

Reading Homework due Week 6

Read Chapter 3 from Practical English Language Teaching - Grammar by Nunan starting on the next page. Print and bring this file to class next week.

Homework Task:

Look carefully at the “principles for teaching grammar to intermediate students” starting on page 85.

Find an activity or teaching material that you can relate to these principles. This can be one of the task types of pages 91, or it could be any other relevant task type.

1. Information gaps
2. Problem-solving
3. Grammar dictation/Dictogloss
4. Surveys
5. Role-plays
6. Conscious-raising
7. Grammar charts

Materials can be created by you, or you can find the materials online. Here are some useful sites:

<https://en.islcollective.com/> (free log in needed to download)

<https://busyteacher.org/>

Remember: You must explicitly relate your task or material to the principles on page 85.

In Week 6 you will share and explain your ideas in groups. Bring the necessary materials to share and demonstrate your ideas. You may be asked to share your ideas with the whole class.

This is a preparation task to develop ideas before micro-teaching.

Chapter **Three**

Grammar for intermediate learners

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

Goals

- ✓ **describe** the grammatical items that are typically taught to intermediate learners.
- ✓ **demonstrate** an understanding of the following key principles used to support the teaching of grammar to intermediate learners: move learners along the continuum from reproductive to creative language use; personalize the learning process; and teach grammar as a process.
- ✓ **create** materials and activities for intermediate level learners based on the following task and activity types: information gaps, problem-solving, dictogloss, surveys, role-plays, and consciousness-raising exercises.
- ✓ **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 intermediate learners' grammar.

1. Introduction

In this chapter, we will look at techniques for teaching intermediate level learners. This chapter follows a similar format as the last chapter. We begin by looking at syllabus design issues. Next is a discussion of key concepts to consider when teaching intermediate learners. We then turn our attention to effective activities to use when teaching intermediate students. The final two sections look at some classroom interactions and assessment issues. The following descriptors, adapted from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages guidelines (1986), give some indication of the kinds of things that intermediate level learners of English might be expected to do in terms of their speaking ability.

- Able to handle successfully a variety of uncomplicated, basic communicative tasks and social situations.
- Can talk simply about oneself and family members.
- Can ask and answer questions and participate in simple conversations on topics beyond the most immediate needs, e.g., personal history and leisure time activities.
- Utterance length increases slightly, but speech may continue to be characterized by frequent long pauses, since the smooth incorporation of even basic conversational strategies is often hindered as the speaker struggles to create appropriate language forms.
- Pronunciation may continue to be strongly influenced by first language and fluency may still be strained.
- Although misunderstandings still arise, speakers can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors.

2. Syllabus design issues

At an intermediate level, students consolidate the grammar they have already acquired. They begin to extend their mastery into more complex tense forms, such as the present perfect, as well as items that enable them to begin to express abstract rather than concrete meanings. There are far too many structures to be covered here in any exhaustive way. The items in Figure 1 (pages 81–82) are, therefore, illustrative only. However, they represent a good cross-section of the kinds of grammatical and functional items that textbooks and syllabuses designed for intermediate level learners tend to focus on.

Reflection



Study the items in Figure 1 and underline any that are unfamiliar to you. Find further examples of these in a grammar reference book.

Unit	Grammar	Functions (Examples only—most grammatical structures can realize numerous functions)	Sample exponents
1	The present perfect	Talking about past experiences with present relevance	I don't want to see <i>Gangs of New York</i> because <i>I've seen</i> it twice already.
2	Passive voice	Describing an action when the actor is unknown	My car <i>was stolen</i> last week.
3	Conditional sentences	Hypothesizing/ Conjecturing	If it rains we'll get wet.
4	Coordination	Providing additional detail	I like reggae and hip-hop, <i>but I also</i> like classical music and jazz.
5	Relative clauses	Identifying people	My brother is the guy <i>who is wearing the yellow shirt</i> .
6	Gerunds and infinitives	Expressing attitudes	I love <i>going</i> to the movies, but I don't like <i>to watch</i> them on DVD.
7	Comparative and superlative adjectives	Comparing things	I'm <i>more</i> extroverted than most of my friends, but my sister is <i>the most</i> extroverted person I know.
8	Conjunctions	Giving reasons	<i>Because</i> we have an important examination next week, I decided not to go away for the weekend.
9	Future forms: <i>going to</i> and <i>will</i> Present continuous to express future actions	Talking about planned and unplanned future actions	<i>I'm going to</i> the mountains next week. I just heard that my cousin <i>is coming</i> to visit, so <i>I'll</i> stay home next weekend.
10	Modals	Talking about things that are prohibited, permitted, advisory and compulsory	You <i>mustn't</i> bring your cell phone to school. You <i>can</i> wear sneakers. You <i>should</i> attend the sports day. You <i>must</i> attend the assembly.
11	Past continuous and past simple	Describing an ongoing past action in relation to a past point in time	<i>I was walking</i> down the street when a small boy <i>ran</i> into the road.

Unit	Grammar	Functions (Examples only—most grammatical structures can realize numerous functions)	Sample exponents
12	Count and noncount nouns with quantifiers and <i>how much/ how many</i> questions	Describing quantity and numbers of things	<i>Are there any cans of soda?</i> <i>Is there any juice?</i> <i>How many cans of soda are there?</i> <i>How much juice is there?</i> There are <i>a few cans</i> of soda but not <i>much juice</i> .
13	Reported speech	Reporting what somebody said	Boss: You're very hard-working. Employee to friend: <i>The boss said I was very hard-working.</i>
14	Past perfect	Relating one past event to a prior past event	By the time I got to the airport, my flight <i>had already left</i> .
15	Two-part verbs	Giving and following instructions	<i>Turn on</i> the machine, <i>put in</i> the paper, and when you've finished <i>turn off</i> the machine.
16	Indirect questions	Making inquiries	Can you tell me how much it costs?
17	Comparative and superlative adverbs	Making comparisons	I got to the show quickly and comfortably, because I went by train. Jose got there <i>quicker</i> and <i>more comfortably</i> because he went by a chauffer-driven limo.
18	Word order of modifiers	Describing things	I saw some <i>fascinating wooden Scandinavian</i> furniture in town today. Well, I saw some <i>boring woolen English</i> skirts.
19	<i>used to</i>	Talking about past habits	When I was a kid I <i>used to</i> chew my nails, but I don't anymore.
20	Tag questions	Checking and confirming facts and opinions	You have to travel a lot in your job, <i>don't you?</i> You don't live around here, <i>do you?</i> Oh, so you're an engineer, <i>are you?</i>

Figure 1 Typical grammatical and functional items for intermediate level learners.



1. Review the Table of Contents or Scope and Sequence of three course books (books which teach all four language skills) for intermediate 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 83—84)?

Contents

To the Student vii
To the Teacher viii

Present and past

- 1 Present Continuous (I am doing)
- 2 Simple Present (I do)
- 3 Present Continuous and Simple Present (1) (I am doing and I do)
- 4 Present Continuous and Simple Present (2) (I am doing and I do)
- 5 Simple Past (I did)
- 6 Past Continuous (I was doing)

Present perfect and past

- 7 Present Perfect (1) (I have done)
- 8 Present Perfect (2) (I have done)
- 9 Present Perfect Continuous (I have been doing)
- 10 Present Perfect Continuous and Present Perfect Simple (I have been doing and I have done)
- 11 How long have you (been) . . . ?
- 12 For and since, When . . . ?, and How long . . . ?
- 13 Present Perfect and Past (I have done and I did)
- 14 Past Perfect (I had done)
- 15 Past Perfect Continuous (I had been doing)
- 16 Have and have got
- 17 Used to (do)

Future

- 18 Present tenses (I am doing / I do) with a Future Meaning
- 19 I'm going to (do)
- 20 Will (1)
- 21 Will (2)
- 22 I will and I'm going to
- 23 Will be doing and will have done
- 24 When I do / When I've done When and if

Modals

- 25 Can, could, and (be) able to
- 26 Could (do) and could have (done)
- 27 Must (You must be tired, etc.)
- 28 May and might (1)
- 29 May and might (2)
- 30 Have to and must
- 31 Should
- 32 Subjunctive (I suggest you do)
- 33 Had better It's time . . .
- 34 Can / Could / Would you . . . ?, etc. (Requests, Offers, Permission)

Conditionals and "wish"

- 35 If I do . . . and If I did . . .
- 36 If I knew . . . I wish I knew . . .
- 37 If I had known . . . I wish I had known . . .
- 38 Would I wish . . . would

Passive

- 39 Passive (1) (is done / was done)
- 40 Passive (2) (be/been/being done)
- 41 Passive (3)
- 42 It is said that . . . He is said to . . . (be) supposed to . . .
- 43 Have something done

Reported speech

- 44 Reported speech (1) (He said that . . .)
- 45 Reported speech (2)

Questions and auxiliary verbs

- 46 Questions (1)
- 47 Questions (2) (Do you know where . . . ? / She asked me where . . .)
- 48 Auxiliary verbs (have/do/can, etc.) I think so / I hope so, etc.
- 49 Tag Questions (do you? / isn't it?, etc.)

-ing and the infinitive

- 50 Verb + -ing (enjoy doing / stop doing, etc.)
- 51 Verb + to . . . (decide to do / forget to do, etc.)
- 52 Verb + (Object) + to . . . (I want to do / I want you to do, etc.)
- 53 Verb + -ing or to . . . (1) (remember/regret, etc.)
- 54 Verb + -ing or to . . . (2) (try/need/help)
- 55 Verb + -ing or to . . . (3) (like / would like, etc.)
- 56 Prefer and would rather
- 57 Preposition (in/for/about, etc.) + -ing
- 58 Be/get used to something (I'm used to . . .)
- 59 Verb + preposition + -ing (succeed in -ing / accuse somebody of -ing, etc.)
- 60 Expressions + -ing
- 61 To . . . , for . . . , and so that . . . (Purpose)
- 62 Adjective + to
- 63 To . . . (afraid to do) and Preposition + -ing (afraid of -ing)
- 64 See somebody do and see somebody doing
- 65 -ing Phrases (Feeling tired, I went to bed early.)

Articles and nouns

- 66 Countable and Uncountable Nouns (1)
- 67 Countable and Uncountable Nouns (2)
- 68 Countable Nouns With a/an and some
- 69 A/an and the

Figure 2 *English Grammar in Use* (Murphy, 2000, pp. iii–vi)

70	The (1)
71	The (2) (school / the school)
72	The (3) (children / the children)
73	The (4) (the giraffe / the telephone / the piano, etc.: the + Adjective)
74	Names With and Without the (1)
75	Names With and Without the (2)
76	Singular and plural
77	Noun + Noun (a tennis ball / a headache, etc.)
78	-s (the girl's name) and of . . . (the name of the book)
<i>Pronouns and determiners</i>	
79	Myself/yourself/themselves, etc.
80	A friend of mine My own house By myself
81	There . . . and It . . .
82	Some and any
83	No/none/any Nothing/nobody, etc.
84	Much, many, little, few, a lot, plenty
85	All / all of, most / most of, no / none of, etc.
86	Both / both of, neither / neither of, either / either of
87	All, every, and whole
88	Each and every
<i>Relative clauses</i>	
89	Relative Clauses (1) – Clauses With who/that/which
90	Relative Clauses (2) – Clauses With or Without who/that/which
91	Relative Clauses (3) – whose/whom/where
92	Relative Clauses (4) – “Extra Information” Clauses (1)
93	Relative Clauses (5) – “Extra Information” Clauses (2)
94	-ing and -ed Phrases (the woman talking to Tom, the boy injured in the accident)
<i>Adjectives and adverbs</i>	
95	Adjectives ending in -ing and -ed (boring/bored, etc.)
96	Adjectives: Word Order (a nice new house) Adjectives after Verbs (You look tired)
97	Adjectives and Adverbs (1) (quick/quickly)
98	Adjectives and Adverbs (2) (well/fast/late, hard/hardly)
99	So and such
100	Enough and too
101	Comparison (1) – cheaper, more expensive, etc.
102	Comparison (2)
103	Comparison (3) – as . . . as / than
104	Superlatives – the longest / the most enjoyable, etc.
105	Word Order (1) – Verb + Object; Place and Time
106	Word Order (2) – Adverbs with the Verb
107	Still, yet and already Anymore / any longer / no longer
108	Even

<i>Conjunctions and prepositions</i>	
109	Although / though / even though In spite of / despite
110	In case
111	Unless As long as and provided/providing
112	As (Time and Reason)
113	Like and as
114	As if, as though, and like
115	For, during, and while
116	By and until By the time . . .
<i>Prepositions</i>	
117	At/on/in (Time)
118	On time / in time, at the end / in the end
119	In/at/on (Place) (1)
120	In/at/on (Place) (2)
121	In/at/on (Place) (3)
122	To/at/in/into
123	On/in/at (Other Uses)
124	By
125	Noun + Preposition (reason for, cause of, etc.)
126	Adjective + Preposition (1)
127	Adjective + Preposition (2)
128	Verb + Preposition (1) – at and to
129	Verb + Preposition (2) – about/for/of/after
130	Verb + Preposition (3) – about and of
131	Verb + Preposition (4) – of/for/from/on
132	Verb + Preposition (5) – in/into/with/to/on
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Figure 2 (cont.) *English Grammar in Use* (Murphy, 2000, pp. iii–vi)

3. Principles for teaching grammar to intermediate learners

A brief review of textbooks by different writers reveals many useful principles for teaching grammar, as well as for selecting classroom materials and exercises. Pennington (1995), for example, suggests that the following principles will enhance learner motivation and the effectiveness of learning.

- Attend to communicative need and purpose.
- Place grammatical structures in real or realistic contexts.
- Make creative use of various sorts of everyday objects, visuals and special purpose graphics.
- Incorporate humor or other highly motivating content.
- Provide challenge and interest through game-like features.
- Promote choice, independence, creativity, realism and feedback through pair and small group work.

All of the principles in this book are useful, to varying degrees, across all proficiency levels. So, for example, the discussion on inductive and deductive teaching for beginning level learners in Chapter 2 is also relevant for intermediate and advanced level learners.

As we are focusing on those principles that are particularly pertinent for intermediate level students in this section, we will examine the following three principles:

- Start to move students from reproductive to creative language use.
- Personalize the grammar activities and exercises whenever possible.
- Encourage learners to see grammar as a process.

1. **Begin to move learners along the continuum from reproductive to creative language use.**

Reproductive language exercises are those that require learners to mimic the language models provided by a textbook, audio/video source, or by you, the teacher. Common reproductive language exercises were discussed in Chapter 1. These include drills of various kinds, fill-in-the-blank passages, word and sentence sequencing work, matching exercises, listen and repeat, and so on. Despite their differences, all these exercises require the student to generate language that accurately reproduces the target language form.

While exercises such as those listed in the preceding paragraph are most commonly associated with materials for beginners, they are also common in materials for intermediate and advanced level students. The following exercise is designed to focus students on the positioning of adverbs in a sentence.

Example 1

Ken: What time (fly) _____ you _____ ?
 Jim: At 9:30. I (have) _____ lunch with Carlos at 12:00 in San Francisco.
 Ken: Where (eat) _____ you _____ ?
 Jim: At the Blue Moon restaurant. Then I (go) _____ to the office. I (work) _____ at the office until 5:00. Then I (meet) _____ Judy at 6:00.
 Ken: Where (go) _____ you _____ ?
 Jim: We (have) _____ dinner at the Prado restaurant. Dave (come) _____, too.
 Ken: That's a busy day. When (come) _____ you _____ back?
 Jim: I (catch) _____ a flight at 9:30.

12 Your Turn

Work with a partner. Ask and answer questions about today and tomorrow.

Example:

You: Where are you going after class?
 Your partner: I'm going to the library.

1. Where are you going after class?
2. How are you getting there?
3. What time are you leaving home tomorrow?
4. Are you meeting anyone today or tomorrow?
5. What are you doing this evening?

II Practice

Look at Jim's schedule for tomorrow with the present progressive of the verbs in the box.

Schedule

8:00	Leave the house for the airport
9:30	Catch the plane to San Francisco
12:00	Have lunch with Carlos at the Blue Moon Restaurant
2:00	Go to the San Francisco office and work until 5:00
6:00	Meet Judy in the office lobby
6:30	Have dinner with Judy and Dave at the Prado restaurant
9:30	Catch the plane back home

Ken: What (do) _____ you _____ tomorrow Jim?
 1 2

Jim: I (go) _____ to San Francisco.
 3

Ken: What time (leave) _____ you _____ ?
 4 5

Jim: I (leave) _____ home at 8:00 in the morning.
 6

Grammar Form and Function 2 (Broukal, 2004, pp. 7–8)

Although the two exercises in Example 1 require learners to reproduce a language form following a model, they are not all mechanical. Instead the exercises guide the students along the continuum from reproductive to creative language use.

Exercise 12, in Example 1, is a good example of a task for intermediate level learners designed to move them towards creative language use.

Creative language activities provide more “space” for the learners to use language a little more flexibly than reproductive language tasks, while at the same time generating one or more target language items. The item invites students to use their imaginations. They can come up with a range of different answers that follow the required model. I use the term *creative* because for me the essence of creative language use is that it involves learners in recombining familiar words, phrases and structures in new and unfamiliar ways. Pennington (1995, p. vi-vii) also places a premium on activities and exercises that promote creativity.

In [my] view, grammar is more a matter of selection than correction. Grammar is, in other words, about selecting the appropriate option(s) from a range of possibilities rather than simply recalling and producing—or reproducing—language in one particular form, that is, the one prescribed by the grammar teacher or another authoritative source. Because from this perspective grammar is a process of choosing forms and constructing language to respond to communicative demands, it essentially involves the learner’s creative response to context and circumstance.

2. Where possible, *personalize* the content of the practice activities.

Personalization is a key principle regardless of the focus of the lesson (whether it be listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, pronunciation, or vocabulary), and irrespective of the level of the students. Tasks involving personalization encourage the learners to bring in their own ideas, feelings, attitudes, and opinions. It is, therefore, a perfect strategy for linking what students already know with what they have to learn. The American educational psychologist David Pearson (1978) defined learning as “building bridges between the known and the new.” It is also a perfect way for getting learners to self-invest in their learning, because the content of the lesson is, at least in part, derived from the learners themselves.

Personalization can often be problematic for beginning students. Such students are often frustrated by their limited vocabulary for expressing opinions and attitudes. However, it can work wonderfully well with intermediate level students who have sufficient language by this stage to enable you, the teacher, to exploit the principle.

Very few items of grammar are *not* amenable to personalization. This is hardly surprising, given that one of the major functions of language is to enable us to express ourselves in relation to the world. It is nicely exploited in the first-rate grammar book, *Grammar Dimensions 3*, by Stephen Thewlis (2000), part of the acclaimed *Grammar Dimensions* series. The following example is taken from this book and is intended to provide personalized practice in using gerunds (*I’m going to stop smoking. I’m going to start exercising more.*).

Example 2

STEP 2 In this chart, list ways you spend your free time. Two examples for each category have been provided. Add three more that are true for you.

Activities I enjoy doing in my free time (I do them, and I enjoy them).

1) reading the paper

2) talking with friends

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

Activities I enjoy *not* doing in my free time (*I don't do* them, and I enjoy *not* doing them).

1) not getting up early

2) not driving to work

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

Activities I don't enjoy doing in my free time (I do them, but I don't enjoy them).

1) doing chores (cleaning and laundry)

2) taking work home from the office

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

STEP 3 Describe the activities in your chart to a partner. Your partner should decide whether you appear to be a do-er or a be-er. What category does your partner seem to be in? Present your findings about each other to the rest of the class.

Grammar Dimensions 3 (Thewlis, 2000, p. 107)

Many grammar tasks can be personalized if they don't already involve a degree of personalization. This can be done either by modifying the existing content or by adding a follow-up step that involves personalization.

In Example 3, Thewlis presents an exercise for students to review the English verb system and focus on the way that time frames within a passage can change. He follows up with the personalization task in Example 4 (p.89).

Example 3

Mark the following passages with a slash (/) to show where the time frame changes. The first one has been done for you.

1. My brother called me up yesterday./I always know he needs to borrow money when he calls because I never hear from him at any other time./We spoke about this and that for a few minutes. He asked about my job and my family. We talked about his problems with his boss. These are typical topics before he finally asked for a loan. This phone call was no exception. He needed \$50 "until pay day." Somehow, when payday comes he never remembers to pay back the loan. (p. 10)

Example 4

Work with a partner.

- Describe a typical day in your life. Tell your partner about the things you do, where you go, and how you typically spend your time. Mention at least five regular activities.
- Next describe a typical day in your life five years ago. Mention at least five activities that you did on a regular basis.
- Your partner should use this information to decide what three things in your life have changed the most in the last five years and report the information to the rest of the class. Make a similar report to the class about the changes in your partner's life. (p. 13)

Action



Adapt the following exercise so that it involves personalization.

Write answers for these questions and then practice them in pairs.

1. Have they ever bungee jumped?
2. Has she ever been to Paris?
3. Has Tom ever tried to learn another language?
4. Have the pop group *The Twins* ever had a number 1 hit record?

The most straightforward way of personalizing the task in the Action box would be to get students, perhaps working in pairs, to create their own survey of past experiences using the present perfect, and then to use it to interview other students in the class. The task could be given an element of fun or competitiveness by getting the class to vote on the person who has had the most unusual or interesting experience.

3. Encourage learners to see *grammar as a process* as much as a product.

A number of people have made the point that grammar is both a product and a process. Larsen-Freeman (1991, 2001) uses the term “grammaring” to capture the notion of **grammar as a process**. Another enthusiastic proponent of grammar as process is Thornbury (2001) who argues that grammar is not just a thing, but something you do. “There should,” he says, “be a verb, ‘to grammar’.” He uses the following analogy to illustrate the point.

An omelette is the product of a (relatively simple, but skillful) process involving the beating and frying of eggs. The process and the product are clearly two quite different things, and we could call one *making an omelette* (or even *omeletting*) and the other an omelette. Similarly, the grammar that a linguist might identify in a statement like *If I'd known you were coming I'd have baked a cake* or *Mary had a little lamb* is the result of a process—in this case an invisible mental one. ...To someone who had never seen an omelette being made, it might be difficult to infer the process from the product. They would be seriously mistaken if they

thought that making an omelette was simply a case of taking a lot of little bits of omelette and sticking them together. So, too, with grammar. What you see, and how it came to be that way, are two quite different things. (Thornbury, 2001, p. 1)

Thornbury goes on to make the point that a great deal of grammar teaching is based on the mistaken notion that the process and the product are basically the same thing, and that if you, the teacher, teach the product, then the process will take care of itself.

The following “grammaring” task is taken from Thornbury’s book *Uncovering Grammar*. It illustrates the principle very nicely. The learner has to “add grammar” to newspaper headlines from which much of the grammar has been removed for reasons of economy.

Example 5

Grammaring: Task Sheet 1

1 Here are some newspaper headlines. Expand them so as to summarize the story.

For example: **BANKS WARN HOMEOWNERS: INTEREST RATES TO RISE**

Banks have warned homeowners that interest rates will rise.
Or *Banks are warning homeowners that interest rates are going to rise.*

1 BUS STRIKE TALKS CALLED OFF

2 FREE EYE TESTS OFFERED TO ALL OVER-65s

3 SHARK ATTACK VICTIM BACK AT SCHOOL

4 LOG TRUCK CRASH DRIVER NOT GUILTY

5 DOLPHINS HELP MUTE BOY SPEAK

6 GOVERNMENT PROMISES NEW MONEY FOR HEALTH SERVICE

7 CRACK DOWN ON SPENDING, SCHOOLS TOLD

2 Compare your expanded headlines or summaries with other students. Are they the same? If not, do the differences make a difference in meaning?

For example:
Banks have warned homeowners... / Banks are warning homeowners...

There is a difference in meaning here. In the first sentence, the warning was made at some indefinite time in the recent past; in the second, the warning is still being made.
...interest rates will rise. / ... interest rates are going to rise.

There is no significant difference in meaning here.

3 Now, write headlines for these stories. How short can you make them, without losing the sense of the story?


- 1 The government has announced plans to cut spending on the military.
- 2 The captain of a tanker involved in an oil spill off the French coast has been found guilty of negligence.
- 3 Parties involved in the stalled peace talks in Biombo have agreed to resume their discussions.
- 4 An unidentified man, who fooled bank staff into thinking the banana he was carrying under his jacket was a gun, held up a city bank this morning and made off with over \$15,000.

4 Write a headline that summarizes something interesting or unusual that happened to you recently. For example:

BROTHER'S WEDDING A BIG SUCCESS

DRIVING TEST UPSET

Show it to your classmates – tell them your story and ask them about theirs.



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Uncovering Grammar (Thornbury, 2001, p. 82)

4. Tasks and materials

The purpose of this section is to describe and exemplify a range of task and exercise types that can be used with intermediate learners. The aim is to provide a compendium of task and exercise types that can be used as models for you to develop your own materials. Each of the subsections below contains a description of and rationale for the technique along with an example. Reflection and Action boxes provide you with an opportunity to develop your own examples. The following exercise types are described and exemplified.

1. Information gaps
2. Problem-solving
3. Grammar dictation/Dictogloss
4. Surveys
5. Role-plays
6. Consciousness-raising
7. Grammar charts


1. Information gaps

As we saw in Chapter 2 on page 60, information gap tasks are an excellent way of giving learners practice with a particular structure (or, as we work with higher proficiency students, several structures) within a meaningful context. Because each learner in an information gap task has access to different information, and because all of the information is required in order to complete the task or solve the problems, learners are forced, by the very nature of the task, to persist in their efforts to achieve mutual understanding through negotiating meaning.

Information gaps tasks are useful in mixed ability groups where the weaker students might otherwise be marginalized. The better students are forced to include the weaker ones, and to help them convey the information they have if the task is to be completed successfully.

Example 6

The following information gap task is designed for two students.





Duet A *Personal information*

unit 1






Pronunciation Listen. Repeat silently. Then repeat out loud. Track 9

Where	is Pat	from?		She's	from San Francisco.
What	does she	do?		She's	an office worker.
How old	is she?			She's	in her early twenties .
What	does she	do in	her	She	likes watching videos.
	do you		your	I	like playing tennis.

 *Stress the parts in bold.*


1 **Plan ahead.** Look at the chart. Do you know the meaning of the words (hometown, occupation, age, interest)? Fill in the information about yourself.  *Always plan ahead.*

2 You are A. Fill in the chart. Ask B for the information you need. Answer B's questions. *How do you spell it?*

	Pat				
Hometown	San Francisco				
Occupation	student				
Age					
Interest					

Did you finish the main task? Keep going!





Duet B *Personal information*

unit 1






Pronunciation Listen. Repeat silently. Then repeat out loud. Track 9

Where	is Pat	from?		She's	from San Francisco.
What	does she	do?		She's	an office worker.
How old	is she?			She's	in her early twenties .
What	does she	do in	her	She	likes watching videos.
	do you		your	I	like playing tennis.

 *Stress the parts in bold.*

1 **Plan ahead.** Look at the chart. Do you know the meaning of the words (hometown, occupation, age, interest)? Fill in the information about yourself.  *Always plan ahead.*

2 You are B. Fill in the chart. Ask A for the information you need. Answer A's questions. *How do you spell it?*

	Pat	Michael	Hee Soon	Dusit	Naomi	You	Your partner
Hometown	San Francisco		Seoul		Tokyo		
Occupation		teacher		office worker			
Age	19		20		early 30s		
Interest	dancing	skiing		swimming			

Did you finish the main task? Keep going!

Challenge! Interview A. Find out at least three more things. Do you like ___? Are you ___? Now close your book. How many things can you remember about A?

English Firsthand 1 (Helgesen, Brown, Mandeville, 2004, pp. 15–16)



Design an information gap task for one of the grammar items in Figure 1 on pages 81–82. Share your task with a classmate or colleague.

2. Problem-solving

Like information gap tasks, problem-solving tasks require learners to work together in pairs and groups. However, they differ from information gap tasks in that all of the students have access to the same information. Through collaborative discussion, argument, reasoning and putting forward their own point of view, students have to solve a problem, come to a conclusion, and reach a consensus.

Problem-solving tasks have certain advantages for intermediate level students. By engaging learners in discussion and decision-making, these tasks have the potential to engage learners in practicing a range of structures, thus moving them along the reproductive–creative language continuum.

Example 7 on page 94 is a case in point. It is designed to allow students to practice a range of structures including the following items:

Modals

I think we should/ought to take the axe.

Wh- questions: *How much/how many*

How many cans of food should we take?

How much flour should we take?

Quantifiers

We need to take some rope.

We don't need any CDs.

That clauses

I agree that we need to take some rope.

However, the extent to which any of these structures is to be used is not specified, nor are the ways in which the structures should be combined and recombined.

Example 7

Work with three other students. You are on a ship that is sinking. You have to swim to a nearby island. You have a waterproof container, but can only carry 20 kilos of items in it. Decide which of the following items you will take. (Remember, you can't take more than 20 kilos with you.)

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| • Axe (8 kilos) | • Box of novels and magazines (3 kilos) |
| • Cans of food (500 grams each) | • Packets of sugar, flour, rice, powdered milk, coffee, tea. (Each packet weighs 500 grams). |
| • Bottles of water (1.5 kilos each) | • Medical kit (2 kilos) |
| • Short-wave radio (12 kilos) | • Portable CD player and CDs (4 kilos) |
| • Fire lighting kits (500 grams each) | • Rope (6 kilos) |
| • Notebook computer (3.5 kilos) | • Waterproof sheets of fabric (3 kilos each) |

3. Grammar dictation/Dictogloss

You were introduced to the grammar dictation technique in Chapter 2 on page 61. I have reintroduced it in this chapter because it can be used with students at any level of proficiency. This is simply a matter of selecting source text containing grammatical structures appropriate to the proficiency level of the students in question.



Consider the following Dictogloss text. What grammatical structures could it be used to teach? What vocabulary would you need to pre-teach?

Freedom of speech, or the right to say what you think, is the most important feature of a democratic society. Unfortunately, in many countries you can get arrested if you dare criticize the government. In such countries, informers are paid to report on the activities of student groups, workers, and university teachers. If you criticize the government you can get beaten up, imprisoned, or even killed.

Now look at the instruction sequence in Example 8 provided by Wajnryb and compare her treatment with your own.

2.3 Freedom of speech

TOPIC	Politics Government
LANGUAGE POINTS	First conditional construction Passives Present modal <i>can</i> Impersonal <i>you</i>
WARM-UP	<p>1 Tell your students that the topic of this activity is freedom.</p> <p>2 Next, brainstorm the word 'freedom'.</p> <p>3 Note the students' ideas on the blackboard.</p> <p>4 Then elicit the various kinds of freedoms that characterize (and are often taken for granted in) a democratic society, e.g. freedom of speech, of assembly, of political affiliation, of sexual preference, of religious practice, and others.</p> <p>5 You may find that a number of these more 'political' freedoms have already emerged in the earlier brainstorming. Your students might be surprised to find out just how 'political' they are!</p> <p>6 Finally, explain the difference between the countable and uncountable uses of the noun 'freedom'.</p>
PRE-TEXT VOCABULARY	<p>feature (<i>n</i>) aspect, part, characteristic</p> <p>to arrest (<i>v</i>) to capture (by police)</p> <p>to dare (<i>v</i>) to challenge</p> <p>to criticize (<i>v</i>) to find fault with</p> <p>informer (<i>n</i>) a person who gives information about criminal activity to the police</p>
TEXT	<p>1 Freedom of speech, or the right to say what you think, is the most important feature of a democratic society.</p> <p>2 Unfortunately, in many countries you can get arrested if you dare criticize the government. 3 In such countries, informers are paid to report on the activities of student groups, workers, and university teachers. 4 If you criticize the government you can get beaten up, imprisoned, or even killed.</p>
NOTES	<p>S1 <i>or</i> – The conjunction signals that the following phrase is an expansion of the subject, <i>freedom of speech</i>.</p> <p>S1 <i>you</i> – This is the 'general' you, meaning <i>people in general</i>. Other examples appear in S2 and S4.</p> <p>S2 <i>can get</i> – The modal <i>can</i> here denotes possibility. Another example is in S4 <i>can get beaten up</i></p> <p>S2 <i>arrested</i> – The passive is used, as the focus is on the process or what happens to the <i>you</i> of the sentence, not on the agent(s) of the action. Other examples of the passive occur in S4: <i>beaten up</i>, <i>imprisoned</i>, and <i>killed</i>.</p> <p>S2 <i>if</i> – The conditional introduces the subordinate clause in a first conditional construction. Another example occurs in S4: <i>if you criticize the government</i></p> <p>S2 <i>dare criticize</i> – Note that where an infinitive follows immediately after <i>dare</i>, the <i>to</i> of the infinitive may be omitted.</p> <p>S3 <i>in such countries</i> – This phrase links S3 to S2 and provides more detail on the same subject.</p> <p>S3 <i>are paid</i> – The understood agents of the action are the police.</p> <p>S3 <i>report on</i> – The preposition <i>on</i> is part of this phrasal verb.</p> <p>S4 <i>the government</i> – This is an on-going reference, first introduced in S2.</p> <p>S4 <i>you can get</i> – This phrase is omitted but understood before the last two verbs: (<i>you can get</i>) <i>imprisoned</i> or (<i>you can</i>) <i>even (get) killed</i>.</p>

4. Surveys

Surveys are a staple technique within **Communicative Language Teaching** which emphasize meaning over form and fluency over accuracy. They can be devised for students at any level of proficiency, and they are an ideal way of personalizing the learning process. They are also excellent for demonstrating the relationships between language form and language function as exemplified in Figure 1 (pages 81–82), and for moving learners from reproductive to creative language use.

Reflection



Example 9 is designed to get students practicing simple past tense as well as a range of modal verbs. What language structures do you think might be generated by the survey?

Example 9

Challenge 7

Task 1

Pair Work Complete the following survey. If you haven't been to another country, try to imagine what would bother you. Check [✓] your answers.

<i>This bothered me . . .</i>	<i>a lot</i>	<i>a little</i>	<i>not at all</i>
a the weather	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b the food	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c getting around	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d tipping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f social customs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g being away from home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h meeting people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i money matters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j shopping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



- A Did the weather in England bother you?
 B Yes, it did. It rained all the time.
 A You should have gone to Spain.

Task 2

Pair Work Find a partner and survey him or her. Check [✓] the answers. Give your partner some advice on the things that bothered him or her.

<i>This bothered my partner . . .</i>	<i>a lot</i>	<i>a little</i>	<i>not at all</i>
a the weather	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b the food	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c getting around	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d tipping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f social customs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g being away from home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h meeting people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i money matters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j shopping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ATLAS: Learning-Centered Communication. Student Book 3
 (Nunan, 1995, p. 117)

5. Role-plays

The following description of why role-plays work well is taken from a popular book on role-plays in language learning. As with problem-solving tasks and surveys, they are good for personalizing learning (particularly when learners are expected to express their own ideas, feelings and attitudes in acting out the role-play), and for encouraging creative language use.

When students assume a “role” they play a part (either their own or somebody else’s) in a specific situation. “Play” means that the role is taken on in a safe environment in which students are as inventive and playful as possible. A group of students carrying out a role-play in a classroom has much in common with a group of children playing school, doctors and nurses, or *Star Wars*. Both are unselfconsciously creating their own reality and, by doing so, are experimenting with their knowledge of the real world and developing their ability to interact with other people. (Ladousse, 1987, p. 5)

Reflection



Study the two role-plays in Example 10. What grammar points are these role-plays designed to practice. How would you set up the role-play so that students actually practice these points? Which role-play is the more challenging? Do you think that both role-plays are suitable for intermediate level learners? Why or why not?

Example 10

Role-Play 1

Procedure

1. Set up the task by showing your students some examples of antiques. These can be photographs or actual objects. See if the students can guess the value of the objects.
2. After a brief discussion, explain that the class will be split into two groups for the subsequent lesson. One group will be the buyers and the other the sellers.
3. Give them a copy of the instructions on the task sheet and agree on a time for the sale, which will take approximately twenty minutes.

Task sheet

Instructions for sellers

Sellers should come to the lesson with five objects they wish to sell. These can be real things or pictures from magazines. None of the

objects should be worth more than \$100. Imagine how much you paid for the objects and give your teacher a list of the prices. During the space of twenty minutes you should aim to sell each object for as much as you can. Keep a note of each sale and, when the sale is over, tell the teacher how much money you have collected. Have you made a profit? The seller who makes the most profit is the winner.

Instructions for buyers

In this lesson the sellers will show you objects or pictures of objects they wish to sell. You have a budget of \$200, and your aim is to buy as many objects as possible in about twenty minutes. You may need to bargain with the sellers to achieve your aim. When you have finished shopping, find out who was the best buyer and who was the best seller.

Role-Play 2

Procedure

1. Set up the task with a brief discussion about air travel. Find out if any of the class has ever had a flight that was seriously delayed or overbooked. Ask them to recount what happened, how the different types of passengers reacted, etc.
2. Now divide the class into passengers and ground staff. There should be one member of the airline staff for every three or four passengers. Once the students have been divided up, give each group its instructions.
3. Monitor the role-play.
4. Follow up the task with an evaluation of how the various conflicts were handled or resolved.

Task sheet

Instructions for the ground staff

You are in charge of a flight to Australia. The flight is due to close in twenty minutes. The flight is fully booked and some of the passengers do not have seats, although they all have confirmed tickets. You expect that there will be three seats available in about fifteen minutes, but you are not sure of this, and you do not want to tell the passengers this in case there are none left. Until then you cannot accept luggage or give anyone a boarding card. Your aim is to calm the passengers down and get them to accept \$500 compensation in order to take another flight as soon as possible. The next available flight is in six hours' time, and you think there might be seats but you cannot check because the computer is not working. At the end of fifteen minutes you and your colleagues have to decide which three passengers you will take. Find a way of telling the other passengers.

Instructions for passengers

You are booked on a flight to Australia. Decide on a role, e.g., a man or woman going to visit his or her relatives, a scientist speaking at a conference, etc. Approach the desk. Do not change your role. Try your best to get on the flight by talking to the staff and the other passengers.

Conversation (Nolasco and Arthur, 1992 page 109–110)

Action



If possible record several pairs of native speakers or competent users of the language doing the role-plays. Record the role-plays and listen to the interactions. Did the speakers use the language you predicted? Did they use other language? How would you modify your procedures in light of this experiment? Share your answers with a classmate or colleague.

6. Consciousness-raising tasks

Consciousness-raising tasks and exercises require learners to solve a grammatical problem or puzzle in small groups. In so doing, they are communicating authentically in English. However, the subject that they are communicating about is some aspect of grammar rather than some other content area from outside the classroom. Fotos (1995, pp. 181–182) argues that the most communication is produced among students when the tasks have four components:

1. They contain an information gap.
2. Students are given time to plan what they are going to say.
3. The tasks require a solution.
4. All students must reach agreement on the solution.

Reflection



Which of the four components listed above does the consciousness-raising task in Example 11 have?

**Appendix A:
Adverb
Placement
Task Sheet**

Use only English during this group activity. One person should read the directions to the rest of the group.

Directions: Working in your groups, study the following sentences. These sentences contain adverbs, words that tell about the verb. In English sentences, adverbs can occur in several places:

Yesterday he studied English.

We *quickly* ate lunch.

He studied for the test *carefully*.

But adverbs cannot occur in one location in the English sentence. In groups, you must find that location—the location where English adverbs cannot occur. To help you solve this problem, you will ask and answer questions that contain these five adverbs: *yesterday, quickly, carefully, easily, often*.

1. First, decide who will start.
2. Then, that person asks the person to his or her right Question 1, and the person answers it.
3. Then, the person who answered Question 1 asks Question 2 to the person on his or her right.
4. Continue until everyone has asked and answered questions.
5. When people are answering questions, you should think about the location of the adverb. Do you think that the person is using the adverb in the correct location? If not, tell the person where you think the correct location is.
6. When everyone has finished, discuss four general rules for adverb placement.
7. When you agree on the rules, write the rules at the bottom of this page.
8. When you are done, you may turn off your tape recorder.

Question 1: What did you do *yesterday*?

Question 2: Many people can solve mathematical problems *quickly*. How *quickly* can you calculate?

Question 3: Are you the type of person who prepares for examinations *carefully*?

Question 4: Some people remember what they read *easily*. Other people *easily* learn sports. What activities can you *easily* do?

Question 5: What type of activity do you *often* like to do? How *often* do you do this activity.

General Rules for Adverb Placement in English:

1. Adverbs may occur _____.
2. Adverbs may also occur _____.
3. And adverbs may also occur _____.
4. However, adverbs may not be used _____.

Communicative tasks for grammar consciousness-raising in *New Ways in Teaching Grammar* (Fotos, 1995)

7. Grammar charts

As teachers, we want to allow for a variety of learning styles within our classrooms. Grammar charts not only allow for the deductive approach but they also allow visual learners a chance to see rules mapped out. Grammar charts become increasingly more effective as learners' language levels increase. Intermediate students usually possess enough metalanguage to interact with charts more easily. In fact, teachers may begin to have students work with the charts either alone or in pairs.

The grammar chart below is for using *could* to express possibility. Two exercises follow the chart. While the rule looks relatively easy to understand, it is one that often confuses intermediate students. It is important to remember that grammar charts need not be overly complex.

Example 12

7-4 USING *COULD* TO EXPRESS POSSIBILITY

- (a) A: Why isn't Greg in class?
B: I don't know. He *could be* sick.
(b) Look at those dark clouds. It *could start* raining any minute.

Could can mean *past ability*. (See Chart 7-2, p. 191.) But that is not its only meaning. Another meaning of *could* is *possibility*.

In (a): "He *could be* sick" has the same meaning as "He *may/might be* sick," i.e., "It is possible that he is sick."

In (a): *could* expresses a **present** possibility.

In (b): *could* expresses a **future** possibility.

□ EXERCISE 9. Meanings of *COULD*. (Charts 7-2 and 7-4)

Directions: What is the meaning of *could* in the following? Does *could* express past, present, or future time?

1. I *could be* home late tonight. Don't wait for me for dinner.
→ *could be* = *may/might be*. It expresses *future time*.
2. Thirty years ago, when he was a small child, David *could speak* Arabic fluently. Now he's forgotten a lot.
→ *could speak* = *was able to speak*. It expresses *past time*.
3. A: Where's Alicia?
B: I don't know. She *could be* at the mall.
4. When I was a child, we *could swim* in the Duckfoot River, but now it's too polluted. Today even the fish get sick.
5. A: What's this?
B: I don't know. It looks like a glass bottle, but it *could be* a flower vase.
6. Let's leave for the airport now. Yuki's plane *could arrive* early, and we want to be there when she arrives.
7. When I was a kid, I *could jump* rope really well.



Modal Auxiliaries 195

Fundamentals of English Grammar (Azar, 2003, p. 195)

This particular grammar chart is followed by a nice oral exercise that reinforces the rule *and* allows the students a chance to use it to convey real meaning.

Example 13

□ EXERCISE 10. Expressing possibility: COULD, MAY, and MIGHT. (Charts 7-3 and 7-4)

Directions: Listen to the clues with books closed. Make guesses using *could*, *may*, and *might*.

Example: is made of metal and you keep it in a pocket

TEACHER: I'm thinking of something that is made of metal. I keep it in my pocket. What could it be?

STUDENTS: It could be a pen. It could be some keys. It might be a paper clip. It may be a small pocket knife. It could be a coin.

TEACHER: (...) was right! I was thinking of the keys in my pocket.

1. has wheels and a motor
2. is made of plastic and can be found in my purse/pocket
3. is brown, is made of leather, and is in this room
4. is flat and rectangular
5. is white, hard, and in this room
6. is played with a ball on a large field
7. has (*three*) stories* and is made of (*brick*)
8. has four legs and is found on a farm
9. is green and we can see it out that window
10. is sweet and you can eat it

Fundamentals of English Grammar (Azar, 2003, p. 196)

5. Grammar in the classroom

In this section, we look at some examples of language teaching and learning in action in a range of intermediate level classrooms.

Reflection



In Extract 1, page 103, students are practicing adjectives ending in *-ed* and *-ing*. This is a common problem for many intermediate level students, and you will often hear these students making statements such as *I was boring* when they mean *I was bored*. Is this an inductive or a deductive teaching sequence? How can you tell? Are students using language reproductively or creatively? Would you say that this is an example of grammatical consciousness-raising? As with all extracts in this book, T stands for teacher and S stands for student.

Extract 1

- T:** *OK, so on the tape you heard Heidi say she was bored in her job, that her job was boring. Right? Understand the difference, Yumi? Bored? Boring?*
- S:** *Yes.*
- T:** *So, now, which is the correct word here? Which word is correct? (puts on overhead) "I guess Nancy was horrified/horrifying at losing her job." Look here. Which one? Yuki? (There is silence from the student.) Yumi?*
- S:** *Horrified.*
- T:** *Horrified. Horrified. Good. And how about this one? (puts on overhead) "Did you hear about the horrified/horrifying accident at work?" Yuki? What do you think?*
- S:** *Horrifying.*
- T:** *Yes. Pretty obvious really, isn't it, if the other one was.... What was that? (Student says something inaudible.) Oh, OK. Now look at this pair of sentences. Which is the correct word for each pair? (puts on overhead) "I was disappointed/disappointing not to get the job." "My job is exhausted/exhausting." Rosy?*
- S:** *Um, for the first one, is disappointed and for the second one is exhausting.*
- T:** *OK, good, disappointed and exhausting. (She circles the correct option on the overhead.) So does anyone know the rule? When do we use -ed and when do we use -ing? (Lengthy silence)*
- T:** *OK, let me ask a different question. When we talk about how we feel, what form do we use? Do we use the -ing form of the verb or the -ed form? The -ing or the -ed form? Yes, Judy?*
- S:** *The -ed form.*
- T:** *The -ed form. Right. Yes, the -ed form.*

This sequence illustrates a process of guided discovery or inductive learning. Having gotten the students to consider several examples, the teacher then encourages them to formulate the rule. The extract provides a good example of a teacher thinking on her feet. When the students are unable to come up with the requisite generalization, she simplifies it to a single application. While potentially it could be a form of consciousness-raising, the teacher-fronted format of the interaction denies students the opportunity to use language to talk about language.



Modify the above task so that it is a consciousness-raising task along the lines suggested by Fotos on page 99. Share your task with a classmate or colleague.

Reflection



In Extract 2, the teacher is trying to provide a grammatical explanation for an error made by a student. Do you think that the explanation is effective or not?

Extract 2

T: "You can write programs, play a game, doing calculations, drawing a picture, etc." *I like the idea very much, you've got some concrete examples, but it's not quite balanced so far as grammar goes. OK, what is the modal in that sentence?*

S: Can.

T: Can. *OK, and we see here the modal (points to the board on which one student has written.) "So I think all students should be learn how to use computers.). Now what's the infinitive after should? (pause) What's the infinitive after should in this sentence?*

Ss: Learn.

T: Learn, *this is the infinitive. Should learn. If you've got one modal in a sentence, all the verbs which follow must be infinitives. So pick up your pencils and correct this sentence. First of all, let's find the verbs. Which are the verbs?*

Ss: Write, play, doing, drawing.

T: Write, play, doing, drawing. *OK. (Students correct the errors.) OK, what did you change? (pause) What have you changed there? (pause) Do I change play?*

Ss: No.

T: *Do I change doing?*

Ss: Yes.

T: *Cross out...?*

Ss: ...ing.

T: *What about drawing?*

Ss: ... ing.

T: *Yes, same thing. OK, that's good. Now you can see how it works. You can have many different verbs following just one modal, but they must all be infinitives. Now there's something else that needs fixing up. Can anyone suggest what's wrong?*

Classroom Interaction (Tsui, pp. 35–36, 1995)

Tsui provides the following commentary on this piece of classroom interaction.

The problem to be explained to the students is the use of the infinitive after the modal verb even when there are many different verbs following just one modal verb. We can identify the following characteristics of effective explanation in the excerpt: Firstly, the teacher tries to relate the grammar rule to the students' existing knowledge, which is the use of the infinitive after a modal verb and he actively involves the students in doing so. Secondly, the questions that he puts to the students are the "keys", in that they are linked questions that elicit responses leading to the solution to the problem. He first establishes that the students know what a modal verb is by asking *what is the modal in that* (the sentence under discussion) *sentence?* This is followed by *What's the infinitive after* should *in this* (the previous sentence discussed) *question?* He then states the rule and tries to get the students to apply it. In applying the rule, he gets the students to identify what the verbs are in the sentence under discussion by asking *Which are the verbs?* Then he goes over each verb and asks them to produce the infinitive form of the verb. Thirdly, by asking students these key questions, the teacher is actively involving them in processing the new information. Fourthly, the explanation is clearly structured with framing moves like *First of all let's find the verbs*, by a summarizing statement reiterating the rule before he moves on to the next point, thus clearly signposting the end of one teaching sequence and the beginning of another. (1995, p. 34)

Reflection



Extract 3 on page 106 has been adapted from Thornbury (2001, p. 91). In what ways does the task exemplify a teacher exploiting the principle of adopting a process approach to grammar?

Extract 3

The teacher hands out the following worksheet.

Dialogue 1	Dialogue 2
<p>A: Anyone fancy a coffee? B: Sure, if you're getting one. A: Got any small change? B: Here. A: Ta. Tomorrow it's on me. B: No worries. A: Milk? Sugar? B: Black. Two sugars. A: Something to eat? B: Get us a chocolate bar, will you? A: OK. Back in a sec.</p>	<p>A: Would anyone like a hot drink? B: Well, I wouldn't mind a coffee, if it's no trouble. A: Not at all. You wouldn't happen to have a fifty pence coin, would you? B: I think I just might. Here you are. A: Thank you. I'll pay you back. B: Please. I wouldn't hear of it. A: Would you like milk and sugar? B: I'll have it black, with two spoonfuls of sugar, if that's possible. A: Can I get you something to eat? B: Well, a chocolate bar would be nice, if they have any. A: Certainly. I'll be back shortly.</p>

T: OK, so in your groups, I want you to look at the two dialogues on the worksheet, and make a list of the things that make the second dialogue more formal than the first one. So, one of you will need to make notes—be a scribe. All right. ... Yes, Roberto?

S: So we need to com...compare with the one with the other one.

T: Yeah, you need to compare the two, OK? Right, then off you go.

(The students complete the task in groups of three–four. While they work, the teacher circulates and checks their work.)

T: OK, then, time's up. So then, what did you come up with? Regina? Let's start with your group.

S: Well, Dialogue 2 have full sentences.

T: Full sentences.

S: Yes. For example Dialogue 1 have "Anyone fancy a coffee?" Dialogue two have "Would anyone like a hot drink?"

T: And what do we call this word here, would, what do we call this word?

S: Modal.

T: Right. It's a modal, modal verb. What's the function of using would here? What's the function?

S: For politeness?

T: For politeness. OK. So, um, what else did you come up with?

S: Dialogue 1 is informal.

T: Informal? Can you give me an example?

S: For example, "Tomorrow it's on me."

T: And what do we call that kind of language? "It's on me." What do we call that? ...Colloquial. We say it's colloquial. It's the way people talk when they're being casual. OK, now, back in your groups, I want you to expand this conversation skeleton into a more formal one with complete sentences. All right? You can use Dialogue 2 as a model.

(The teacher puts the following dialogue onto the overhead projector.)

A: Salad?

B: Thanks.

A: Mixed or plain lettuce.

B: Mixed.

A: Dressing?

B: Uh-huh.

A: Ranch or blue cheese?

B: Ranch.

A: There you go.

B: Great.

Reflection



In Extract 4, to what extent does the teacher try to relate new information to the students' existing knowledge? Are learners actively involved? How does the teacher structure the explanation? Is the sequence basically inductive or deductive in nature?

Extract 4

T: Now step back and look at it again. Go back to think about things which happened in the morning. Now here you've got two interesting points. First of all, he turned on the tap and then the telephone rang. Now, do you think you can join them together? The two events, they have certain causal relationships. So how do you join the two events together?

S1: While the telephone rang. When he was...

T: OK, right. Look at it again. Now see what actually happened.

S2: After he turned on the bath, he heard the telephone ring.

S1: While.

T: Now here we've got two people, Sam and Wilfred, using two different words to join them together. One is the word while. Sam used while to join them together. Wilfred used the other word and that is after. Is there any difference between these words? While?

Ss: While happening at the same time.

T: While, happening—?

Ss: At the same time.

T: OK. You used while when the two things are supposed to be happening at the same time. What about after?

S3: One follows the other.

T: OK, one follows another. So two events one following the other. Now look at the picture again. Which is true?

S3: After (pause)

T: The second is right. Do you agree?

S3: Yes.

T: Now why?

S3: Because in fact the telephone rang after he turned on.

T: Yes.

S3: Then Henry was walking, walking to the phone.

T: Yes, right. Do you agree, Sam? Because the action of turning on the tap is a very short one. You turned on the tap, the telephone rang. Now, but suppose I don't use the verb turned on the tap, I use another verb. If I say run a bath what would you use?

S1: The first one.

T: The first one? OK, give me the complete sentence.

S1: While Henry was running a bath, the telephone rang.

T: So, you would say While Henry was running a bath, the telephone rang. Do you agree, the rest of you? Think about that. What's the difference?

S1: The action.

T: What about the action?

S1: Running a bath would take a long time.

T: Yeah. Do you agree? Running a bath would take a long time.

Classroom Interaction (Tsui, 1995)

Tsui makes the following commentary about the extract.

At the beginning of the interaction there are two competing answers to the teacher's questions of how to join the two events. In response to that, the teacher activates students' knowledge of the words *while* and *after* (lines 12–23). She then refers to the picture and asks students to decide which one is correct; there is active cognitive involvement of students. Apart from asking questions the teacher also asks students to give reasons for or explain their answers (lines 28, 41–42, 44). In trying to explain that when joining two events together, we need to look at the duration of the event, she asks the following linked questions: *Is there any difference between these words (that is, while and after)? While? What about after? Now look at the picture again. Which is true? Why? If I say run a bath, what would you use? What's the difference? and What about the action?* Apart from verbal presentation, she uses pictures to help her. At various points in the explanation she draws students' attention to the picture to help them come up with the correct answers to her questions (lines 8,24). Finally, the teacher signposts the explanation. She uses focusing moves such as *Now, step back and look at it again. Go back to think about things which happened in the morning. Look at the picture again, and Now, look at the picture again, and framing moves such as Now here you've got two interesting points.* (pp. 36–37)

6. Assessing intermediate learners

At an intermediate level, we need to begin thinking about the assessment of receptive skills (listening and reading) in contrast with the assessment of the productive skills of speaking and writing. One of the paradoxical things about assessing receptive skills is that it can only be done through learners producing or doing something. Another issue that becomes salient at the intermediate level is how we go about assessing grammar in relation to the different language skills. Do we, indeed should we, separate the assessment of grammatical accuracy from communicative fluency?

Peter Skehan (1998), who has written extensively on the assessment of learner performance, has created the following assessment scales for assessing grammatical accuracy at beginning, intermediate and advanced levels.

Level	Grammatical accuracy	Fluency
Beginning	Can use some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes some mistakes.	Can keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production.
Intermediate	Does not make mistakes that lead to misunderstanding; errors occur, but it is clear what he/she is trying to express.	Can produce stretches of language with a fairly even tempo, although he/she can be hesitant as he or she searches for patterns and expressions. There are few noticeable long pauses.
Advanced	Good grammatical control; occasional slips or non-systematic errors and minor flaws in sentence structure may still occur, but they are rare and can often be corrected in retrospect.	Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly, although a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a smooth flow of language.

Figure 3 Assessment scales for grammatical accuracy (*A Cognitive Approach to Language Teaching* (Skehan, 1998))

Reflection



If you were trying to identify an intermediate level learner and distinguish him/her from a beginner or an advanced learner, would you find the descriptors in Figure 3 useful? What problems do you imagine that you might encounter?

One of the problems with these descriptors is that they are vague and subject to a range of interpretations. For instance, the scales use phrases such as “good grammatical control.” Also, intermediate learners are said not to make mistakes that lead to misunderstandings. This is probably too high a benchmark for intermediate learners.

Example 14 is an assessment task from Lewkowitz and Nunan (2003) and is a useful one for intermediate level learners because it can be administered on a large scale (unlike other production tasks such as one-on-one interviews), and it is a naturalistic task—the kind that learners might conceivably be required to carry out in the real world.

Example 14

Situation

John is a visiting student who has come from Singapore to study in your school for one year. He is interested in joining an activity organized by the school club you belong to. As the club secretary you telephone him to remind him about it. However, he is not at home so you leave a message on his answering machine. You have one minute (60 seconds) to leave your message.

Call John and tell him:

- Your name
- The event you are calling about
- The club organizing the event
- When the event is taking place
- How to get to the event (e.g., by bus) and times (e.g., leaves at 8 a.m.)
- Your contact number

Task-based Assessment for Learning (Lewkowitz and Nunan, 2003)

Action



1. Make a list of the grammar items learners will need in order to complete the task. Create assessment criteria for the task.
2. Decide how you would give feedback.
3. If possible have several intermediate level learners carry out the task and then analyze their responses.

7. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have looked at the teaching of grammar to intermediate students. In the first main section, we determined the characteristics of intermediate level learners, then looked at typical grammatical and functional items appropriate for them. In Section 3, we discussed three principles for teaching intermediate students: moving them from reproductive to creative language use; personalizing the grammar activities; and encouraging students to see grammar as a process. In Section 4, techniques and exercise types for introducing and practicing grammar with intermediates were described and illustrated. Then, we looked at the assessment of intermediate level students. And finally, we looked at a number of classroom interactions, where teachers were focusing on aspects of grammar with intermediate students.

The next chapter, which focuses on advanced learners, follows a similar format to this one and Chapter Two.



Further readings

Murphy, R. 2000. *Grammar in Use: A self-study reference and practice book for intermediate students*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This book has remained highly popular since its publication a number of years ago, and is a useful reference source for both students and teachers.

Thornbury, S. 2001. *Uncovering Grammar*. Oxford: Macmillan Heinemann.

This is not so much a grammar reference book as it is a book about how grammar as a process emerges, and what we as teachers can do to help and support our students with the process.



Helpful Web site

Expressions Web site (<http://expressions.heinle.com>)

Most commercial textbook series have an associated Web site that can be accessed regardless of whether or not you are using that particular series. On pages for levels 2 (Intermediate) and 3 (Upper Intermediate) you will find interactive, self-access quizzes and Internet search activities that provide learners with further, independent practice of the key grammatical items in the series.



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