

## Reading Homework due Week 8

Read Chapter 4 from Practical English Language Teaching - Grammar by Nunan starting on the next page.

Especially pay attention to the “principles for teaching grammar to advanced learners” starting on page 119.

Choose **one** of the tasks below. Be prepared to share in week 9.

### **1. Help learners to identify the relationship between grammar and discourse.**

Find an example of discourse that has interesting grammar features that go beyond a sentence. For example a dialogue, an interview video, a newspaper article, and so on. Features of discourse include responses and discourse markers. Recordings of interviews are especially good for finding responses. Newspaper articles are good for finding discourse markers.

### **2. Encourage learners to explore differences between spoken and written English.**

Find an example of a difference between spoken and written English that is not mentioned in this reading.

### **3. Give learners systemic exposure to authentic language data.**

Find an authentic text (a text not designed specifically for teaching language), for example a newspaper article, a blog post or a video. Analyse the language used in the authentic text and find a grammar feature of the text that could be highlighted in a lesson.

Choose **one** of the above tasks and be prepared to share it next week.

# 4

## Chapter **Four**

# Grammar for advanced learners

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

### Goals

- ✓ **describe** the grammatical items that are typically taught to advanced learners.
- ✓ **explain** the following key principles used to support the teaching of grammar to advanced learners: help learners identify relationships between grammar and discourse, encourage learners to explore differences between spoken and written English, and give learners systematic exposure to authentic language data.
- ✓ **create** materials and activities based on the following task and activity types: consciousness-raising tasks, information gaps, problem-solving, grammar dictation/dictogloss, surveys, role-plays, projects, values clarification, and sentence sequencing.
- ✓ **examine** pieces of classroom interaction and identify the principles underpinning the instructional sequences as well as the strengths and weaknesses of each.
- ✓ **describe** practical techniques for assessing advanced learners' grammar.

# 1. Introduction

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In this chapter, we will explore aspects of teaching grammar to advanced students. The chapter follows a similar pattern to the previous two, looking briefly at syllabus design issues before discussing key concepts in the teaching of grammar to advanced learners. As with preceding chapters, the bulk of the chapter is devoted to the practicalities of teaching grammar to advanced learners, and looking at methods and materials. Next, we look at some samples of classroom interaction. Lastly, we look at how and when to assess advanced learners.

In communicative terms, what do we mean when we talk about “advanced” learners? The guidelines published by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (1986) provides the following snapshot of the advanced level language user:

- Able to satisfy the requirements of everyday situations and routine school and work requirements.
- Can handle with confidence, but not with facility, complicated tasks and social situations, such as elaborating, complaining, and apologizing.
- Can narrate and describe with some detail, linking sentences together smoothly.
- Can communicate facts and talk casually about topics of current public and personal interest, using general vocabulary.
- Can often smooth over by communicative strategies, such as pause fillers, stalling devices, and different rates of speech. Circumlocution, which arises from vocabulary or syntactic limitations, very often is quite successful, though some groping for words may still be evident.
- Can be understood without difficulty by native interlocutors.

## 2. Syllabus design issues

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At an advanced level, the syllabus consists mainly of elaborated items that have been introduced at lower levels. For example, simple passives are elaborated into perfect passive forms.

# Reflection



Study the items in Figure 1 on pages 116–117 and underline any that are unfamiliar to you. Find further examples of some of these in a grammar coursebook designed for advanced learners.

Unit	Grammar	Functions (Examples only—most grammatical structures can realize numerous functions)	Sample exponents
1	Passive: past and perfect forms	Describing past actions and events when the actors are unknown or unimportant	We can't get into the show because all of the tickets <i>have been sold</i> . The team <i>had been selected</i> by the time I got to the field.
2	Modals: Past forms of <i>can</i> ; <i>Could</i> versus <i>was able to</i>	Describing past abilities	I <i>could</i> tie my shoelaces when I was four. I <i>couldn't</i> knot my tie. The party was so crowded, I <i>couldn't</i> get out. I <i>was able to</i> get out through a side door.
3	Conditional clauses	Speculating about unlikely future events	I didn't bring an umbrella. Good thing the weather looks OK. <i>If it rained</i> , we'd probably get wet.
4	Existential subjects	Introducing a new topic or entity into the discourse	<i>There</i> is someone here to see you. <i>It</i> is important to be on time.
5	Anaphoric reference	Making multiple references to people, things and events in discourse.	I recently sold my car. <i>This</i> means I now have to walk to work.
6	Adverbial clauses	Providing additional/qualifying information about an event	<i>While I was driving to work yesterday</i> , I had an accident. <i>Having worked until midnight</i> , we were exhausted.
7	Conjunctions	Linking information to create coherent paragraphs	<i>in fact</i> ; <i>in addition</i> ; <i>furthermore</i>
8	Indirect questions	Reporting what other people ask	"What did you do wrong?" they asked. <i>They asked her what she had done wrong.</i>

Unit	Grammar	Functions (Examples only—most grammatical structures can realize numerous functions)	Sample exponents
9	Reported speech	Reporting what someone else said	"Being right isn't the most important thing," said Molly. <i>Molly said that being right wasn't the most important thing.</i>
10	Cohesion	Establishing relationships between entities and events across sentences	Tim left school early. <i>This is because he</i> was feeling unwell.
11	Past conditional	Speculating about past events that did not occur	You missed seeing the end of the race. <i>If you'd waited a few more minutes, you'd</i> have seen it.
12	Tag questions	Expressing degrees of certainty about one's state of knowledge	You're a teacher, aren't you? (rising intona- tion on tag) <i>versus</i> You're a teacher, aren't you? (falling intonation on tag) <i>versus</i> You're a teacher, are you?
13	Indirect requests	Making polite requests	I wonder if you could help us to design a new corporate logo?
14	Relative adverbials	Change the emphasis of information in a sentence or utterance	The way <i>in which the rescue happened</i> was nothing short of miraculous. <i>How the rescue happened</i> was nothing short of miraculous.
15	Wh- questions with gerunds and infinitives.	Describing thoughts, attitudes and feelings	<i>What did you consider doing</i> after graduation? <i>What did you intend to do</i> after graduation? <i>What did you want to do</i> after graduation? <i>What did you enjoy doing</i> after graduation?

**Figure 1** Typical grammatical and functional items for advanced level learners

Notice how the grammatical items at an advanced level are being used to express more abstract concepts and functions. In addition to expressing concrete meaning and functions, items such as conditionals, modals, and tag questions enable the speaker to speculate about past and future actions and events, and to add their own attitudinal meaning to the message. For example, the difference between *Are you a teacher?* and *You're a teacher, aren't you?* with rising intonation, is that the meaning of the second form of the question is something like, "I think that you're a teacher, but I'm really not sure." When the tag has a falling intonation, the meaning is "I'm almost certain that you're a teacher, but I'd like you to confirm it for me." Modals

and indirect requests also allow the speaker to add a layer of attitudinal meaning to the message. Cohesive devices (relative clauses and adverbials) and conjunctions allow the speaker to make multiple references and qualifications to events and states-of-affairs.



1. Review the Table of Contents or Scope and Sequence of three course books (books which teach all four language skills) for advanced level learners and make an inventory of the structures and functions that are common to them.
2. What are the five most frequently occurring structures?
3. Compare the books. Are the structures matched with similar or different functions?
4. How do they compare with the Table of Contents from a popular intermediate level grammar book (page 118–119)?

Grammar items	Examples
Tenses: Present simple and continuous; present perfect simple and continuous; past continuous; past perfect; past perfect continuous	I do; I am doing; I did; I have done; I was doing; I have been doing; I had done; I had been doing
Tenses: Future – will, going to; present simple for future; future continuous; future perfect continuous; infinitive constructions, future in the past	I will do; I am doing; I'm going to do; I will be doing; I am to do; I will have done; I will have been doing; I was going to do
Modals	should vs. ought to; will; would; used to; may; might; can; could; be able to; must; have to; needn't; don't have to; mustn't
Linking verbs	be; appear; seem; become; get
Passives: Past, perfect and future forms	It was done. It has been done. It had been done. It will be done.
Reporting questions	She wanted to know if I'd seen the movie.
Nouns and compounds	the kitchen cupboard; an answering machine

Grammar items	Examples
Articles	English has become an international language. English has become the international language of business.
Quantifiers: Some, some of, any, any of	Some people are missing. Some of the people are missing.
Relative clauses	My brother, who is only six, can speak four languages. My brother, who lives in New York, can speak four languages.
Reflexive pronouns	He gave himself a present for his birthday.
Participle adjectives	the losing ticket; the selected winners
Adverbs and conjunctions	although; even though; in spite of
Prepositions	along from; throughout; during; except
Organizing information	there is/are; it

**Figure 2** Table of Contents *Advanced Grammar in Use* (Hewings, 2000)

### 3. Principles for teaching grammar to advanced learners

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As I indicated in Chapters 2 and 3, teaching principles can apply across levels. However, in each chapter, we discussed those principles that are particularly appropriate to the proficiency level under examination. In this section, we will discuss the following three key principles for teaching grammar to advanced learners:

1. Help learners to identify the relationships between grammar and discourse.
2. Encourage learners to explore differences between spoken and written English.
3. Give learners systematic exposure to authentic language data.

## 1. Help learners to identify relationships between grammar and discourse.

Most grammar books describe grammar as a sentence-level phenomenon. In fact, many define grammar as a set of rules for determining what is grammatical or ungrammatical at the level of the sentence. However, work in linguistics has demonstrated that many aspects of the grammar within a particular sentence can only be understood with reference to the sentences that surround it. This is particularly true once we begin to explore advanced grammatical features. At an advanced level, it is often less a matter of determining whether or not a sentence is grammatically correct than in deciding whether it is appropriate given the context in which it appears. Consider the following sentences, both of which describe an identical past state of affairs.

I was an English teacher.

I used to be an English teacher.

While both are grammatically correct, it is not true to say that both are equally appropriate once the overall context is taken into consideration. For example, the more appropriate response to the question, *What did you do in Korea?* would be, *I was an English teacher.* The more appropriate response to the question, *How come you know how to describe the difference between the present perfect and the simple past?* would be, *I used to be an English teacher.*

According to the Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (1999), there are only five grammar items in English that are completely separate from the discursal contexts in which they occur. These are:

- subject – verb agreement
- determiner – noun agreement
- use of gerunds after prepositions
- reflexive pronominalization within the clause  
(*I finished the task myself.*)
- some/any suppletions in the environment of negation (*I'd like some food, but I don't want any wine.*).

As a further example of how discourse affects the grammatical structure of a sentence, consider the question of the use of the passive voice. The traditional way of teaching the passive was to provide students with a list of statements in the active voice (*The boy broke the window.*), furnish a model of how to transform the active voice sentences into their passive equivalents (*The window was broken by the boy.*), and then let them get on with transforming the active forms into the passive. While such a practice is fine for teaching how to form the passive, it gives no insight into why we have the passive or



when we use it. In other words, it doesn't explain what the passive functions are in English. Consider the following two possible beginnings to a news report.

**Version 1**

The politician was found guilty of fraud. The judge sentenced him to three years in prison.

**Version 2**

The politician was found guilty of fraud. He was sentenced to three years in prison.

Most people intuitively feel that Version 2 “reads better.” The reason is that in Version 1, the subject of the sentence jumps from the politician in the first sentence to the judge in the second sentence. In Version 2, use of the passive enables the writer to maintain the politician as the topic of the discourse. This is yet another example of the interaction and interrelationship between sentence level and discourse level considerations.

## **2. Encourage learners to explore differences between spoken and written English.**

Until recently, it was assumed that there was a single, monolithic entity called “the grammar of English.” However, with the development of **discourse analysis** and **conversational analysis**, linguists are beginning to appreciate the fact that spoken English has its own particular grammatical features, that these are systematic, and that they can be studied and taught in their own right. Hitherto, the grammar that was taught in the classroom was the grammar of written English. The deviations from written norms that occurred in spoken language we assumed were corruptions or “lazy” English.

McCarthy, who has studied the particular nature of spoken language over many years, makes the following points:

- Spoken language pedagogy cannot simply just proceed from the same assumptions as written language pedagogy with regard to language use. The historical dominance of the written language in applied linguistics has militated against good understanding of the spoken language.
- Spoken language has its own grammar and lexicon which, although coinciding in most cases with the written language, differ in crucial areas that correspond to the goals and relations of interactants in particular settings.

- We can only begin to describe the special **lexicon-grammar** of talk by looking at real data.
- The best data for a pedagogical theory of spoken language is everyday, informal talk.
- Observation of spoken language use by participants in real encounters of various kinds is the first step in building language syllabuses and teaching materials. (McCarthy, 1998, p. 47)

### 3. Give learners systematic exposure to authentic language data.

The third principle is indirectly related to the second principle. In order to appreciate the different qualities and characteristics of spoken versus written language, it is important for learners to listen to and read both spoken and written authentic language texts. **Authentic texts** are those that have come into existence in the course of two or more people communicating with each other. **Non-authentic texts**, on the other hand, have been specially written by textbook writers or teachers for use in language teaching.

In the early stages of language learning, learners are given non-authentic texts to listen to and read because the language is easier to process. Low frequency vocabulary is replaced by high frequency vocabulary, the rate of speech in spoken texts is slowed down, and speakers enunciate more clearly than in authentic speech. These modifications to the language that learners work with all help to “easify” the language learning process—and after all, isn’t that the purpose of having classes anyway?

As learners develop their proficiency, however, they should be given increasing opportunities to work with authentic texts. Such opportunities will help to prepare them for dealing with language outside the classroom.

Considering only spoken language at this time, what are some of the differences between non-authentic and authentic texts? The transcript below and the text that follows demonstrate well the differences between the two. Figure 3 (page 123) is an authentic transcript of two people ordering food in a restaurant.

**A:** I'm gonna have nachos, I'm addicted to it...I want.... They don't do cider and I don't want beer. You don't do cider, do you?

**B:** Sorry.

**A:** Don't do cider.

**B:** No.

**C:** I'll have the deep fried mushrooms with erm, an Old Timer burger, can I have cheese on it?

**B:** What cheese?

**C:** What's the difference?

**B:** Swiss. Monterey Jack is an American cheese [inaudible] how would you like it cooked?

**C:** Erm, well done.

**B:** Yes?

**A:** Can I have the, er, nachos and, erm, I was wondering whether to have a veggie burger or the normal burger, erm, are the veggie burgers nice?

**B:** They're okay, they're not made on the premises though.

**A:** All right I'll have, er, I'll have a normal burger then, with barbecued beans.

**B:** How would you like it cooked?

**A:** Erm medium.

**B:** And drinks?

**A:** Er d'you have, er, have you got pineapple juice?

**B:** [nods her head]

**A:** Can I have pineapple juice mixed with white wine? Mixed together.

**B:** White wine.

**A:** Yeah, in a big glass with loads of ice.

**C:** [laughs] Erm, can I have, erm, mineral water, sparkling one?

**B:** Okay.

**C:** Thanks.

**Figure 3** A transcript of an authentic conversation

Figure 4 is a non-authentic text of the same conversation. This “cleaned up” version is designed to simulate the language function *ordering food and drink*.

- A:** I'm going to have nachos. I'm addicted to them. They don't sell cider here, and I don't want beer. You don't sell cider here, do you?
- B:** I beg your pardon?
- A:** You don't sell cider here, do you?
- B:** No, I'm afraid we don't.
- C:** I'll have the deep fried mushrooms with an Old Timer burger. Could I have cheese on it, please?
- B:** Certainly. What kind of cheese would you like?
- C:** What kinds of cheese do you have?
- B:** We have Swiss cheese, and we have Monterey Jack. Monterey Jack is an American cheese. How would you like your hamburger cooked?
- C:** I'd like it well done, please.
- B:** And what would you like?
- A:** Could I have the nachos? And I was wondering whether to have a veggie burger or the normal burger. Are the veggie burgers nice?
- B:** They're okay, although they're not made on the premises.
- A:** In that case, I'll have a normal burger with barbecued beans.
- B:** How would you like it cooked?
- A:** Medium, please.
- B:** And what would you like to drink?
- A:** Do you have pineapple juice?
- B:** Yes, we do.
- A:** Can I have pineapple juice mixed with white wine?
- B:** Pineapple and white wine? Certainly.
- A:** Would you mind putting it in a big glass with lots of ice?
- C:** And could I have sparkling mineral water?
- B:** Certainly.
- C:** Thank you very much.

**Figure 4** An alternative version of an authentic conversation



Study the two texts in Figures 3 and 4 and make a list of at least seven differences between them. Share your list with a classmate or colleague.

As you can see, it is important to move advanced learners towards more authentic texts. As most experienced teachers can tell you, often students will complain that they understand the English in class but cannot understand what people are saying outside of class. Porter and Roberts (1981) identified the following features as differentiating specially-written or simulated conversations from authentic speech.

Feature	Comment
Intonation	Marked by unusually wide and frequent pitch movement.
Received pronunciation	Most speakers on British ELT tapes have an RP accent which is different from that which learners will normally hear in Britain.
Enunciation	Words are enunciated with excessive precision.
Structural repetition	Particular structures/functions recur with obtrusive frequency.
Complete sentences	Sentences are short and well-formed.
Distinct turn-taking	One speaker waits until the other has finished.
Pace	This is typically slow.
Quantity	Speakers generally say about the same amount.
Attention signals	“Uhuh’s” and “mm’s” are generally missing.
Formality	Materials are biased towards standardized language; swearing and slang are rare.
Limited vocabulary	Few references to specific, real-world entities and events.
Too much information	Generally more explicit reference to people, objects and experiences than in real language.
Mutilation	Texts rarely marred by outside noise.

**Figure 5** A comparison of authentic to non-authentic speech

Brown and Menasche (1993) suggest that five different kinds of text can be found in language teaching:

- **genuine (authentic):** created only for the realm of real life, not for classroom, but used in language teaching;
- **altered:** no meaning change, but the original is no longer as it was (glossing, visual resetting, pictures or colors adapted);
- **adapted:** created for real life (words and grammatical structures changed to simplify the text);
- **simulated:** written by the author as if the material is genuine; many genuine characteristics;
- **minimal/incidental:** created for the classroom; no attempt to make the material seem genuine.

Generally speaking, as we move from teaching beginning to advanced learners, we would expect to find a gradual increase from minimal/incidental to genuine.

## Reflection



Which of these descriptions best fits the text in Figure 4 on page 124?

## 4. Tasks and materials

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The purpose of this section is to describe and illustrate some task and activity types that can be used with advanced learners. Most also encapsulate one or more of the key principles described earlier in the chapter. The following task and exercise types are explained and exemplified in this section:

1. Consciousness-raising tasks
2. Information gaps
3. Problem-solving
4. Grammar dictation/Dictogloss
5. Surveys
6. Role-plays
7. Projects
8. Values clarification
9. Sentence sequencing

### 1. Consciousness-raising tasks

**Consciousness-raising** tasks are designed to draw learners' attention to a particular linguistic feature through a range of inductive and deductive procedures. The assumption here is not that a feature once raised to consciousness will be immediately incorporated into the learner's interlanguage, but that it is a first step in that direction. (This notion is consistent with the principle of *recycling* introduced in Chapter 2.)

### Example 1

A. What is the difference between verbs like *give* and *explain*?

She gave a book to her father. (grammatical)

She gave her father a book. (grammatical)

The policeman explained the law to Mary. (grammatical)

The policeman explained Mary the law. (ungrammatical)

B. Indicate whether the following sentences are grammatical or ungrammatical.

1. They saved Mark a seat.

2. His father read Kim a story.

3. She donated the hospital some money.

4. They suggested Mary a trip on the river.

5. They reported the police the accident.

6. They threw Mary a party.

7. The bank lent Mr. Thatcher some money.

8. He indicated Mary the right turning.

9. The festival generated the college a lot of money.

10. He cooked his girlfriend a cake.

C. Work out a rule for verbs like *give* and *explain*.

1. List the verbs in B that are like *give* (i.e., permit both sentence patterns) and those that are like *explain* (i.e., allow only one sentence pattern).

2. What is the difference between the verbs in your two lists?

*Communicating about grammar: A task-based approach.* In *TESOL Quarterly* (Fotos and Ellis, 1991)

## 2. Information gaps

As indicated in Chapters 2 and 3, information gaps are designed in such a way as to ensure that two or more students are in possession of unique information that must be shared with their partner or group in order for the task to be completed successfully.



The following task is designed to get students to use reported speech. (My aunt said that it seemed to be dangerous.)

1. How would you set up the task so that students actually practiced the target form?
2. Design a pre-task for the information gap.
3. Share your pre-task with a classmate or colleague.

## Example 2


7

Work In Pairs

Student A


Student B: Use page 116

**A** You are thinking about buying a motorcycle. Why do you think this would be a good idea? Look at the opinions of some people you know.




**Your sister**

It would be really convenient. You could save time by not taking the bus anymore.




**Your father**

It could be expensive. Think about the insurance, repairs, maintenance, and fuel.



**Your friend**

I have one, so if you get one too, we can go riding together in the countryside.



**Your aunt**

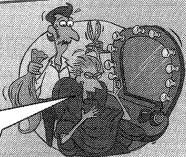
It seems so dangerous. There are so many accidents, you know.

**B** Tell your partner about each person's opinion. Does your partner agree with them? What does your partner think you should do?

Your Partner's Advice

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**C** Your partner is thinking about joining a health club. Listen to the opinions your partner has received. Which ones do you agree with? What do you think your partner should do?



Well, at least it will be a lot easier to take care of.

Try this

What have you decided to do about buying a motorcycle? Note your decision and your reasons. Then find out what your partner decided to do about joining a health club.

My decision: \_\_\_\_\_

Reasons: \_\_\_\_\_



# 7

## Work In Pairs

Student B

Student A: Use page 115

**A** You are thinking about joining a health club. Why do you think this would be a good idea? Look at the opinions of some people you know.



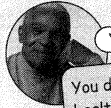
Your mother

It seems unnecessary. I think you can easily exercise on your own.



Your cousin

You'll get into shape and feel better. It's definitely worth it.



Your uncle

You don't need to join a health club. It's a waste of money and you have no time.

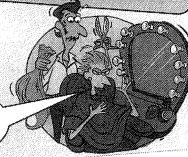


Your friend

Health clubs are great. You'll exercise more, plus you'll meet new people.

**B** Your partner is thinking about buying a motorcycle. Listen to the opinions your partner has received. Which ones do you agree with? What do you think your partner should do?

Well, at least it will be a lot easier to take care of.



**C** Tell your partner about each person's opinion in 'A.' Does your partner agree with them? What does your partner think you should do?

**Your Partner's Advice**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



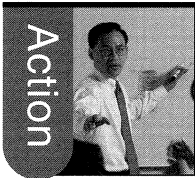
### Try this

What have you decided to do about joining a health club? Note your decision and your reasons. Then find out what your partner decided to do about buying a motorcycle.

My decision: \_\_\_\_\_

Reasons: \_\_\_\_\_

*Expressions: Meaningful English Communication. Book 3*  
(Nunan, 2001, pp. 115–116)



Action

Follow the model provided in Example 2 and design an information gap task for one of the grammar items in Figure 1 on pages 116–117.

### 3. Problem-solving

At an advanced level, the possibilities for encouraging genuinely creative language use become much greater. Problem-solving tasks are ideal for encouraging such language use. With students at lower levels of proficiency, it is usually a good idea to select problems that have a single or preferred solution. At advanced levels, however, you want to encourage students to

reason, hypothesize, make a case for their own ideas and opinions, and explore a range of competing options. These higher level communication skills can often be more effectively achieved if the problem scenario is open-ended, or if a range of plausible alternatives are offered to the students to negotiate on.

## Reflection



The challenge in the task below is to determine and utilize a range of overlapping and somewhat conflicting information in order to make a personal decision about a preferred vacation trip. What grammar do you think the participants will need?

### Example 3

#### Challenge 7A

#### Task 1

- a You want to go on an eco-tourism trip, so you picked up a couple of brochures. Now you have to decide which of these trips would be best to take. You go to see a travel agent who has more information about each trip.
- b Ask the travel agent questions to find out which trip . . .
  - is the most exciting.
  - is the most dangerous.
  - lets you see the most exotic animals.
  - lets you see the most endangered species.
  - takes you to the most mysterious places.
  - has the most extreme weather.
  - is the most unusual.
  - is the cheapest.
- c Ask any other questions you like and decide which trip you are going to take, and why.

#### 15-DAY TRIP TO THE SOUTH POLE



Take the trip of a lifetime! A never-to-be-forgotten journey to the frozen wastelands of the South Pole. Available to specially-selected clients only.

#### 21-DAY ECO-TRIP TO THE AMAZON JUNGLE



Travel the Amazon River. See beautiful and exotic creatures and experience the mystery of the jungle.

#### TWO-WEEK TRIP TO NORTHERN AUSTRALIA



Visit the jungles of Far North Queensland. See some of the most unusual creatures on earth in their native habitat.

#### Task 2

Now change roles and do the task again.

### Challenge 2C

*Student C*

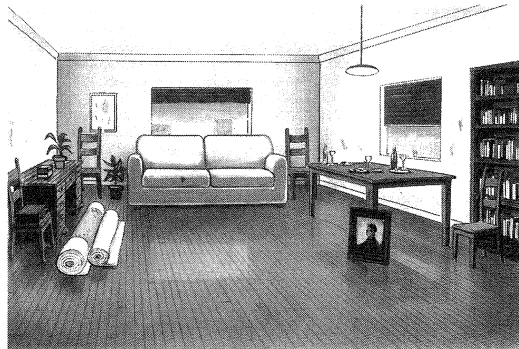
You are taking part in an interview between a journalist and a person you rescued from an island. You were on a sailing trip when you saw the wreckage of a light plane in the water. You had heard on the news that the plane had been missing for four days. You went ashore and found the person who looked frightened and confused. He/She had had nothing to eat or drink and had not slept while on the island.

### Challenge 6B

You've just returned from a vacation and you receive a call from your roommate who had a party while you were away. He/She asked his/her friends to clean up after the party because he/she had to go away for the weekend. Listen to what the friends were asked to do and then say what they really did.



"Well, the CDs have been put back in their cases, but they've been put on the desk, not on the bookcase."



*ATLAS Learning-Centered Communication. Student Book 4*  
(Nunan, 1996, pp. 115–116)

Action



If possible, record two language students completing the task in Example 3. Analyze the recording. Did the students use the predicted grammar items?

## 4. Grammar dictation/Dictogloss

As we have already seen, grammar dictation, or dictogloss tasks require learners to activate all of their current grammatical knowledge to reconstruct a text. At an advanced level, they are excellent for activating the key principle of exploring relationships between grammar and discourse.



According to Wajnryb (1990) the following text can be used to practice reported speech, embedded questions, and the past perfect tense. Underline one example of each in the text and then design a grammar dictation lesson around the text.

Tradition says that mothers are full of words of wisdom, but how much of their advice is taken to heart? Recently a number of people were asked what advice their mothers had given them. One recalled that her mother had always told her to show her appreciation of other people. Another mother had said that winning didn't matter but trying did. A third had warned her son never to conform blindly to the crowd. People were also asked whether they had followed their mother's advice, and most claimed they had.

Wajnryb's notes on how to teach the above grammar dictation are as follows:

#### Example 4

### 3.3 The best advice

#### TOPIC

Growing up  
Children and mothers

#### LANGUAGE POINTS

Reported speech  
Embedded questions  
Past perfect tense  
Substitution

#### WARM-UP

- 1 Start the session by introducing the subject of advice.
- 2 Next, ask your students questions such as:
  - *Who gave you the best advice when you were growing up?*
  - *What sort of advice, if any, did your mother give you?*
  - *Did you take her advice to heart?*
  - *Now, with hindsight, what are your views on parental advice and on advice in general?*

**Note:** Some of your students may not know the meaning of the word *hindsight*. Explain to them that it means 'wisdom about an event after it has occurred' (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 4th edition, 1989).

3 The students' responses should lead naturally into the text.

**PRE-TEXT  
VOCABULARY**

**wisdom** (*n*) knowledge, especially that which comes from the experience of living  
**to take to heart** (*idm*) to accept seriously  
**appreciation** (*n*) gratitude, good opinion  
**to conform** (*v*) to copy what others do

**TEXT**

1 Tradition says that mothers are full of words of wisdom but how much of their advice is taken to heart? 2 Recently a number of people were asked what advice their mothers had given them. 3 One recalled that her mother had always told her to show her appreciation of other people. 4 Another mother had said that winning didn't matter but trying did. 5 A third had warned her son never to conform blindly to the crowd. 6 People were also asked whether they had followed their mother's advice and most claimed they had.

**NOTES**

**S2** *what advice* – This is the beginning of an embedded question in which the subject/verb order follows the rule for declarative sentences.

**S3** *one* – That is, *one of the people who were interviewed*.

**S3** *had . . . told her* – The past perfect tense is an example of backshift appropriate to reported speech. Other examples of this are *had said* (S4) and *had warned* (S5).

**S4** *winning . . . trying* – These gerunds function as the subject of the noun clause.

**S4** *did* – That is, *did matter*.

**S6** *whether* – *Whether* is used when there is a choice of two options, in this case: if they did follow the advice or if they did not.

**S6** *had* – That is, *had followed the advice*.

*Grammar Dictation* (Wajnryb, 1990, pp. 82–83)

## 5. Surveys

As discussed in chapters 2 and 3, surveys are great for beginning and intermediate level learners because you can determine the grammar that students must use, while at the same time allowing for genuine communication exchange. With advanced learners, the task should be more open-ended.

### Example 5

1. Pair work. Using the cues below, interview your partner. Write his or her answer on the line.
  - time spent watching television per day? \_\_\_\_\_
  - number of movies seen per month? \_\_\_\_\_
  - time spent studying or reading per week? \_\_\_\_\_
  - time spent traveling to work/school per week? \_\_\_\_\_
  - money spent on food and drink per week? \_\_\_\_\_
  - time spent talking on the telephone per week? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Now make statements about your partner beginning with the following:

“By the end of this week, you will have \_\_\_\_\_.”

or

“By the end of this month, you will have \_\_\_\_\_.”

*ATLAS Learning-Centered Communication. Student Book 4*  
(Nunan, 1996, p. 88)

## 6. Role-plays

For many writers, the terms role-play and simulation refer to the same thing. However, the difference for me is that in a role-play the student gets to pretend to be someone else, and at the very least can adopt a persona, which does not necessarily require them to reveal their own feelings and attitudes. In a simulation, they are speaking for themselves. The distancing effect of pretending to be someone else often provides students with a greater sense of security, and from that point of view they feel safer. However, once learners reach an advanced level, the focus should begin to move from role-play to simulation.

## Reflection

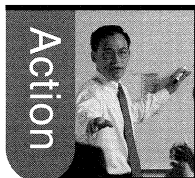


What language would you pre-teach in setting up the role-play task in Example 6?

## Example 6

<p><b>2.12 Partner baiting: optimists and pessimists</b></p> <p>Students are given conflicting attitudes to a topic.</p> <p><b>LEVEL</b> Intermediate upwards</p> <p><b>TIME</b> 15 minutes</p> <p><b>AIM</b> To develop students' sensitivity to attitudes expressed in language.</p> <p><b>LANGUAGE</b> Structures: negative questions in polite disagreement. Functions: expressing likes and dislikes, disagreeing.</p> <p><b>ORGANIZATION</b> Pairs (also possible with groups of three or four students).</p> <p><b>PREPARATION</b> Select a relevant topic for the activity. Some suggestions are: a film or book that has been in the news recently; politics (if this subject is suitable for your class); a new landmark or building. Prepare role cards A and B for the class. See page 74 for examples of the type of role cards you will need.</p> <p><b>WARM-UP</b> None. It is important to go straight into this activity.</p> <p><b>PROCEDURE</b> 1 Divide the students into pairs. If there is an odd number, it is possible to double up a role. In particularly fluent and cooperative classes, it is possible to double up on each role card and do the activity in groups of four.</p>	<p>2 Distribute the role cards to students A and students B. It is vital that they do not read each other's role cards.</p> <p>3 Ask the students to read their cards, and give them time to become familiar with the situation.</p> <p>4 Begin the role play and monitor the activity closely, noting any difficulties which you had not predicted.</p> <p><b>ROLE CARD A</b> You approve of . . . Describe all the good aspects. Exaggerate your praise. Do not change your mind, whatever your partner says. Be polite!</p> <p><b>ROLE CARD B</b> You disapprove of . . . Describe all the bad aspects. Disagree systematically with your partner. Be polite!</p> <p><b>FOLLOW-UP</b> 1 When the role play is over, ask the students how long it took them to discover that there were conflicting attitudes on their cards, and discuss how well your students role-played these attitudes. 2 Encourage the students to talk about people they know who have very marked positive or negative attitudes to life, who are always criticizing or always cheerful.</p> <p><b>VARIATION 1</b> 'Opinion was split down the middle'. For intermediate students upwards.</p> <p><b>PROCEDURE</b> 1 Divide the students into groups of up to seven. 2 Ask one student in each group to go out of the room to prepare a topic which he or she will talk about to the rest of his or her group. In the meantime brief the rest of the students: tell half of them in each group to agree systematically with everything the speaker says, and the other half to disagree. You can suggest a few expressions of polite agreement and disagreement at this stage, such as: Agreement – Yes, I agree it certainly is/was . . . – Of course, there's absolutely no doubt about that. – I think you're absolutely right. – I think you have a good point there. – I couldn't agree more. Disagreement – I wouldn't say that exactly. – That's not quite how I see it. – That's rather a sweeping statement, isn't it? – I'm afraid I'm not convinced. 3 Ask the speakers to come back into the room. Tell them to keep talking on their chosen subjects for as long as possible. It will be interesting to see how long it takes before the speakers realize that something is strange. 4 Initiate a discussion at the end of the activity with the whole class on how it went.</p>
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*Role Play* (Ladousse, 1987, pp. 73–74)



If possible get a group of students to complete the role-play in Example 6. Record and review the role-play. Did the learners use some of the language you predicted? In light of this experience, how would you set up the role-play next time?

## 7. Projects

Projects are larger in scale than most of the other tasks and activities described so far. As such, they are excellent for advanced level learners as they can be designed in such a way as to incorporate the practice of a range of different grammatical items.

### Reflection



For each of the 7 procedural steps of the project described in Example 7, brainstorm some of the grammatical items that will help students complete the project.

### Example 7

## 3 Trips

### 3.1 Planning a trip

In this project students plan a trip as part of a business English course. This trip can be real or imaginary.

<b>LEVEL</b>	Elementary to intermediate
<b>AGE RANGE</b>	16 years and above
<b>TIME</b>	<b>One term</b> (scheduled at a time when the project can be followed up by the trip, if possible)
<b>GENERAL AIMS</b>	To prepare the class for a trip abroad, or if this is not possible, to plan an imaginary trip.
<b>LANGUAGE AIMS</b>	To use expressions related to asking for information, requesting brochures, etc.; to practise reading skills by accessing the Internet and finding information from library resources; to write emails or letters booking accommodation and flights (for real trips only).
<b>LOCATION</b>	Libraries, tourist offices.
<b>RESOURCES</b>	Maps, brochures, catalogues, underground maps, bus routes, timetables, tourist booklets; information on accommodation and sightseeing attractions; access to computers and the Internet (optional); addresses and phone numbers of tourist-information centres; tape recorders and cameras, video camera.
<b>TEACHER PREPARATION</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 Decide on a destination and dates, then, if you are outside the country of destination, collect the relevant resources.</li><li>2 Make sure that the syllabus includes the relevant areas of travel English and give the students input and practice during the course.</li><li>3 Calculate the approximate cost if you decide to go on a real trip, inform students, and if necessary get parental consent.</li></ol>
<b>STUDENT PREPARATION</b>	If you are already in the country you are going to travel in, students can take responsibility for gathering the resources. They can also search the Internet for useful sites and do general background reading on the country they are visiting.



**PROCEDURE**

- 1 In three groups students pool their knowledge of the destination and useful sources of information they have found.
- 2 Discuss as a class what general and travel topics each group is going to research:
  - *General:* geography, history, education, music, sport, leisure
  - *Travel:* accommodation (A), entertainment (B), transportation (C)
- 3 After general topics have been chosen or allocated, the groups then do research on these in their own time, building up a file of information, examples, typed-up notes, website printouts, etc. Class time can be allocated for coordinating the material and planning a presentation to the rest of the class.
- 4 For the travel topics the students work in class as follows:
  - *Group A:* Using the material gathered, students select a number of hotels or bed and breakfast facilities and write letters of enquiry asking for location, availability, prices, etc. These letters/emails should be checked before being sent.
  - *Group B:* Students should write to or phone tourist offices asking for information about museums, galleries, restaurants, shows, sightseeing tours, etc. They should ask about opening and closing times, ticket prices, booking, etc. Any correspondence should be checked before being sent.
  - *Group C:* This group should check the Internet for airline-company sites and on-line ticket sales. They should also contact car-hire and railway companies, check road and rail maps, calculate travel times and costs, the most efficient and convenient means of travelling, etc.
- 5 One of the most exciting moments in any project is probably when students' letters bring the authentic replies into the classroom. Share all this material by asking students to read it aloud, discuss the information, and note preferences. Put the letters on a notice board in the classroom for everyone to see.
- 6 When enough information has been gathered, the students then pool their resources. For small classes, this can be done as a class. For larger classes, students should regroup in mixed A, B, C groups. They decide the schedule in detail coordinating all three categories (A, B, and C).
- 7 The hotel and flights, transfer from the airport to your destination, travel cards, and anything else like theatre or concert tickets, have to be reserved well in advance. For real trips, no bookings should be made without your consent. For imaginary trips, real companies should not be approached for anything more than information.

**FOLLOW-UP**

The trip itself will involve using English in a wide range of everyday travel situations. The students can video their trip and show it on their return along with a commentary or voice-over. They may also wish to keep a diary, give their personal comments on the trip, give mini presentations based on photos they have taken, etc.

**VARIATION**

If the class cannot go on the trip, concentrate instead on producing a city fact file which can be made available to others or displayed in the local tourist office for the benefit of potential travellers.

**COMMENT**

This is a very ambitious project but one which offers a great deal of potential from everyone's point of view.

**Acknowledgements**

Many thanks to Daniela Calzoni, Istituto Professionale Servizi Commerciale e Turistici, Poppi, Italy for the original idea.

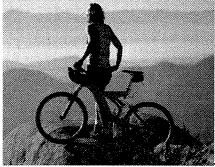
*Project Work (Fried-Booth, 1986, pp. 68–70)*

## 8. Values clarification

One of the beauties of working with advanced learners is the potential to introduce increasingly sophisticated and abstract subject matter. Values clarification exercises provide an excellent means of encouraging students to express their attitudes and feelings. As Nolasco and Arthur explain:

Values clarification techniques aim to get students to make explicit the reasons behind their judgment on a social issue, choice of a particular set of objects, etc. They follow a similar pattern to ranking activities, in that a period of individual work is followed by group or class discussion. These tasks can be very threatening and they should not be introduced before a group has managed to get to know each other well, and has achieved a positive working relationship. The subject matter may also not be acceptable to students from some cultures, and teachers are encouraged to adapt these tasks if issues, such as sexual assault, are taboo. (1992, p. 99)

### Reflection



Look at the four activities in Example 8. What values might students discuss in each activity?

## Example 8

### 1 Re-write the Dialogue

With a partner, re-write the conversation. The phrases below will help you.

I'll see what I can do.    It shouldn't be long.    I'll do the best I can.    It's a long story.  
Should be any day now.    I'm working on it.    It may take a while.    I haven't got around to it yet.

Boss: \_\_\_\_\_  
Clint: \_\_\_\_\_  
Boss: \_\_\_\_\_  
Clint: \_\_\_\_\_  
Boss: \_\_\_\_\_  
Clint: \_\_\_\_\_  
Boss: \_\_\_\_\_  
Clint: \_\_\_\_\_  
Boss: \_\_\_\_\_  
Clint: \_\_\_\_\_  
Boss: \_\_\_\_\_  
Clint: \_\_\_\_\_  
Boss: \_\_\_\_\_  
Clint: \_\_\_\_\_

#### When you finish:

1. Ask the teacher for more suggestions.
2. Practice the new conversation with, then without script.
3. Act out the new conversation, then show the class.

### 2 Role Play

A: Mr/s Ward! Do you have your homework? B: Sorry... can I bring it tomorrow?

In pairs, decide:

1. Who is A? Who is B?
2. Where are they?
3. Make a complete conversation until you reach a solution.
4. Your teacher will ask you to show the class.

### 3 Who said it?

Some of the things below were said by Ed, a super-worker, and others were said by Ken, who is lazy and procrastinates. In pairs, decide who said what.

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. I'll be there in a minute.                             | 8. Yeah, sooner or later.             |
| 2. I'll get to it tomorrow.                               | 9. We've got plenty of time.          |
| 3. It was about time.                                     | 10. It'll just take a second.         |
| 4. It's long overdue.                                     | 11. I can't work on an empty stomach. |
| 5. I'll do it first thing in the morning.                 | 12. That's pushing it, I think.       |
| 6. There's no better time than the present.               | 13. It should be no problem.          |
| 7. I'll have it ready for you first thing in the morning. | 14. I'll make it up to you.           |

Now work out another scene like the first one between Clint and his boss. If you were a small business owner, what qualities would you look for in an employee?

## AVOIDING COMMITMENT

### The New Girl

Conrad and Ken are in the employee's lounge. What is their mistake and why do they make it?

Conrad: Hey... Who's the new girl?  
Ken: Well, from what I understand she's the new secretary. Cute, huh?  
Conrad: Very. But, my understanding was that they were hiring some guy from the other department.  
Ken: I'm just going by what they've told me.  
Conrad: Well, I'm no expert, but that outfit she's wearing doesn't look cheap.  
Ken: Well, from what I hear she has expensive tastes in both clothes and men.  
Conrad: So who's going to be the new supervisor?  
Ken: From what I gathered they've got somebody from the outside – but don't quote me on that.  
Conrad: Really? I wonder who.  
Ken: As far as I know he hasn't shown up yet – but I could be wrong. Hey, look! Here comes that cute new girl.  
'Cute Girl': Good morning, gentlemen. I don't believe we've met. My name's Therese.  
Ken: Hi, Therese. Are you the new secretary?  
Therese: [visibly upset] Actually, the way I understand it is that I'll be your new supervisor.  
Ken & Conrad: Oh.

100

99

Conversation (Nolasco and Arthur, 1992, pp. 99–100)

## 9. Sentence sequencing

Sentence sequencing activities require students to reorder a set of jumbled sentences to form a coherent paragraph. They are excellent for activating the three principles discussed on pages 119–126. This activity is most effective when constructed from authentic written (or spoken) sources. The activity also dramatizes the relationship between sentence-level grammar and discourse.

### Reflection



What grammatical knowledge does the learner have to draw on to correctly sequence the sentences in Example 9? (Hint: It draws particularly on one of the items from Figure 1 on pages 116–117.)

#### Example 9

##### 1.1 *A Comparison of Two National Approaches to the Problem of Icy Roads*

(1) In England, however, the tungsten-tipped spikes would tear the thin tarmac surfaces of our roads to pieces as soon as the protective layer of snow or ice melted. (2) Road maintenance crews try to reduce the danger of skidding by scattering sand upon the road surfaces. (3) We therefore have to settle for the method described above as the lesser of two evils. (4) Their spikes grip the icy surfaces and enable the motorist to corner safely where non-spiked tyres would be disastrous. (5) Its main drawback is that if there are fresh snowfalls the whole process has to be repeated, and if the snowfalls continue, it becomes increasingly ineffective in providing some kind of grip for tyres. (6) These tyres prevent most skidding and are effective in the extreme weather conditions as long as the roads are regularly cleared of loose snow. (7) Such a measure is generally adequate for our very brief snowfalls. (8) Whenever there is snow in England, some of the country roads may have black ice. (9) In Norway, where there may be snow and ice for nearly seven months of the year, the law requires that all cars be fitted with special steel spiked tyres. (10) Motorists coming suddenly upon stretches of black ice may find themselves skidding off the road.

*On the Surface of Discourse* (Hoey, 1991, p. 4)

## 5. Grammar in the classroom

This section gives you an opportunity to reflect on several classroom extracts that have been taken from advanced level classrooms where the teacher is focusing, directly or indirectly, on some aspect of grammar.

## Reflection



For Extract 1, the class was divided in two, and both groups of students were given the worksheet at the beginning of the extract. Each group then listened to two different taped conversations, which gave them somewhat contradictory information about three individuals, one of whom has to be fired and one of whom is to be given a promotion. They then regrouped, with a student from the A group working with a student from the B group to complete the task. What the students do not know is that they have been listening to different information about the three individuals concerned.

The grammatical goal of the task is to get students practicing relative clauses to identify and specify additional information about individuals. How successful do you think that the task is at this?

### Extract 1

**SITUATION:** You work for a printing firm that produces weekly magazines. Your firm is going through a period of contraction, and the manager is in the process of deciding on a number of redundancies. At present there are three foremen in the works department: Alan Larkin, Geoffrey Richards and Philip Green. At least one, and possibly two of these men are going to be made redundant.

**TASK:** The Managing Director has asked you to forward a joint recommendation saying which of the three men should be sacked, and which should definitely be kept on.

**PROCEDURE:**

1. Listen to the tape and fill in the information table.
2. Rank the information from most to least important in terms of its value in deciding whether the individuals should be retained.
3. Decide on who should be sacked and who should be retained.
4. Discuss your conclusion with a member of the other class group. You have to reach a joint agreement that is satisfactory to both of you.
5. Having reached agreement, complete and sign the memorandum.

(The following transcription picks up at Step 4 of the procedure set out in the worksheet. The two participants, M and G, are sitting in a corner of the classroom facing each other across a desk. They are in the middle of trying to resolve a difference of opinion about the relative merits of the three different candidates for the job. Unbeknownst to them, the disagreements are the result of the fact that they have different information about the three candidates.)

**M:** *Are you talking about Alan or Geoffrey? Just the first name.*

**G:** *Well, I understood I was talking about Geoffrey, yeah. Is that correct?*

**M:** *Not at all.*

**G:** *Not at all. So, I've confused the man, have I? I've made a mistake here. Who ...who are you...can you...What notes do you have on Richards? See if we can get this sorted out first.*

**M:** *We're talking about Geoffrey, right? And he's certainly the man that had very good report. He knows the job and I don't see why we should at all discuss this because it is so obvious to me that he should be on the payroll.*

**G:** *Well, it could very well be that I'm confusing the names of the people involved so let's make sure we're talking about the same people, shall we?*

(They study their notes for several minutes in silence, and then begin discussing Alan Larkin.)

**G:** *But he's a foreman, rather than a supervisor, I understand, and this is basically a union job, isn't it? I mean, I...my information is that all these people are occupying more or less the same rank.*

**M:** *Yes, but I mean, er. I agree they are all, erm, foremen. Supervisor, by the way, is the same to me. Isn't it to you?*

**G:** *Um, no, it's not quite the same thing to me. A foreman is, uh, somewhat lower on the, er, range, right?*

**M:** *All right. So he himself is not a supervisor and he is the same rank as Geoffrey, yeah?*

(Discussion ensues on whether the roles and functions of foremen and supervisor are the same or different.)

**M:** *But they, they all three have some kind of leading supervisor or foreman job right? We can't have a foreman doing a union job?*

**G:** *Well, actually, I must say on this issue that foreman are, in fact, um, key figures—usually in the union...the trade union set up.*

**T:** *OK, now can we just reformulate now into one group?*

(There is some shuffling and noise as chairs and desks are rearranged.)

**T:** *OK, then, what did you agree on?*

**M:** *Not much.*

(Laughter.)

**T:** *Who did you think should get the...should be made redundant?*

**M:** *Philip Green.*

**T:** *And who should be kept on?*

**M:** *We didn't finish that.*

## Reflection



How successful is the information gap task in generating disagreement between the two participants? (Note that G is a native speaking practice-teacher who took part in the information gap to make up the numbers.)

## Action



For Extract 1, make a list of five questions that you would like to ask the teacher who designed the task, and five questions to ask the participants in the task. Explain your list to a classmate or colleague.

## Reflection



In Extract 2 the teacher constructs a scenario designed to give students an opportunity to practice *that* clauses.

- Underline examples of *that* clauses within the extract. How frequent are they? How might the teacher have increased the frequency?
- Which of the principles discussed earlier in the chapter are apparent in the classroom extract?

## Extract 2

**T:** Today we're gonna talk about superstition...and...before we start, I'll write it on the blackboard. Superstition. Superstition is when we have a belief, uh, that may not be scientific.... Uh, we have a belief that something bad is going to happen. And, different countries as we've all seen, have different beliefs about what might be these bad things. For example, today we have with us...Well, I'm from the U.S., and we have students from Japan, students from Indonesia; Sri Lanka; Korea. So I think we're going to find that some of these beliefs we have are different from country to country. Can you tell us about some beliefs that you have about snakes. I mean, I know that snakes are something dangerous. Uh, some of them are dangerous, so, people have this—fear of snakes that maybe goes back to the time of our ancestors. But, what about some beliefs, do you have...

**S1:** Well, in Sri Lanka, we believe that, uh, the cobra is a lucky animal to have, have come into the house. And we usually don't chase it away or anything, because, it's a belief that the cobra's an ancestor...and, it comes in for protection.

**T:** So it actually comes into the house?

**S1:** It was like, some houses of...like in the religious the houses are built like, next to the forests, like, so there were so many snakes and reptiles.... And every time a cobra comes, you don't chase it away, you, ah, you kinda welcome it.

**S2:** Like, if you find a snake sheds skin...the, the skin shed out of the...

**T:** When the snake sk..., uh, sheds its skin...

**S2:** Right, right, right. And then, if you collect that skin, and then put it in your wallet, like here. Let me show you here. And put it over here.... That, that gives you a lot of money. And eventually, you, you become like, a rich person. Then, but I did it. It didn't work. (laughter) But I still believe in it. You know, if you, if I find it, then I'll keep it in my wallet. Try...try to do it again, you know, make it come true, probably...

**T:** Ah, some other things, uh, what about numbers?

**S3:** In Indonesia, number thirteen's really bad luck.

**T:** Oh, that would be the same. Well, that's, that's right. Today is, we're talking about Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>. So that's...

**S3:** The 13<sup>th</sup>. Because you like...you know, a house, if they—build a house, they gotta skip number thirteen. So, eleven, in the odd. O.K., eleven...



**T:** Yeah.

**S3:** ...is going to skip to fifteen. So we don't have any number thirteen.

**T:** Oh, wait a minute. Now, twelve...

**S3:** Twelve...no, no. It's even, and odd.

**T:** Oh, oh. Oh yeah. On the even, on the odd side, you just skip...

**S3:** Skip thirteen.

**T:** Yeah...We do that, too. We uh...

**S2:** Like a hotel. They don't have like, thirteen.

**T:** Right. Right. Or you're going up in a building, and you're looking for...

**S2/S3:** Thirteen.

**T:** ...eleven, twelve, and then, where's thirteen? There's no thirteen.

**S4:** We have something belief, uh, in Indonesia, especially Chinese Indonesians, like, uh, Fung Shui, uh, it means like, um, wind and water. And, for example, if you, uh, just open the, your front door, you cannot build a stairs just in front of your front doors. It will be bring a bad luck to the whole house...

**T:** ...to the whole house.

**S4:** Hmm-hmm...

**T:** So what we've seen is, uh, the group of us, uh, from five different countries, have talked about superstition a little bit. And we've found that it's, uh, not necessarily based on scientific fact, but it's a belief that we have. And we've found that some superstitions are shared by all of the countries. For example, the black cat, is, something that brings bad luck. And, uh, it's been a very fruitful discussion. So, thank you all very much for being here, and we'll continue later.

Action



Create a grammar-focused follow-up task to the teaching sequence in Extract 2. Share your follow-up task with a classmate or colleague.

## Reflection



Below is the task that three students worked on in Extract 3. Before you read the extract, try and predict the grammar that you think it will stimulate.

1. Make a note of the things you have to do this week. Leave two spaces free.
2. Talk to your partners and arrange a time to see a movie. You might need to change your schedule.

### Extract 3

**S1:** *Let's go to see a movie Spy Kids 3D this Friday afternoon?*

**S3:** *What's the movie? Who's the actor?*

**S1:** *Um, I can't quite remember the name of the characters, but it is um a 3D animation movie and it is cast by some children and very exciting.*

**S2:** *Let's go to see it, but, but er, when should we go for that?*

**S3:** *Yea we should sort out a time to see when we can go together.*

**S1:** *For me, I think er Friday afternoon is better.*

**S3:** *Oh I'm sorry, that day I have to attend a tutorial, which is a compulsory one. Because er, well the tutorial has to count attendance, I can't be absent. The tutor is not so kind and I don't think I can swap the time with other Ss.*

**S2:** *Also, I have a quiz on that day afternoon, so I think I'm not available on that day.*

**S1:** *Then what, which day do you think better?*

**S3:** *Well for me, I'm free on um Wednesday, in Wednesday, er on Wednesday afternoon, so how about you?*

**S1:** *But I have er...lecture at Wednesday afternoon, how about Kelvin?*

**S2:** *I also have a lesson that day afternoon.*

**S3:** *So maybe this is not the good time for us.*

**S1:** *I'm free er on Tuesday afternoon.*

**S2:** *Yes, I also available on that, that day afternoon.*

**S1:** *How about you, Crystal?*

- S3:** *Um... yea, but I have a class that time, a lecture which is for my core subject and I don't think it's good for me to skip that class, then how about Tuesday evening, are you free?*
- S1:** *Um, I am having dinner with my friend.*
- S3:** *And you? Kelvin?*
- S2:** *Because I have to take a first aid course on that, I have applied for first aid course.*
- S3:** *Ah yes, first aid course.*
- S1:** *But yea...you have first course, then...um ...*
- S3:** *But I know that um...there are um...er morning session for the first aid class on Tuesday, too, so can you er just swap the time and attend the morning, yea the morning session one so leave your afternoon free.*
- S2:** *Um I don't think I can do that because er...er the class on that day is, that is um, that is time set for all Ss and I have to go with my partner to do some practice on that, so that I, I don't think I can arrange the time to swap it, sorry about that.*
- S3:** *I see.*
- S1:** *Um...then which day do you have time?*
- (Dead air)
- S2:** *On my schedule, I'm only available on Tuesday afternoon and Friday evening.*
- S1:** *Um, I've got a tutorial on Friday evening.*
- S3:** *Yea, me too, I have a tutorial that time.*
- S2:** *Then, I think it's not a good time to go for a film.*
- S1:** *Um...how about Thursday evening?*
- S2:** *Thursday evening? As I mentioned before I have a quiz on Friday afternoon so I have to prepare for the quiz.*
- S3:** *Then how about Monday evening, actually I have plan to have dinner with my friends, but I can change my time if you guys want to see that movie.*
- S2:** *Okay then, actually I will have dinner with my parents. But I think I can arrange for maybe next week to have dinner with my parents.*
- S3:** *Um, yea, you can postpone that...*

**S2:** *I've got, I've got a tutorial on Monday evening, but this tutorial is for some er...I make this tutorial to, to some primary Ss, um...I think I can um arrange another time with him to see whether he is available during the weekend.*

**S3:** *That's good.*

**S2:** *But I have to ask him first, so um I think Monday evening is okay, is okay.*

**S3:** *So let's fix our time on Monday evening and watch that movie together.*

**S2:** *Okay then I'll go to buy the tickets.*

**S3:** *Oh, thank you.*

## 6. Assessing advanced learners

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The principles discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 can also be applied to advanced learners. However, at this level, **formative** self-assessment should also become a regular part of pedagogical practice. Self-assessment tasks require the learners to reflect on what they have learned and how well they are doing. This is usually achieved through some sort of checklist or rating scale.

When discussing self-assessment, the objection is sometimes raised that learners are not able to assess their own language proficiency accurately. There is little evidence to support this notion. In fact, there is evidence to the contrary (Nunan and Wong, 2003). I believe that with adequate training and appropriate support, learners are able to make reasonably accurate assessments of what they can and can't do. In any case, if assessment is to be seen as a part of the learning process, and if teaching and assessment are to be integrated, then this may become relatively unimportant. The important thing is that learners are actively involved in their assessment, as with all other aspects of their language learning.

When it comes to self-assessing grammar, we are not concerned with overall language proficiency, but with specific points of grammar in a context. Examples 10 and 11 (pages 149–150) are self-assessment tasks that were designed to see whether learners could link the grammar they had been learning with the communicative functions that the grammar enables them to express.

# Language Focus 2

*Supposed to*

- 1 Which of the following refer to past events and which to future events? Write P for past events and F for future expectations in the blank next to each sentence.
  - ..... I'm supposed to enroll in the new computer course by Friday.
  - ..... They were supposed to have sent me the enrollment form in the mail.
  - ..... We were supposed to have completed the assignment by the end of semester.
  - ..... The survey is supposed to be published by the end of the week.
  - ..... The interviewer was supposed to have asked more detailed questions.
  - ..... They are supposed to provide the information in time for next weekend's newspapers.
  
- 2 Complete the following statements.
  - a Barbara was supposed to have learned a new wordprocessing program, but .....
  - b She was supposed to have taken up painting, but .....
  - c She ....., but she twisted her ankle.
  - d She was supposed to have taken a tour of the city, but .....
  - e She ....., but she had no librarian training.
  
- 3 a Think of ways to complete these statements.
  - 1 The teacher was supposed to have given us an exam yesterday, but .....
  - 2 We were supposed to have prepared for the exam, but .....
  - 3 They are supposed to come to the party, but .....
  - 4 We are supposed to finish the assignment by Monday, but .....
  - 5 The teacher was supposed to have handed our last assignment back to us by Friday, but .....
  - b **Group Work** Compare responses. Who has the most interesting or unusual responses?
  
- 4 a **Pair Work** Find out three things that your partner was supposed to have done in the last month, but didn't do.
  - b **Group Work** Report what your partner said to another pair.
  - c **Pair Work** Write down three things you are supposed to do by the end of the year and then tell another student.



"Adriana was supposed to have called her parents last week, but she forgot."

ATLAS Learning-Centered Communication. Student Book 4  
(Nunan, 1996, p. 99)

# Self-Check

my sister

**COMMUNICATION CHALLENGE**

*Group Work* Look at Challenge 13 on page 126.

**1** Write three new sentences or questions you learned.

.....  
 .....

**2 a** Review the language skills you practiced in this unit. In what situations might you use this language?

**WHEN WOULD YOU USE THIS LANGUAGE?**

Situations

Express past and future expectations

.....  
 .....

Describe interesting and significant events in the past

.....  
 .....

*b Group Work* Brainstorm ways to practice this language out of class. Imagine you are visiting an English-speaking country. Where/When might you need this language?

**3** *Out of Class* Find someone who has an interesting or dramatic story to tell. Make notes, and then retell the story in class. Who has the most interesting or most dramatic story?

Name	Story Events
1	
2	

**4** Vocabulary check. Check [✓] the words you know.

**Adjectives/Adverbs**

- dependent    main    significant
- ethnic    predictable    totally
- ever    professional
- first    selective

**Nouns**

- catalog    expectations    supervisor
- car pool    leisure    workout
- change    relationships
- difference    rut

**Verbs**

- approve    happen    sample
- break out    help    subscribe
- change    note    understand
- experience    occur    vary

ATLAS Learning-Centered Communication. Student Book 4 (Nunan, 1996, p. 100)

## Reflection



What grammar point is being tested in Examples 10 and 11?

Another useful self-assessment technique with advanced learners is using learner transcripts. Here the teacher records two or more learners as they complete a task and then transcribes all or part of the interaction. The disadvantage of this technique is that it requires the teacher to undertake the time-consuming task of transcribing.

## Reflection



Consider Extract 4, which is taken from a small group discussion in which three students have to decide on a suitable time to go to a movie. How could this extract be used in a self-correction section?

### Extract 4

- C:** *Well for me, I'm free on um Wednesday, in Wednesday, er on Wednesday afternoon, so how about you?*
- A:** *But I have er...lecture at Wednesday afternoon, how about Kelvin?*
- B:** *I also have a lesson that day afternoon.*
- C:** *So maybe this is not the good time for us.*
- A:** *I'm free er on Tuesday afternoon.*
- B:** *Yes. I also available on that, that day afternoon.*

The teacher could either leave the task as a fairly open-ended one, or could give the students hints on what to look for. In this particular extract, the teacher could ask the students to look for errors and/or omissions of articles. There is a missing article as well as an incorrect preposition in *I have er...lecture at Wednesday afternoon*. In *So maybe this is not the good time for us*, the article is incorrect; the student used the definite rather than indefinite article.

Later in the conversation, the following interchange occurs:

### Extract 5

- C:** *Then how about Monday evening, actually I have plan to have dinner with my friends, but I can change my time with my friends if you guys want to see that movie.*
- B:** *Okay then, actually I will have dinner with my parents, but I think I can arrange for (C: Oh, that's good.) maybe next week to have dinner with my parents.*

This affords a good opportunity to get students focusing on the *going to/will* forms for the future. Arguably, Student B should have used the *going to* form, because he is referring to a planned rather than unplanned future event.

**Summative assessment** tasks for students at advanced levels usually involve the assessment of aspects of language other than grammar. At this level, the interest lies more in finding out whether the students can employ their grammatical knowledge for effective communication.

## Reflection



Consider the following assessment task, which has been adapted from a public examination. How would you assess the grammar? What other aspects of language would you assess?

### USE OF ENGLISH AS LEVEL SECTION B WRITING

*You have 1 hour for this section. It is suggested that you spend some time on planning and proofreading. Write legibly and make neat corrections wherever necessary. Write about 500 words on ONE of the topics.*

1. You have learned that, in some schools, younger students are being beaten up and bullied by older students. Write an article for your school newspaper about this issue. Discuss the seriousness of the problem of bullying in schools and propose three ways of dealing with it.
2. Christmas celebrations have now become very popular in China. In many large cities, shopping malls are full of tall Christmas trees and men dressed as Santa Claus. Write an essay EITHER for OR against the proposition that "Christmas should not be celebrated in China because it is a foreign custom." Give reasons for your views.
3. In many parts of the world, it is very common for couples to live together before they decide to get married. Write an essay discussing BOTH the positive and negative aspects of living together before marriage. Give your opinion about this issue.

As we have seen, the major difference between formative and summative assessment is that formative assessment has numerous purposes, although the key purpose is to improve learning outcomes. The principal purpose for summative assessment, on the other hand, is to sit in judgment of students—to determine what skills and knowledge they have acquired, and to what degree. While the focus of both formative and summative assessment might be the same, how the results are reported will differ. While formative assessments can be reported in qualitative terms, summative assessments usually require some form of quantification. In other words, students' abilities need to be rendered into a letter grade or number.



In the case of the writing task in the Reflection box above, the following criteria were used, and students were then assigned a number.

The piece of writing should be assessed on a nine point scale shown in Figure 6.

+ Above Average -			+ Average -			+ Below Average -		
9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

**Figure 6** Assessment scale for written exams

When awarding a grade, the assessor should balance concern about content with concern about language accuracy. Figure 7 shows the six areas an assessor should keep in mind:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the candidate communicate relevant content that fully answers the questions?</li> <li>Is the content logically organized and in a format appropriate to the questions?</li> <li>What degree of skill does the candidate show in constructing paragraphs?</li> <li>Is the vocabulary, including its variety and level of formality, appropriate to the question?</li> <li>What degree of skill does the candidate show in constructing a variety of sentence types?</li> <li>How accurate is the candidate's grammar, idiomatic usage, punctuation and spelling?</li> </ol>	
In short:	
<b>Content</b>	<b>Language accuracy</b>
Relevant content	Appropriate vocabulary
Logical organization	Variety of sentence types
Well-constructed paragraphs	Accurate grammar and mechanics

**Figure 7** Assessment of grading concerns for written exams. *HKALE Question Papers AS Use of English* (Hong Kong Exams Authority, 2001)

As you can see, grammar is only one of six areas assessed in this task. The assessment also requires an experienced assessor, who is able to make an interpretive judgment when assigning a number to each of the six areas. While assessors are instructed to give equal weighting to content and language accuracy, they have to make judgments about the weighting to be given to each sub-area. For example, is “accurate grammar” to be given more weight, less weight, or the same weight as say “appropriate vocabulary” in determining the overall grade?



1. Complete the assessment task in the Reflection box on page 152 yourself.
2. Create a marking key like the one given in Figure 7.
3. Decide how you would weight each of the items. Would you give each item the same weight, or do you consider some items more “serious” than others and therefore deserving of more points.

Example 12 is an alternative summative assessment task, and one that focuses exclusively on the grammar presented.

### Example 12

**Directions:** Correct the errors in the following letter to the editor. Some lines have more than one error and some lines are correct. For wrong words, underline the wrong word and write the correct word above it. If there is an extra word, delete the extra word with an X. If a word is missing, mark the position of the missing word with a “^” and write the missing word above it.

#### Snapped by camera deal

I am an Argentinean businessman and would like to express my unhappiness to my most recent trip to Hong Kong. Before buying a digital camera I was interested in, I was checked prices in different video stores in area close to Nathan Road.

I decided on a suitable model, price at \$2,600. But once the deal was made and had paid for by credit card, I was shown the superior model, clearly of better quality. This item was almost four time expensive - \$9,625.

I had not intended buy this more expensive camera, but because it was so much better, I eventually did.

However, after I left the store, I saw in another shop the exact similar model for \$5,505. I could not believe this! I returned back to the first store, but they said it was “their” price and they are not accept returns.

I upset not only because I was overcharged more than \$4,000 (which are a lot of money for anyone) but also because these unscrupulous sales seem to lack of integrity in dealing with their customers.

I am told this is a common practice in Hong Kong. I am suggest that tourists be warned of these practices when they arrive at the airport. I also think that the government be require stores to accept returns within three days purchase.

*HKALE Questions Papers AS Use of English (Hong Kong Exams Authority, 2001)*



What assessment criteria would you use in assessing students who completed Example 12? Would you give the same weighting to each item, or would you give greater weight to some items on the basis of their difficulty? Which ones? On what basis did you make your selection?

## 7. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have explored the teaching of grammar to advanced level students. Many beginning teachers are somewhat apprehensive about teaching advanced level students. They fear that the students will ask difficult questions about obscure aspects of the language. And, indeed, they do. However, be honest. Most students will appreciate it if you admit that they have asked an interesting question, that you don't know the answer, but that you will find out and tell them later. In fact, such queries can lead to a mutual exploration of the issue in question that generates a great deal of genuine language use.

Teaching advanced students can be great fun, because it is easier to resist the temptation to separate a focus on form from a focus on meaning and use. It is also possible to make much greater use of the authentic data that is all around us. Some of my fondest teaching memories are of advanced level classes where learners, working in groups, brought their own texts to class, generated their own insights into the way that specific grammatical features were functioning in the texts, and then shared their insights with the rest of the class. In this way, the learners became teachers.



### Further reading

**Celce-Murcia, M. and E. Olshtain.** 1999. *Discourse and Context in Language Teaching: A guide for language teachers.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

This book provides an excellent detailed overview of the relationships between grammar and other dimensions of language including grammar and vocabulary.



### Helpful Web site

**Dave's ESL Café Expressions Web sites (<http://www.eslcafe.com>)**

This site by Dave Sperling provides a wealth of resources for teachers and students. You will find some interesting ideas here for teaching advanced level grammar.



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