a coursebook. Did you notice any differences in the coursebooks you used? Did you find the coursebooks a help or a hindrance? Why?

# 3. Principles for using a coursebook

## 1. Understand how the coursebook is organized.

A coursebook provides a visible outline for what is to be learned in the classroom. Coursebooks are often described metaphorically as maps (O'Neil, 1993). Maps provide a guide to the territory to be covered. The actual classroom teaching and learning can be viewed as a journey through the territory. The first principle for using a coursebook is to become familiar with the territory so that you can plan the journey.

Most coursebooks are organized around key features of language. These features include topics and associated vocabulary (e.g. food or transportation), grammar structures (e.g. verb tenses or how to form questions), and social and cultural interaction skills (e.g. how to order in a restaurant or how to politely refuse something). Coursebooks also emphasize two or more of the four skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

The first step is to explore the coursebook to see how it is organized. Often the table of contents (sometimes called scope and sequence) provides a chart that shows how the authors have mapped out the territory within each unit and across units. Knowing how the book is organized can help you to make decisions about how to adapt it to your particular group of students. Each unit or chapter of a coursebook is a microcosm of the book as a whole, so one way to get to know a coursebook is by examining a unit.

## Reflection

Look at the Table of Contents extracts from three different interme-diate level coursebooks. What features of language are they organized around? What are the similarities and differences in the ways they are organized? What do you think accounts for the differences?

| Unit Title | Functions | Grammar | Listening and Pronunciation | Reading and Writing | Learning Strategies and Skills |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Life Stories | • Talk about past actions<br>• Talk about frequency of actions<br>• Talk about lifestyles<br>• Talk about habits and routines | Simple past tense: Questions, short answers<br>Was born/married<br>Irregular past tense of verbs<br>Used to<br>Had to<br>Reported speech: verb *say* | Listen: listen to a biography to put events in chronological order<br>Pronunciation: use to | Read a biography<br>Write an autobiography<br>Write a biography (Project) | Look for time order cues in biographical material<br>List events in chronological order as a writing strategy |

**Figure 1** *Super Goal 3* (McGraw-Hill, 2002)

**Alike yet different**

**Speaking** *The roles of men and women*

**Listening** *Short oral report—weekend cooks*

**Grammar** *Review of contrasting tenses: simple present vs. present progressive; present simple past vs. present perfect*

**Reading** *Contrast/comparison*—How different are men and women?

**Conversation** *Sharing news and stating an opinion strategies*

**Grammar** More adjective clauses: Fran works with a sister that specializes in interior decorating.

**Writing** *Personal reports*

**Figure 2** *CrossCurrents 1* (Pearson Education Limited, 1992)

| Topics | Functions | Grammar | Listening/Pronunciation | Writing/Reading | Interchange Activity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unusual and Exceptional jobs | Giving opinions about jobs; describing and comparing jobs | Gerund phrases as subject and object; comparisons ww itr ..more/less tha. p r and as ... as | Listening to descriptions of jobs; Sentence stress | Writing about career advantages and disadvantages "Strategies for Keeping Your Job" Reading advice about behavior in the workplace | The best and the worst Finding out about classmates' summer or part-time jobs |

**Figure 3** *New Interchange 3: English for International Communication* (Cambridge University Press, 1998)

Usually, the different language features or components of a coursebook chapter or unit are linked together around a topic or topics. What is the focus of each of the units profiled? How are the components of each unit linked?

## 2. Adapt the material.

Coursebooks are not written for a specific group of people. Since they are meant to be used by different or successive groups of learners, they can't be. They're written for a generalized target group (e.g., for children or adults, for use in English speaking countries or in other countries, for beginner, intermediate or advanced levels, and so on). No book can meet all the needs and interests of each group of learners that uses it. For this reason, a coursebook *must be adapted* to your particular group of learners. Acklam (1994, p. 12) suggests the following acronym for adapting a coursebook: "SARS."

**S = Select**
What parts of the coursebook do you definitely want to keep?

**A = Adapt**
What parts of the coursebook do you basically want to keep, but need to change in some way to make them more suitable for your students, and in tune with your teaching style?

**R = Reject**
What parts of the coursebook do you definitely want to leave out?

**S = Supplement**
What else do you need to bring to the coursebook to fulfill the requirements of the overall syllabus you are working to, and to respond to the needs of your particular students?

**Figure 4** SARS (Select, Adapt, Reject, Supplement)

Remember, a coursebook is not an inflexible document, it is a learning tool that is used by learners and teachers. Your decisions about what to "select, adapt, reject and supplement" depend on who your learners are (age, interests, purposes for studying and language level), what the institution emphasizes, the resources available to you, how much time you have, and

what you feel is important. If there is too much X, then do less of X. If there is no Y, then add Y, if Z is unnecessary for your students, then skip Z. For example, Sato (2002) found that Japanese high school students and teachers initially had difficulty using coursebooks that emphasized speaking since they were accustomed to coursebooks that emphasized reading with a focus on translation and grammar. They were able to use the coursebooks more effectively when the teachers designed oral performance assessments to be done at the end of each unit. The addition of the tests gave the learners a goal and thus made them more willing to do the speaking activities in the coursebook. In the section on techniques we will look at ways to adapt and supplement a coursebook.

## 3. Prepare the learners.

In an on-line research project a colleague and I conducted with a group of teachers from four different countries, we found that coursebook activities usually fail not because they're too boring or too complicated, but because the learners haven't been adequately prepared to do them. Put another way, any coursebook activity can be successful as long as learners know what to do and have the ability to do it. (If they don't have the ability to do the activity, the coursebook may be at too high a level.) Preparing the learners means two things. First, it means orienting them to the content and purpose of the activity, that is, making sure they know *what* the activity is about and *why* they are doing it. Second, it means making sure they understand the steps of the activity, *how* to do it. However, simply telling the learners the *what, how,* and *why* of an activity doesn't prepare them. They need to demonstrate either verbally or in action that they have understood.

Preparing the learner really means preparing yourself. What is the context for the activity? The images that accompany an activity are often helpful in providing a context. How can you make the context clear and interesting to the learners? What is the point of the activity? Is the focus to learn grammar? Is it to practice speaking? Is it to learn vocabulary? The title of the activity often provides clues to the purpose. What are the steps involved in carrying out the activity? How can you ensure that the learners know what to do? How long will the activity take?

Figure 5 is a page from a textbook aimed at young adults/adults at the intermediate level. There are two activities on the page. Describe how you would prepare the learners to do each activity so that

a) they know *what* the activity is about (How would you orient them to the content?);

b) *why* they are doing it (How would you make sure they understand the purpose?);

c) and *how* to do it (How would you break down the steps?).

Decide on a time limit to give the students for each activity.

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**1    Talk it over**

**Complete the sentences using some of the words in the list.**

Women are more _____ than men.
Men are more _____ than women.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| competitive | cautious | logical | possessive | emotional | aggressive |
| considerate | intuitive | industrious | generous | relaxed | sensitive |

**Compare your sentences and opinions with a classmate.**
**Which statements do you agree with?**

**2    Talk about... Cartoons**

**Look at these cartoons.**
**Describe what is**
**happening in each one.**
**What generalizations do**
**they show about men,**
**women, and children?**

"He doesn't know anything except facts."
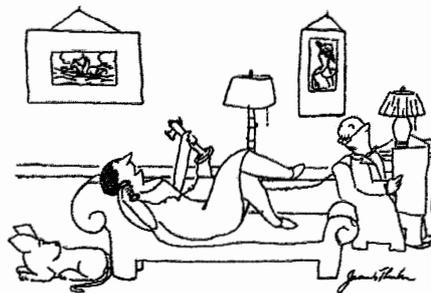
"Well, if I called the wrong number, why did you answer the phone?"
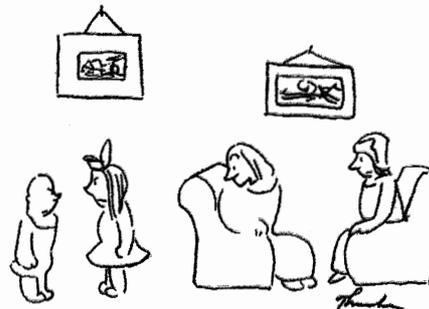
"Alice can be a little *girl* Commando in your game. Donald."

**Figure 5**  *CrossCurrents 1* (Pearson Education Limited, 1992)

## 4. Monitor and follow up.

Any activity actually has three parts: preparation, implementation, and follow-up. While the students are doing an activity, you have an important role: to monitor what and how well they are doing. The easiest way to monitor is to walk around the classroom and observe what they are doing, (in a neutral, not a judgmental way). As you circulate, you can answer questions, keep track of language problems, offer helpful corrections (if they don't inhibit fluency), and make sure they are doing what they are supposed to be doing. Monitoring also helps you to see if the time limit you set was appropriate and whether it will need to be shortened or extended. Often teachers concentrate on the students in the front rows and remain at the front once an activity is underway. Consequently, the students at the back give up on the activity and the learning opportunity is lost.

It helps to develop signals to let students know when to stop. In small classes, this can be done via language such as "OK, time to stop." In large classes, clapping your hands or ringing a bell are more effective than using your voice, unless you have a resonant voice! Once an activity is done, it is important to follow up so that students can demonstrate what they have learned or ask questions about it. For example, if students have practiced a dialogue in pairs, then a few pairs can demonstrate the dialogue to the group. If groups of three have just discussed what they like to read and why, then a few students can report to the class on what they learned about their partners' preferences. Alternatively, the teacher can survey the class. For example, "How many of you like to read ___?"

## 5. Build a repertoire.

In addition to being organized around key features of language, a coursebook generally has consistent types of activities in each unit or chapter such as pair and group tasks, **role-plays, information gaps,** listening tasks, and vocabulary games. It helps to build up your own repertoire of ways to do each type of activity. For example, most listening activities include some kind of task. One way to approach a listening activity (after the appropriate introduction to what it's about) is for students to listen through once to get the general idea; listen a second time and do the task in the book such as answer questions or fill in a diagram; and then listen a third time and check their answers. If you follow this format consistently, you provide some predictability for the students—they learn familiar ways to approach an activity. It also helps to have ways to vary an activity once students are familiar with the basic format. For example, students can try to do the task before the first listening as a way to create anticipation for what they will hear.

Building a repertoire also means having techniques for supplementing what is in the textbook. Part of my own repertoire includes putting things on cards or strips of paper that students can manipulate. For example, one way to teach vocabulary is to have students write the vocabulary words on cards and then group them in some way. Another way is to put parts of sentences on cards so that students can put them in order and learn the grammar. I sometimes write prompts on cards for speaking and writing activities. I also have students write comprehension questions to reading passages on cards and quiz each other.

The teacher's guide that accompanies the coursebook is an excellent resource for learning about ways to teach and vary activities. When Alison Rice and I were writing the introduction to the teacher's guide for *East West Basics* (Oxford University Press, 1994), we included nine different ways to prepare for a dialogue and ten different ways to practice it. Teacher's guides also give step-by-step suggestions for how to teach each activity in the student book.

# 4. Classroom techniques and tasks

In this section, we look at techniques and tasks for implementing the five principles outlined in the previous section. The first two techniques are designed to help you understand how the coursebook is organized.

**Survey or map the territory** When familiarizing yourself with the table of contents, trying to take in the entire contents of the book can be overwhelming. Start small, with a group of units or just one unit. Some books have review units, so a natural chunk is the group of units leading up to the review unit. If you own the book, make notes as you go through it about what you like, what you don't like, what you want to emphasize, supplement, and reject.

Another way to survey the territory is to make a map of it. This means creating a nonlinear visual representation of the contents of the book or unit. By taking apart the pieces and rearranging them in a visual way, you become familiar with what is in the book. These kinds of "mind maps" or "word webs" can be done at any level: book, unit, or activity. (See Andersen, Chapter 4, this volume.)

**Group prioritizing** There is often more material in a coursebook than you can cover in the amount of time available. Richard Acklam suggests the following activity (1994, p. 13). "Give out the books on the first day [of class], and, for homework, ask students to decide which topics/grammar areas in the book they are most interested in/concerned about. The next day the students vote on the most relevant parts of the book for them, and this immediately helps the teacher to select appropriately."

One advantage of this technique is that the assignment gives the students a reason for looking through the coursebook. It gives them ownership of the "tool" and helps them understand it is flexible. It also opens dialogue among them and the teacher. One disadvantage is that some learners may feel intimidated or inadequate to the task. Or they may feel that making these decisions is the teacher's job. One way to adapt this task would be to have them do the same kind of prioritizing, but only for one unit.

The next three techniques will help you adapt the material to your particular group of learners.

**Personalizing** Personalizing means asking for or giving personal or culturally familiar information related to the material in the coursebook. This technique draws on the learners' experiences and opinions and so makes the material more real and accessible to the students. I remember observing a high school French teacher teach telephone numbers using the examples in the textbook. The students were bored and inattentive. By simply asking them to use their own telephone numbers, she would have made the material more relevant and motivating. In addition to making material more relevant, personalizing also allows for personal and cultural comparisons. Learning how to order food from a menu is a common coursebook activity. Learners can be asked to compare the way menus are organized in their culture(s), what items cost, and what food items are included.

Personalizing can be done in preparing for an activity, during an activity, or following up an activity. Take the example of ordering from a menu. The menu in the coursebook is unlikely to be one students have actually used. In preparation for the activity, the teacher can ask students to make a list or sketch of what they expect to find in a menu. They can then compare their lists to the menu in the book and discuss how they are similar and different. To personalize during the activity, the learners can discuss foods on the menu that they've tried, and ones they've never tried, and whether they would want to order them or not. As a follow-up, the teacher can ask the learners to talk about the kinds of restaurants they go to and what they usually order. Alternatively, they can prepare menus with only their favorite foods.

## Reflection

Why is personalizing important? What are some considerations when planning ways to personalize the material and activities in a coursebook?

**Format shift  Format shift** means switching to a different skill or grouping than the one proposed in the book.

- Switching to a different skill: A reading text about places to vacation in Australia can be used as a model for writing about places to vacation in the students' own country. The same text can be used for pair dictation or for pronunciation practice. In one sense, format shift is about supplementing through skill integration: when appropriate, giving students opportunities to speak, listen, read, and write about each activity.

- Switching to a different grouping: a pair question and answer activity about the ideal roommate can become a mixer in which the whole group gets up and walks around and asks different people the same question. An individual writing activity about the pros and cons of school uniforms can be turned into a small group brainstorm and group essay.

**Use props, visuals, or realia**  Props, visuals and realia stimulate visual and cultural interest in a lesson. Realia are objects or texts that are used by people in their everyday lives. Props are theatrical aids to represent a role or situation. Visuals are pictures, drawings, photos or images. (These three categories very often blend.) Realia for a lesson about phone numbers might include a phone book or an advertisement with phone numbers. Realia for a unit about places to vacation might include tourist brochures. Props for a lesson on phone numbers might include a toy telephone, and for a lesson on places to vacation, a beach towel and ski goggles. One of my colleagues uses a plastic bow as a humorous prop to demonstrate a dialogue between a woman and a man. He places the bow in his hair when speaking the woman's part and at his throat when speaking the man's part. Visuals for a lesson on vacations might include pictures of different vacations spots.

Props, visuals and realia can be used both to prepare students for and to supplement or extend an activity. The teacher should not be the only source of these supplementary materials. Students can be asked to bring in materials related to the topics, such as pictures of their ideal vacation spot or photos from their last vacation.

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The two activities in Figure 5 (page 232) are aimed at intermediate adult/young adult learners. Think of a group of learners that fits that description.

Describe:

- how you would personalize the activities so that they are relevant to the learners and highlight potential cultural differences.

- different ways of grouping learners to do them (individual, pair, small group, whole class).

- props, visuals, or realia you or the learners could bring in to supplement them.

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The next two techniques are designed to help you prepare the learners to do the activities.

**Visual instructions** Visual instructions is a fancy way of saying "demonstrate what to do." This technique is based on the notion that showing is much more effective than telling. For example, to introduce a pair activity, you can write an example of the pair exchange on the board and then use your hands to represent the two speakers as you demonstrate the exchange. (Some teachers use puppets, others change positions.) You can then ask two students to stand up and model the exchange. If you are introducing a group activity in which students are to survey each other in groups (e.g., about what they like to read and why), you can demonstrate the activity by asking one student the questions first and then having the student ask you the same questions.

**Elicitation** Elicitation means asking the students to provide information or examples based on what they know. In preparing for an activity that reviews the present perfect tense, you can ask for several examples from the students. However, elicitation doesn't mean putting learners on the spot. It only works when you try to elicit what they are likely to know. Because it emphasizes the learners' experience and knowledge, elicitation helps to take the focus off of the text as the source of authority and helps learners become more self-reliant, an important skill in learning a language. Elicitation works hand in hand with personalization. To prepare for an activity about reading preferences you can first ask the students "What are things we read?" and list their responses on the board. It is also a way to get differences of opinion, or examples that are different from those provided in the coursebook. Students can be asked whether a picture that shows a family living in a large house is the way most people live. Elicitation is also useful when following up an activity.

The next two techniques are designed to help you monitor and follow up what the students do.

**Mistake log** One way to monitor what and how well the students are doing is to keep a mistake log. Make a note of the activity and the class and as you circulate, write down the mistakes you hear the students making. Mistakes

can be grammatical, lexical (vocabulary), or cultural. The mistake log can then be used in a number of ways. You can use it immediately after the activity and elicit correction from the students. For example, in an activity for practicing polite ways to ask for something, the teacher noticed that many of the students were not using the word *please*, which was included in the examples in the book. After the activity, she wrote two contrasting examples on the board "Could you bring me a glass of water?" and "Could you bring me a glass of water, please?" She asked the students to discuss the difference and why one was more polite than the other.

If there are recurrent mistakes, for example incorrect use of tenses, you can prepare a separate lesson and use examples from the log. The log will also show you and your students in which areas they are improving because the mistakes occur less frequently.

**Group survey** One way to follow up an activity is to do a group survey of the results. Surveys answer the questions how many, how often, how much, how long, and so on. For example, after an activity in which students have asked for and given information about their families, the teacher writes three headings on the board: only child, one brother or sister, more than one brother or sister, and then surveys the class to find out how many fit in which category. In a group survey after an activity on reading preferences, the teacher writes each type of reading on the board, asks for a show of hands for each, and writes the number after each category. She then asks the group why the categories with the most and least numbers are the most and least popular.

**Activity chart** Building a repertoire requires setting up some kind of system for keeping track of what has been successful so that you can use the techniques again. One way to do that is to make a chart with the relevant four skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing (depending on which you teach), as well as other focal areas such as grammar, culture, or vocabulary.

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**Action** Chapters 2, 3, 7 and 8 in *Practical English Language Teaching* provide descriptions of excellent activities that can be used in the classroom. Refer to the appropriate chapter in order to complete the activity chart. Write one or two activities from each chapter.

| Focus area ➡ | Listening | Speaking | Vocabulary | Grammar |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Activity | • <br> • | • <br> • | • <br> • | • <br> • |

# 5. Using a coursebook in the classroom

The purpose of this section is to show you some of the ways language teachers use the concepts and techniques already discussed. The first example shows how a teacher prepares to teach the first two activities in a unit. The second example shows how a teacher adapts an activity in a unit. The last example shows how a teacher prepares her students to do an activity, h●w she monitors, and how she follows up the activity.

Teacher A teaches at a language institute in Morocco. The learners are men and women, mainly in their twenties, and at an intermediate level of English. In preparation for teaching the activities in Figure 6, Teacher A has made notes about how she wants to teach the activities on that page.

Look at the textbook excerpt in Figure 6. Notice how the teacher has annotated the page with her comments.

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**1   Talk it over**

**Complete the sentences using some of the words in the list.**

Women are more _____ than men.⎤ *expand w/phrases and vocab.*
Men are more _____ than women.⎦ *make a list on the board*

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| competitive | cautious | logical | possessive | emotional | aggressive |
| considerate | intuitive | industrious | generous | relaxed | sensitive |

**Compare your sentences and opinions with a classmate.**    *brainstorm*
**Which statements do you agree with?**                              *more*

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**2   Talk about... Cartoons**

**Look at these cartoons. Describe what is happening in each one. What generalizations do they show about men, women, and children?**
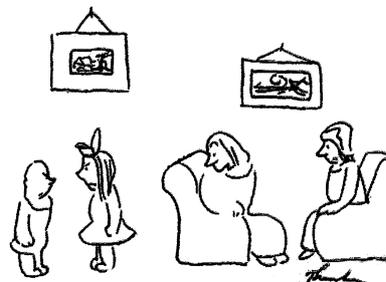
*What stereotypes? What roles?*    "He doesn't know anything except facts."
*Bring in other cartoons for balance.*

"Well, if I called the wrong number, why did you answer the phone?"

*How do these reflect Moroccan culture? American? Why?*

"Alice can be a little girl Commando in your name, Donald."

**Figure 6** *CrossCurrents 1* (Pearson Education Limited, 1992)

**Commentary** Before the students even open the book, Teacher A plans two preparatory activities (discuss terms and brainstorm) to orient students to the theme of the unit and to generate useful vocabulary based on their own experience. The first activity in the book *Talk it Over* aims to provide the vocabulary and grammar needed to compare men and women as a basis for expressing personal opinions. The activity already has personalization built in since students are expressing their own opinions. However, as it is a forced choice, the students may feel they have to express opinions they don't hold. The teacher plans to add an additional grammar structure *As...as* so that the students can talk about similarities in addition to differences. She plans to review the vocabulary, however it is unclear from the notes how she will make sure they understand new vocabulary. If some students don't know certain vocabulary words, she could elicit explanations or examples from the students who do.

The second activity in the book *Talk about...Cartoons* asks students to describe the cartoons and the way they generalize male and female traits and roles. The teacher questions the viewpoint of the textbook. She feels the stereotypes are too traditional, so she plans to bring in additional visual material to show a variety of perspectives.

**Action**

Think of a particular group of learners. Consider their age, gender, level of English, and interests and purposes for learning English. Choose a page from a coursebook. Write on the page what you would keep, what you would adapt, what you would reject and what you would supplement.

**Reflection**

Look at Teacher A's notes in Figure 6. What are ways that she plans to supplement the material? How does she plan to adapt the activities and why? How will she prepare the students? How will she personalize the material?

Teacher B teaches at a language institute in Brazil. His students are adults at an intermediate level. He is teaching Activity 2 in Figure 7. In this activity, they are applying the rule they learned in Activity 1.

## PRACTICE

1. Read the sentences in the box and answer the
questions below.

a. In *Ghost*, Patrick Swayze stars as a ghost who returns to help his girlfriend.
b. In *The African Queen*, Katharine Hepburn stars as a woman who travels downriver in Africa.
c. *E.T.* is about an alien who comes to Earth and becomes friends with a young boy.
d. A film buff is someone that knows a lot about movies.
e. What do you call a movie that makes you laugh?
f. A musical is a movie that has singing and dancing.
g. I like movies that have a lot of action.

- Circle the word who in the sentences. Underline the word that. When do we use *who?*
  When do we use *that?*
- Look at sentences "f." and "g." One sentence uses *have*, the other uses *has*. Why?

  Answers on page 100

2. *Pairs*. Make a guess. What do you think these films
are about? Choose from the list on the right.

a. In *Roman Holiday*, Audrey Hepburn stars as a princess
b. *Trouble in Paradise* is about two thieves
c. *Babe* is about a pig
d. *Twister* is about two scientists
e. *Jaws* is about a huge shark
f. In *The Mask*, Jim Carrey finds a mask

- that eats swimmers.
- that wants to be a dog.
- who runs away from home.
- that has special powers.
- who study dangerous tornados.
- who fall in and out of love.

**Figure 7** *Transitions 1* (Oxford University Press, 1998)

The activity takes about fifteen minutes.

The sentences that are in the book have been transferred on to cards.

Teacher B divides the class into two groups of six students and hands out a set of cards to each group. He tells them to match the cards. Six movies are described on the cards; there are twelve cards in each set. Examples: *Trouble in Paradise* is about two thieves…(card 1A)…who fall in and out of love (card 1B); *Babe* is about a pig…(card 3A)…that wants to be a dog (card 6B). Students sit on the floor to work. They spread out the cards on the floor but are confused about what to do. The teacher gives them an example by matching one pair of sentences himself. Once students have understood what the teacher is asking them to do, they get down to work. Students interact loudly with each other as they move the cards around and try to match them correctly. They make an effort to use English to communicate and do so successfully. The teacher stands by the students as he watches them working, but does not intervene in their negotiation. Students are on task throughout the activity and are able to match the sentences correctly in the end. Once they have finished matching the cards, the teacher plays the tape for them to check their answers. (The tape has the correct answers.) The teacher checks to see if they have any questions. There aren't any, so he moves on to the next activity.

**Commentary** Teacher B adapted Activity 2 by doing two format switches. The first switch was from reading and drawing lines to speaking and matching cards. Instead of having the learners connect the two sentence halves by drawing a line in the book, he transferred the sentence halves onto cards. The second switch was from pair to group work. Instead of having them work in pairs, as suggested in the book, he asked them to work in groups of six. The teacher assumed that telling the students what to do was enough preparation for the activity. It didn't work. Once he had demonstrated what to do, they understood.

## Reflection

Why do you think Teacher B adapted the activity this way? What are the advantages of doing the activity the way the teacher has done it rather than the way it is suggested in the book? What are the disadvantages?

I see two important advantages to the way Teacher B has done it—group involvement and kinesthetic manipulation. One possible disadvantage is that students may not want to work on the floor or that there may not be space to spread the cards out on the floor.

Teacher C, in Extract 1 page 243, teaches in a private language school in Hong Kong. Her students are young adults. In the following example, we see how she teaches an information gap activity shown in Figure 8. In this kind of activity, Student A has information that Student B doesn't have and vice versa. The activity requires the students to use the target language in order to find out the missing information. Teacher C prepares the learners to do the activity, monitors them as they do, it and follows up with examples.

## Action

Along the side of Extract 1, draw lines where the three phases of the activity (preparing, doing, follow-up) begin and end.
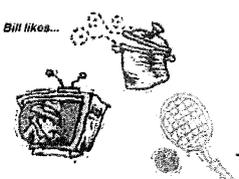
Then note where you find the following:

- Orienting the learners to the purpose of the activity
- Orienting the learners to how to do the activity (making sure they know what to do)
- Elicitation from learners
- Providing a context for the activity
- Monitoring the activity
- Personalizing

**Figure 8** *Expressions 1* (Heinle/Thomson, 2001)

In the classroom extracts, *T* stands for teacher and *S* represents a particular student. *Ss* stands for students.

**Extract 1**

**T:** *Right, now are you ready to do the info gap task? Yes? We've done lots of these, now, haven't we?*

**Ss:** *(Nod)*

**T:** *The purpose of this task is to give you more practice in the language we're learning in this unit. What ARE we practicing? Remember? Johnny?*

**S:** *Talk about what people like.*

**T:** *Talking about what people like—good. And?*

**S:** *Talking about gift giving.*

**T:** *Talking about gift giving. Right. These are our communication goals. And what structures do we use to do these things? ... Anyone? ... Yes, Mary?*

**S:** What do you like? *And* What do you like doing?

**T:** *Great! And we use* "like" *to talk about things, right? And* "like doing" *to talk about activities. What about making gift giving suggestions?*

**S:** Let's.

**T:** *OK, good,* Let's get him a CD, *or* Let's get Tom a golf club. *OK, now WHEN do we give people gifts? WHEN? Yes, Monica?*

**S:** Birthday.

**T:** *Birthdays are good.* (Writes *birthdays* on the board) *Johnny?*

**S:** New ... new baby.

**T:** *That's a good suggestion.* (Writes *new baby* on the board and continues eliciting until there are a number of events on the board.) *OK, now get into your pairs and I want Student A to look at page 107, and Student B to look at page 108.* (Peers over students' shoulder) *Johnny, you're the B student aren't you? You're looking at the wrong page. 108, please. Good. Now, Bill likes the things the A students can see in the picture, but he already has these things. OK? Understand, Monica? Right. So, tell your partner what Bill likes, and your partner will suggest gifts. Write the suggestions in the space, and then decide on the best idea. Oh, Student A—start off by suggesting a reason for buying a gift—look at the board—it's his birthday, he's going away and so on. Right, off you go.*

(The students complete the task. As they do so, the teacher circulates and monitors. When she hears a mistake, she writes it in a notebook, but does not interrupt the students.)

**T:** *OK, I think everybody's finished now. Are you two finished? Right, good. So, now I want you to do the same thing for Connie. B, tell A what Connie likes. A will make suggestions. Write them down then decide, decide on the best one, OK?*

(Again, the teacher circulates and monitors. At one point she is stopped by one pair, listens to their question and says "It's called a subscription—a subscription.")

**T:** *OK, time's up. Let's hear what each pair decided.* (Teacher elicits responses from the students and writes them on the board.) *Well, that's great—look at all these interesting gifts. Which of these gifts would YOU like to receive, Johnny? ... Sorry?*

**S:** *The California Fitness Subscription.*

*T: Yeah, I like that one, too. How about you, Sophie?* (She continues, elic-
iting students' preferences, and writing their names next to the gift.) *OK,
now, you all did very well, but I noticed a few mistakes creeping in here
and there. Look.*
(She writes the mistakes from her notebook on the board and gets students
to self-correct.)

**Commentary**  Teacher C provides an excellent example of how to introduce
and maintain control of an activity so that students are free to concentrate on
the task and practice the target language. When she elicits examples, she
makes sure to call on a variety of students. She is nonjudgmental in the way
she makes sure that students are "on task" and in the way she introduces error
correction at the end. She provides a human touch in her responses by not
only asking for students' personal preferences, but in commenting on what
they have chosen and on what she herself would choose.

# 6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I outlined some of the ways in which coursebooks have
changed through the years, as well as some of the disadvantages and advan-
tages of using coursebooks. I then explained five principles for using a course-
book, followed by techniques that show how to put the principles into prac-
tice: how a coursebook is organized, ways to prepare for, monitor, and follow
up an activity, ways to adapt and supplement what is in a coursebook, as well
as how to build a repertoire of one's own. In the last part of the chapter, we
looked at how three teachers prepare to teach using a coursebook.

## Further readings

**Graves, K.** 2000. *Designing Language Courses: A Guide for Teachers.* Boston, MA:
Heinle & Heinle.

Chapter 9, "Adapting a textbook," goes into more detail about ways to adapt a
coursebook at the syllabus, unit, or activity level with step-by-step examples from
teachers. It also discusses the "hidden curriculum" of coursebooks.

**Rinvolucri, M.** 2002. *Humanising Your Coursebook: Activities to bring your classroom
to life.* London: First Person Publishing.

This book describes 95 activities for using a coursebook with sections on warm-up
activities, grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, listening, speaking, and assessment.

**Woodward, T.** 2001. A Central Tool: The Coursebook, p. 145–160 in *Planning Lessons and Courses*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

> This section includes ideas for orienting yourself and the students to the coursebook as a whole as well as thoughtful ways to adapt it.

## Helpful Web sites

Many coursebooks now have their own Web sites to provide additional activities.

Here are Web addresses for a few of the major ESL/ELT publishers.

**Cambridge University Press (http://publishing.cambridge.org/elt)**

**Heinle/Thomson Publishing (http://www.heinle.com)**

**McGraw-Hill/Contemporary (http://mhcontemporary.com)**

**Oxford University Press (http://www.oup.co.uk)**

## References

**Acklam, R.** 1994. The Role of the Coursebook. *Practical English Teaching*, 14/3, 12–14.

**Hutchinson, T. and E. Torres** 1994. Textbook as Agent of Change. *ELT Journal* 43/4, 315–328.

**O'Neil, R.** 1993. Are Textbooks Symptoms of a Disease? *Practical English Teaching*, 14/1, 12–14.

**Sato, Y.** 2002. "Teacher and Student Learning in the Workplace." Paper presented at the annual conference of the Japan Association for Language Teaching, Shizuoka, Japan.

**Swan, M.** 1992. The Textbook: Bridge or Wall? *Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching*, 2/1: 32–35.

**Van Ek, J. A. and L. G. Alexander** 1975. *Threshold Level English*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

# BOX 13.1.1: IN FAVOUR OF USING A COURSEBOOK

## 1. Framework
A coursebook provides a clear framework: teacher and learners know where they are going and what is coming next, so that there is a sense of structure and progress.

## 2. Syllabus
In many places the coursebook serves as a syllabus: if it is followed systematically, a carefully planned and balanced selection of language content will be covered.

## 3. Ready-made texts and tasks
The coursebook provides texts and learning tasks which are likely to be of an appropriate level for most of the class. This of course saves time for the teacher who would otherwise have to prepare his or her own.

## 4. Economy
A book is the cheapest way of providing learning material for each learner; alternatives, such as kits, sets of photocopied papers or computer software, are likely to be more expensive relative to the amount of material provided.

## 5. Convenience
A book is a convenient package. It is bound, so that its components stick together and stay in order; it is light and small enough to carry around easily; it is of a shape that is easily packed and stacked; it does not depend for its use on hardware or a supply of electricity.

## 6. Guidance
For teachers who are inexperienced or occasionally unsure of their knowledge of the language, the coursebook can provide useful guidance and support.

## 7. Autonomy
The learner can use the coursebook to learn new material, review and monitor progress with some degree of autonomy. A learner without a coursebook is more teacher-dependent.

# BOX 13.1.2: AGAINST USING A COURSEBOOK

## 1. Inadequacy
Every class – in fact, every learner – has their own learning needs: no one coursebook can possibly supply these satisfactorily.

## 2. Irrelevance, lack of interest
The topics dealt with in the coursebook may not necessarily be relevant or interesting for your class.

## 3. Limitation
A coursebook is confining: its set structure and sequence may inhibit a teacher's initiative and creativity, and lead to boredom and lack of motivation on the part of the learners.

## 4. Homogeneity
Coursebooks have their own rationale and chosen teaching/learning approach. They do not usually cater for the variety of levels of ability and knowledge, or of learning styles and strategies that exist in most classes.

## 5. Over-easiness
Teachers find it too easy to follow the coursebook uncritically instead of using their initiative; they may find themselves functioning merely as mediators of its content instead of as teachers in their own right.

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