

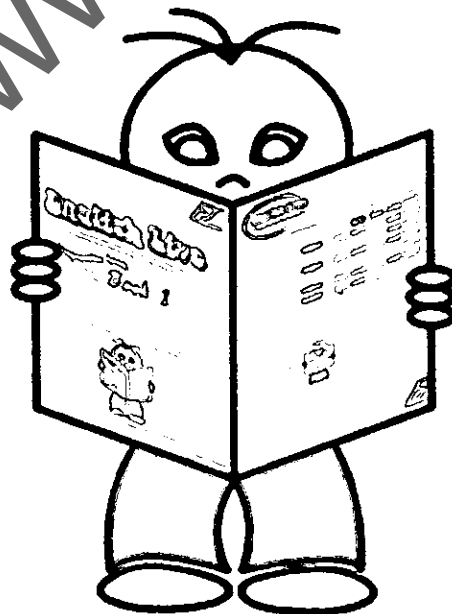
English Live

Academic English for the 21st Century

Preparation Level

Book 1

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Preparation
Level

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PREFACE

General Characteristics of the Series

English Live is a series of comprehensive course books designed for children with different linguistic backgrounds who begin studying English as a foreign language. The content of the books in the series is carefully graded and the materials are systematically presented. The *English Live* series is intended to provide ample opportunities for young learners to build up a strong foundation for language knowledge from the very early stages of language learning process. The series are designed at five levels of **preparation** (Books 1-3), **construction** (Books 4-12), **communication** (Books 13-20), **information** (Books 21-28), and **application** (29-36). In addition, there is a single book, named **Pre-preparation** (Book 0) which is designed for pre-school children. The books at each level are intended to help learners achieve pre-determined objectives and goals.

The books for the first level, i.e., **the preparation level**, are designed for children of primary school age with no prior knowledge of English. At the end of this level, learners should develop mastery of recognizing the sounds of the English language, reading words and simple sentences, and writing simple words.

The books for the second level, i.e., **the construction level**, are designed to form a good command of the basic structures of the English language. The materials in these books are built up fairly systematically on the materials of the preparation series. At the end of this level, learners are expected to understand these structures and use them effectively in oral and written forms.

The books for the third level, i.e., **the communication level**, are designed to develop communicative ability of the learners at the survival level. That is, the materials in the books of the communication level follow the materials of the previous level. At the end of this level, learners are expected to communicate orally and in the written form of the language fairly satisfactorily.

The books for the fourth level, i.e., **the information level**, are designed to develop the ability of extracting information from authentic materials, either in written or oral forms. The books based on informative materials

help the language learners improve both their language and their general knowledge. At the end of this level, learners are expected to become autonomous in comprehending the language in both written and oral forms at their own level of cognitive ability.

The books for the fifth level, i.e., **the application level**, are designed to provide learners with the opportunity to put the language they have learned into practice. At the end of this level, students should be able to listen, speak, read, and write like a native speaker of their school ages.

A significant feature of the books in the *English Live* series is that the materials in each book are presented following the principles of **linguistics, psychology, sociology, and pedagogy**. Linguistically, language elements are presented in an order similar to that of natural language acquisition. That is, language is first heard, then spoken, then read, and finally written. This is the order in which native speakers acquire their first language. Psychologically, the materials are presented in such a way that the learners move from known pieces of information to unknown ones. In other words, except for the new elements to be presented in each lesson, learners do not face anything they have not covered before. Sociologically, the communicative needs of the learners within the context of cultural values are taken into consideration in preparing the materials. That is, the materials are designed in such a way that they are meaningful to the learners in its real sense. Pedagogically, a combination of teaching methods including phonics, syllabic, and whole-word methods are employed for ultimate efficiency.

The *English Live* series is intended to help learners to proceed from the very beginning level to the advanced levels of language proficiency. Young learners will be able to develop an accurate pronunciation, a good command of vocabulary in communicative contexts, an implicit knowledge of grammar, a reasonable speed in reading, and an acceptable ability in writing. The series is designed to help children develop an ability to listen and understand, speak, read and write in a manner similar to that of the native speakers of the language.

Each course in the *English Live* series includes a textbook accompanied by a workbook, a tape, a penmanship notebook, supplementary materials, and a teacher's guide.

Of course, no perfection is claimed and constructive comments are welcome to improve the quality in later editions.

Specific Characteristics of the books at the Preparation level

The present book, *English Live: Book 1* is the first of the three books at the **Preparation Level**. It is designed for children of primary school age with no prior knowledge of English. In this book, an innovative and unique approach is employed in the presentation of the sound system of the English language.

A significant feature of the books at this level is that learners are initially introduced to the sounds of the English language following a unique procedure. Most of the books written for this age group at this level follow the order of the English alphabet. This forces the learners to read the words with unfamiliar sounds. Therefore, they are encouraged to memorize the words without developing the ability to analyze the sounds. For instance, most books intended for young learners start with the letter "a". When the learners are given the name of the letter "a" and its corresponding sound in a word such as "apple", they feel a contradiction between what they hear and how the sound is actually pronounced in the word. In addition, they are required to read the word "apple" without being introduced to the other sounds and letters in the word. This procedure is followed for the subsequent sounds in the order they appear in the alphabet.

In these books, contrary to common practice, the sounds are presented regardless of the alphabetic order of the letters in such a way that the learners build up their knowledge of the sound system in a systematic and progressive way. For instance, in the first lesson of **Book 1**, the learners are exposed to a word with three letters, each of which represents a particular sound. Every new word in the subsequent lessons is chosen in a way to include the previously learned sounds plus only one new sound. In this way, except for the new sound, the learners are not forced to see or read any sound or any word to which they have not been exposed before.

Another significant feature of the books at the **preparation level** is that only one sound of each vowel is introduced at a time. For example, learners are exposed to the letter "A" with the sound of /a/ as in /ant/ in Book 1. Other sounds of the letter "A" are introduced in books 2 and 3. Of course, as the learners develop sound discrimination ability, they are exposed to other words with additional sounds. Later, when learners have mastered word-picture correspondence, they are exposed to the same words in meaningful sentences and contexts. Care has been exercised to

choose words that are easy for learners to pronounce, familiar to them, and present in their immediate physical environment for ease of recognition and comprehension.

The books at the **preparation level** aim at developing listening and reading comprehension skills through word-picture correspondence. This means that in addition to developing an analytical ability in discriminating the sound system of the language, the learners develop a synthetic ability to read and understand the words with reference to the corresponding pictures. It also means that neither the teacher nor the learners need to refer to the learners' first language. While an attempt is made to build up correct pronunciation of the sounds, words, and sentences, no focus is directed toward writing ability.

Last but not least, the books at the **preparation level** are supplemented by workbooks. The activities in the workbooks are designed as follow-ups to the materials in the textbooks. The main purpose of the activities is to consolidate the materials learned throughout the textbooks. In addition, the activities are based on the most recent developments in the field of language teaching and learning. That is, the activities are not similar to traditional exercises; rather, they are task based. They are designed to engage the learners' mind in the process of creative thinking, problem solving and learning through performing.

In the end, it is hoped that the innovations employed in the *English Live Series* will help children to experience new techniques and strategies for a pleasant and effective way of learning a foreign language.

Hossein Farhady