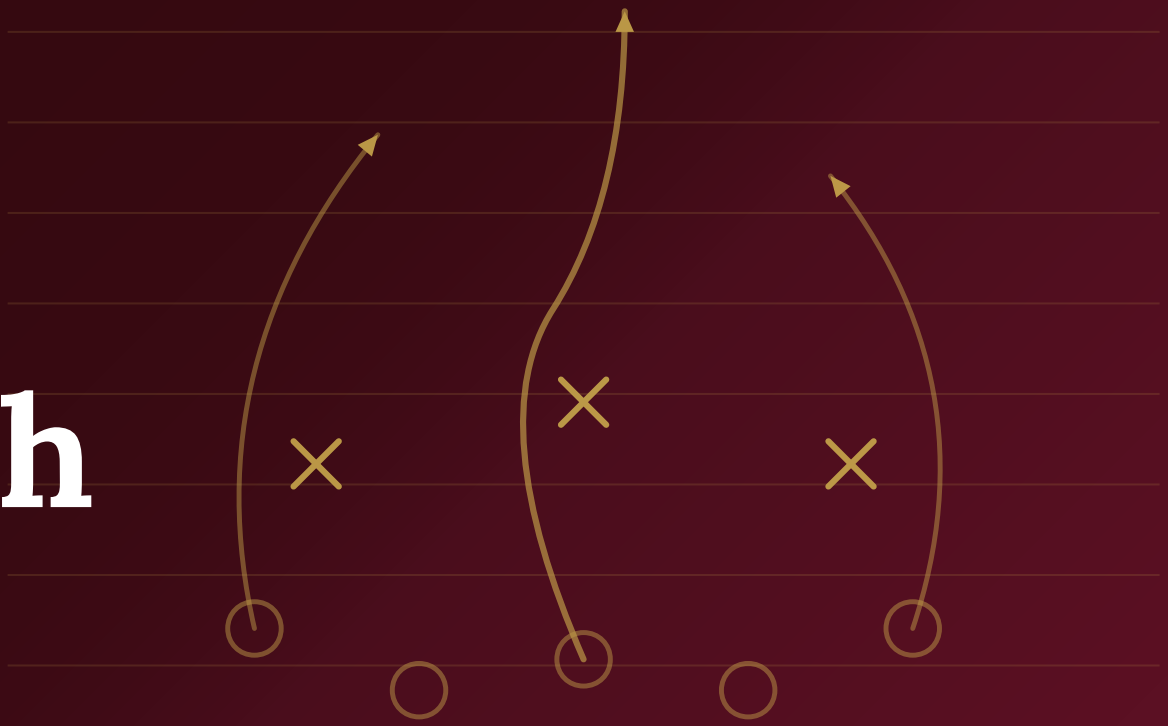
VERITAS HALL

The English Playbook



A complete English curriculum, from first words to a voice that persuades. Free for every student.

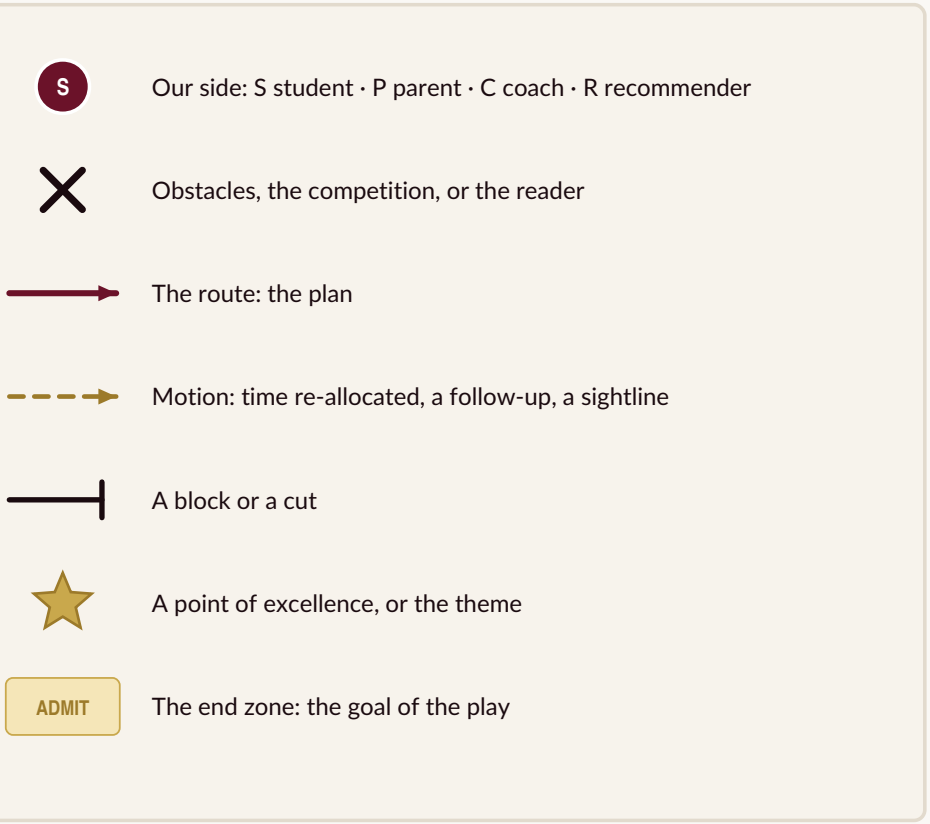
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BEFORE KICKOFF

How to Read This Playbook

One card, one set of symbols, every play.



WHAT THIS IS

A complete English curriculum in playbook form: a six-rung ladder from a student's first English words to C1-level writing and speaking, a Lesson Book of 44 one-page lessons (speaking, grammar and punctuation, with practice and answers), and 30 plays for teaching, practicing and measuring every skill.

FREE TO USE

This book is free for students, families, teachers and schools to use, print and share, unchanged and not for sale. Plays are coded **EN-1** to **EN-30**; lessons in the Lesson Book have their own codes. Cambridge English, IELTS, TOEFL® and Duolingo English Test are trademarks of their owners, none of which was involved in or endorses this book. © 2026 Josef Aiden Durand and Veritas Hall LLC.

THE PLAY CARD

Situation says when to call it. **The Play** gives the steps. **Coaching Points** say why it works. **Scoreboard** is the measurable standard. **Film** lists the sources.

WHO IT'S FOR

Students teaching themselves, parents (including parents who don't speak English), teachers and tutors, and schools running whole classes. Every play can be run with free materials.

FROM THE HEAD COACH

English is a door. This is the key.



JOSEF DURAND
FOUNDER & CEO
HARVARD COLLEGE ’14
12+ YEARS IN ADMISSIONS

Across Southeast Asia I keep meeting the same family. The parents work hard so their children can have more choices than they did, and they know that for this generation, many of those choices open in English: the better school, the scholarship, the university abroad, the job that pays enough to change a family’s future.

Many of their children have studied English for years. They can name the tenses and pass the grammar quiz, but they freeze when someone speaks to them, and they have never read a whole book in English. They were taught about English, not in it.

The research on how people actually learn languages points to a different game: lots of reading and listening they can understand, speaking and writing from the first week, focused practice on the parts that are hard, and the confidence that comes from fluency. Do that every week, measure what the student can actually do, and climb.

This playbook is that game, written down so anyone can run it: a tutor, a teacher with forty students, a mother who doesn’t speak a word of English, or a fourteen-year-old alone with a phone. It is the most important playbook we have written, because for many of the kids we are meeting, English isn’t enrichment. It’s the way out and the way up. For the kids.

Dominate on three. One, two, three… Dominate!

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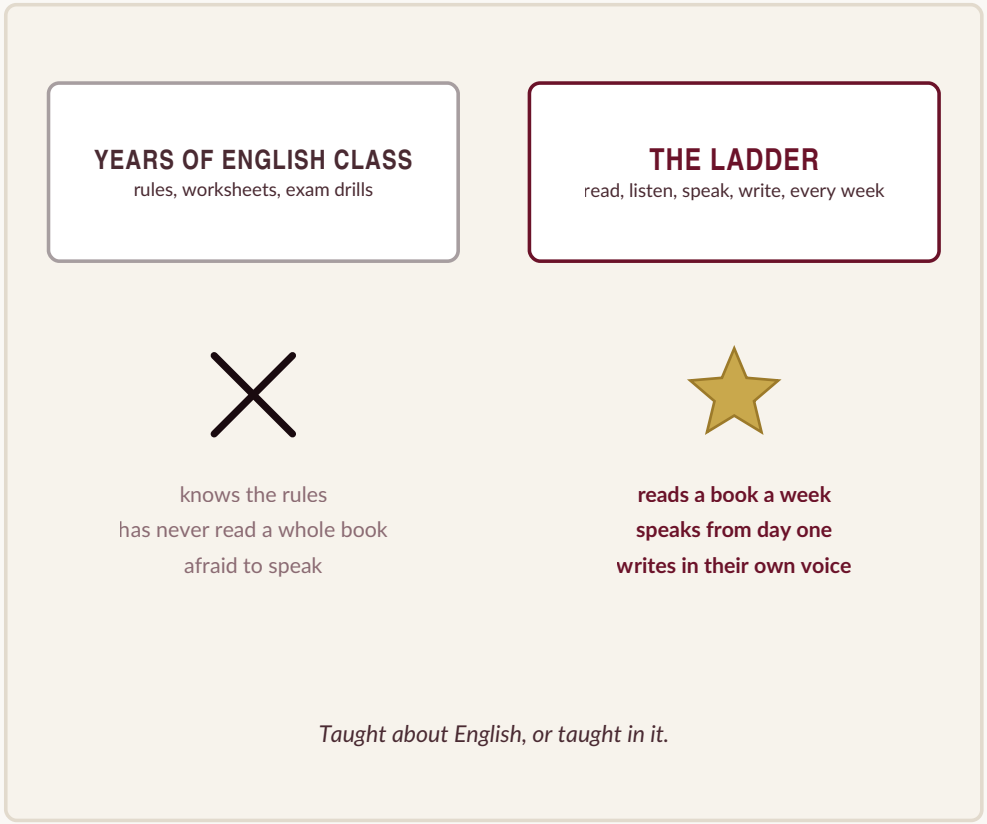
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THE SITUATION

The English Gap

Years of class, and still afraid to speak.



THE PROBLEM

Most English learners get rules, worksheets and exam drills, but very little English they can understand, and almost no chance to use it. They know about English, but they can't yet use it.

WHY IT MATTERS

English opens the doors that change a family's options: international schools, scholarships, universities abroad and better jobs. A student who reads, speaks and writes well in English has choices a student who only passed English class doesn't.

HOW WE WIN

Volume, balance and a coach. A book a week at the right level, speaking and writing every week, focused feedback on the student's own mistakes, and progress measured by what the student can do, on the international CEFR scale, from first words to C1.

THE SYSTEM

Six units, one ladder

Plan the season, feed the input, build the output, climb, run it anywhere, measure.

THE GAME PLAN		
	Place, plan, practice, coach, protect	EN-1, EN-2, EN-3, EN-4, EN-5
INPUT		
	Reading, listening and words	EN-6, EN-7, EN-8, EN-9, EN-10
OUTPUT		
	Speaking and writing	EN-11, EN-12, EN-13, EN-14, EN-15, EN-16, EN-17
THE TOP RUNGS		
	Rungs 4–6 skills	EN-18, EN-19, EN-20, EN-21, EN-22, EN-23
EVERY SETTING		
	Families, alone, classrooms	EN-24, EN-25, EN-26, EN-27
THE SCOREBOARD		
	Measure, move up, hand off	EN-28, EN-29, EN-30

The Game Plan places the student on the ladder and sets the season, the weekly rhythm, the session and the safety rules.

Input covers reading and listening the student can understand: sounds and letters, graded books, close reading, daily listening and vocabulary.

Output covers speaking and writing: from the first sentence to the essay, with pronunciation and grammar coached on the student's own errors.

The Top Rungs add the skills of Rungs 4–6: academic reading, argument, debate, story, interviews and tests.

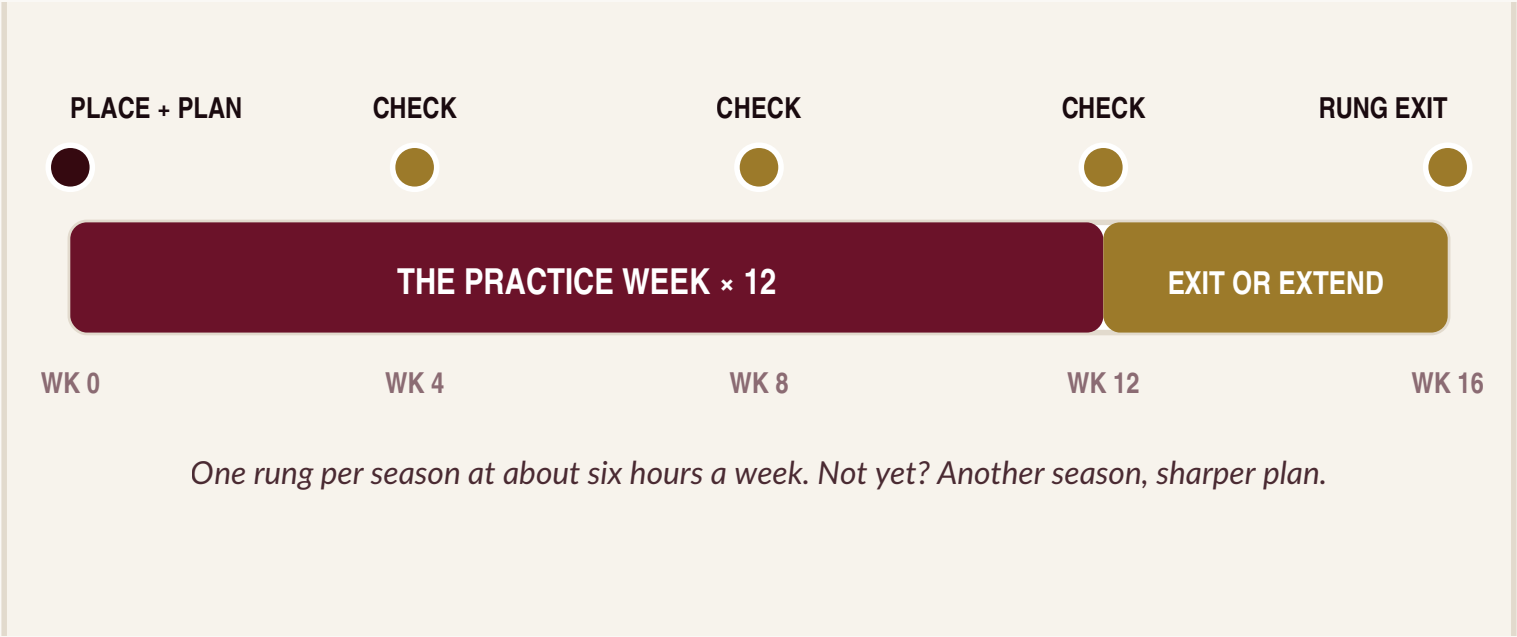
Every Setting runs the curriculum with families, alone, and in classrooms, and keeps the home language strong.

The Scoreboard measures every month, decides when a student moves up, and hands off to what comes next.

THE SEASON

A season on the ladder

Twelve to sixteen weeks, one rung, measured every month.



One rung per season at about six hours a week. Not yet? Another season, sharper plan.

WEEK 0 · PLACE AND PLAN

Placement (EN-1) puts the student on a rung. The Season Plan (EN-2) sets the exit target, the weekly hours and the check dates, signed by student and family.

WEEKS 1–12 · THE PRACTICE WEEK

Every week runs the same rhythm (EN-3): about a quarter of the time each on input, output, language study and fluency, with a coaching session (EN-4) to steer it. Monthly checks (EN-28) at weeks 4, 8 and 12.

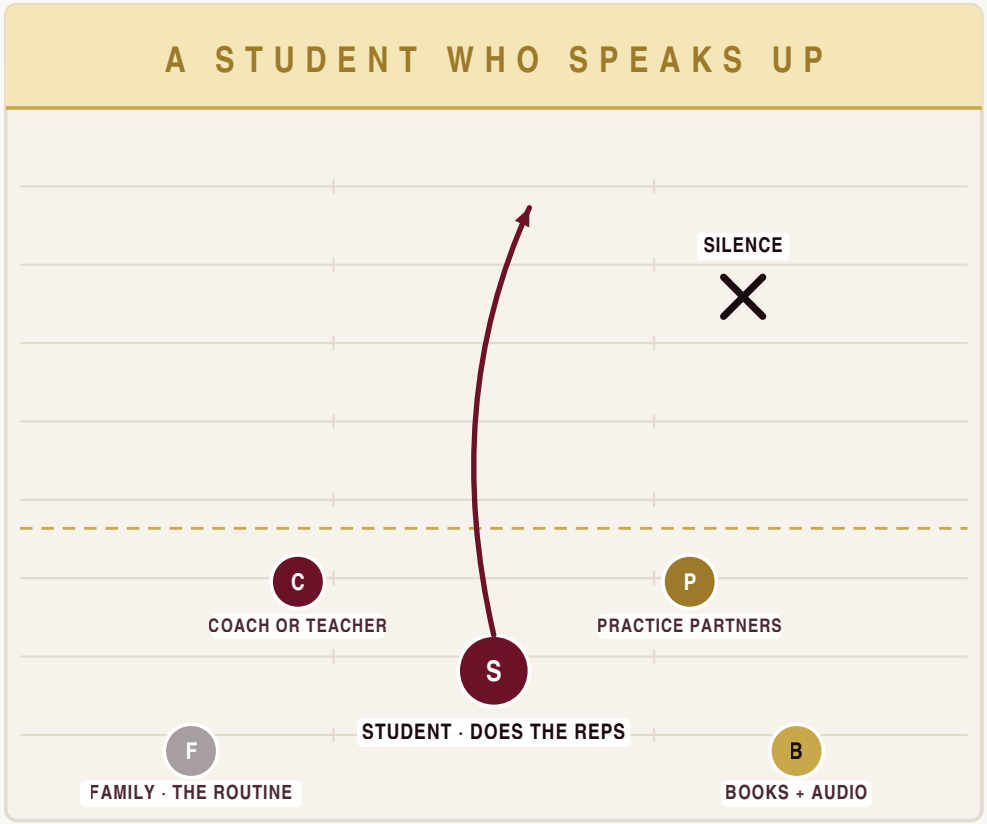
WEEKS 12–16 · EXIT OR EXTEND

The rung exit (EN-29) is passed on what the student can do, not on the calendar. Pass: next rung. Not yet: another season on the same rung with a sharper plan.

THE ROSTER

Who does what

The student does the reps. Everyone else makes the reps possible.



The student does the work: the reading, the listening, the speaking and the writing. Nobody can do the reps for them.

The coach calls the plays: a teacher, tutor or the student themself places the student, runs the sessions, gives feedback and runs the checks.

The family protects the routine: a time, a place and encouragement every day. No English required (EN-24).

Practice partners make speaking normal: classmates, siblings and study groups for the 4/3/2 and conversation.

Books and audio are the field: free graded readers and recordings at the right level.

Silence is the opponent: the student who never speaks, never reads a whole book and never gets feedback.

The Drive Chart

Every student's path, every season, runs the same six drives.



DRIVE	WHEN	WHAT HAPPENS	OWNER	STANDARD
1 · Placement	Week 0	A 30-minute check of speaking, reading, writing and vocabulary places the student on a rung (EN-1).	Coach	Every student placed on evidence, not age or grade.
2 · Season Plan	Week 0	Exit target, weekly hours, books, check dates and an optional exam, agreed with the family (EN-2).	Coach + family	A written plan before the first lesson.
3 · Practice Week	Every week	Four strands in balance; one or two coaching sessions; daily reading, listening and words (EN-3, EN-4).	Student	Five or more practice days every week.
4 · Monthly Check	Weeks 4, 8, 12	Speaking recording, writing sample, words known, books read, compared with last month (EN-28).	Coach	Every check shared with the family.
5 · Rung Exit	Week 12–16	Can-do checklist, portfolio and an exit task; optional external exam (EN-29).	Coach	Move up on evidence, never on the calendar.
6 · Next	After exit	The next rung, or the next goal: a test, a school or a university (EN-30).	Coach + family	A named next step for every student.

Rules of the Game

The eight rules of the curriculum.

01 **Volume wins.**
Languages are learned through hundreds of hours of use. A book a week beats a grammar chapter a week; daily practice beats weekend cramming.

02 **Four strands, every week.**
About a quarter of the time each: understandable input, meaningful output, focused language study and fluency practice (Nation).

03 **Input they understand.**
Reading should use books where the student knows about 98% of the words. Too hard isn't rigorous; it's noise.

04 **Speak from day one.**
Every session, every rung, the student talks more than the coach. Mistakes are data, never shame.

05 **Clear, not native.**
The goal is to be understood easily. An accent is part of who the student is; we fix what blocks understanding.

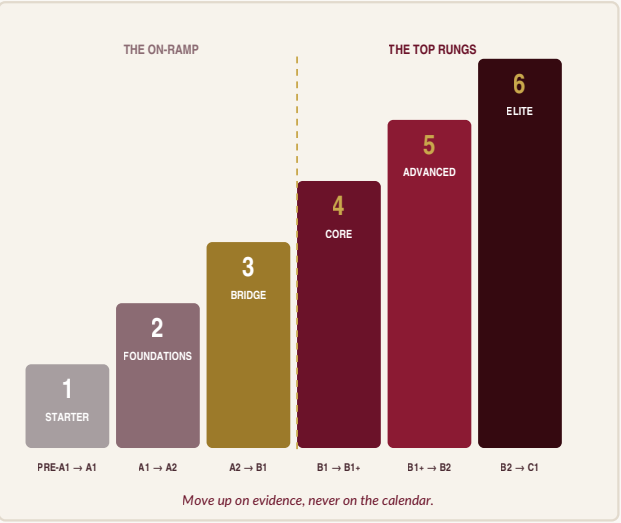
06 **Their words, always.**
Coaches and AI tools give feedback; they never write the student's work. The voice we build has to be the student's own.

07 **Measure what they can do.**
Progress is CEFR can-do evidence (recordings, writing, books read), not textbook pages finished or hours attended.

08 **A free path first.**
Every play can be run with free materials, so no family is priced out of practicing. A coach adds speed and feedback, not access.

The Ladder at a Glance

Six rungs from first words to a persuasive voice, on the international CEFR scale.



HOW THE LADDER WORKS

Each rung is one step on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), the international scale schools, universities and exam boards use. A student is placed on a rung (EN-1), runs seasons of 12–16 weeks, and moves up when the exit check shows they can do what the rung promises (EN-29).

HOW LONG IT TAKES

Cambridge's published guide puts the cumulative study time at about 90–100 hours to reach A1, 180–200 for A2, 350–400 for B1, 500–600 for B2 and 700–800 for C1. That is total time on English (lessons plus practice), and it varies with age, first language and how much English the student hears outside class. At about six hours a week, a rung of 100 hours is one 16-week season.

WHERE TO START

Rungs 1–3 are the on-ramp for students starting from zero or close to it. Most students in grades 7–12 who have studied English at school start on Rung 3 or 4.

RUNG	CEFR	STUDY TIME	THE STUDENT CAN…	WORDS	EXAM MARKERS
1 · Starter	Pre-A1 → A1	about 100 hrs	Read simple words and sentences, introduce themself, follow classroom English.	about 500	Cambridge Pre A1 Starters, A1 Movers
2 · Foundations	A1 → A2	about 100 hrs	Talk about daily life and the past, read short graded books, write a short paragraph.	about 1,000	A2 Flyers, A2 Key for Schools
3 · Bridge	A2 → B1 (low)	about 100 hrs	Hold a simple conversation, read graded novels, write a clear paragraph and a short story.	about 2,000	A2 Key → B1 Preliminary for Schools
4 · Core	B1 → B1+ (secure)	about 100 hrs	Explain and give opinions, write organized multi-paragraph pieces with few errors.	about 3,000	B1 Preliminary for Schools; IELTS about 4.0–5.0
5 · Advanced	B1+ → B2	about 150 hrs	Read academic texts, argue with evidence in writing and speech, take lecture notes.	3,000 + academic list	B2 First; IELTS 5.5–6.5; TOEFL 4–4.5; Duolingo 100–125
6 · Elite	B2 → C1	about 200 hrs	Persuade, debate and tell a story in their own voice; write at university level.	toward 8,000	C1 Advanced; IELTS 7.0+; TOEFL 5–5.5; Duolingo 130+

Starter: Pre-A1 to A1

First sounds, first words, first sentences.

STRAND	WHAT WE TEACH	EXIT CAN-DO
Sounds + letters	The alphabet and the main sound of each letter; blending sounds into short words (c-a-t); the most common spelling patterns; reading simple decodable words aloud (EN-6).	Reads short decodable words and simple sentences aloud; spells common short words from their sounds.
Listening	Classroom English, songs and chants, picture stories read aloud, total physical response (listen and do).	Follows simple classroom instructions; understands slow, clear speech about familiar things with pictures.
Reading	Picture books and the first levels of free graded readers; reading along with audio; the same book several times (EN-7).	Reads and understands very short texts with pictures; has finished 10 or more first-level books.
Speaking	Greetings, introducing yourself, yes/no and one-word answers growing to short sentences; describing pictures with sentence frames (EN-11).	Introduces themself, says what they like and have, answers simple questions about familiar topics.
Writing	Copying, labeling, sentence frames, then first original sentences about self, family and school.	Writes five simple sentences about themself with mostly correct spelling of common words.
Words	The first 500 high-frequency words, numbers, colors, family, school, food, body and daily routines (EN-10).	Knows about 500 common words; recognizes about 100 sight words instantly.
Grammar	To be, have and can; present simple; this/that; plurals; a, an and the; subject pronouns; there is/there are; question words. Lessons: SP-1 to SP-8, GR-2, GR-6, PU-1.	Uses simple present sentences and basic questions correctly most of the time.

WHO

Students from age 10 (grade 5) with little or no English. Younger children can run it at home with a parent (EN-24).

LENGTH

One season of about 16 weeks at about 6 hours a week, including two short sessions.

THE WEEK

Daily: 10 minutes of word cards, 15 minutes of reading or read-along, 10 minutes of listening and speaking aloud.

FREE MATERIALS

StoryWeaver level 1 books (free, many with audio); free phonics videos; picture dictionaries.

EXIT CHECK

Reads a new level-1 book aloud; answers 5 questions about themself; writes 5 sentences; word check of 500.

EXAM MARKERS

Cambridge Pre A1 Starters, then A1 Movers (young learners, optional).

Foundations: A1 to A2

Daily life in English, past and future.

STRAND	WHAT WE TEACH	EXIT CAN-DO
Sounds + letters	Vowel teams and digraphs (sh, ch, th, ee, ai); silent e; the three sounds of past -ed; final consonants; word stress in common words (EN-13).	Decodes most unfamiliar one- and two-syllable words; is understood when reading aloud.
Listening	Learner audio and slow podcasts, graded-reader audiobooks, short dictations of known sentences (EN-9).	Understands the main point of short, clear messages and conversations about daily life.
Reading	Graded readers at starter and level 1–2; one book a week; reading log; retelling in English or the home language (EN-7).	Reads short graded books independently; has finished 12 or more books this rung.
Speaking	Daily routines, last weekend, plans, likes and dislikes; asking questions back; short 2-1.5-1 minute talks (EN-12).	Holds a short exchange about daily life and the past; asks and answers simple questions.
Writing	Joining sentences with and, but, so and because; a five-sentence paragraph; short messages and journal entries (EN-14).	Writes a short paragraph about a past event using and, but, so and because.
Words	Up to the first 1,000 high-frequency words; word cards with spaced review; topic sets for home, town, travel, feelings (EN-10).	Knows about 1,000 common words; uses them in speech and writing.
Grammar	Present continuous, past simple (regular and common irregular), going to and will, comparatives and superlatives, countable and uncountable nouns, prepositions of time and place, adverbs of frequency. Lessons: GR-1, GR-3 to GR-5, GR-7, GR-9, GR-10, GR-12, GR-13, GR-16, GR-17, REF-1.	Uses past simple and future forms correctly in simple sentences most of the time.

WHO

Students at A1: they know basic words and phrases but can't yet talk about their day.

LENGTH

One season of about 16 weeks at about 6 hours a week.

THE WEEK

Daily: 10 minutes of word cards, 20 minutes of a graded reader, 10 minutes of listening; three short speaking or writing tasks a week.

FREE MATERIALS

StoryWeaver levels 1–2; graded reader lists from the Extensive Reading Foundation (erfoundation.org); BBC Learning English.

EXIT CHECK

Two-minute talk about last weekend; reads a new level-2 book; writes a paragraph; word check of 1,000.

EXAM MARKERS

Cambridge A2 Flyers or A2 Key for Schools (optional).

Bridge: A2 to B1

From sentences to conversations and stories.

STRAND	WHAT WE TEACH	EXIT CAN-DO
Sounds + letters	Sentence stress, thought groups and linking; the student's own priority sounds, chosen for intelligibility (EN-13).	Speaks in phrases, not word by word; easily understood by a new listener.
Listening	Graded audiobooks, learner news, shows with English subtitles, dictation and shadowing of short clips (EN-9).	Understands the main points of clear speech on familiar topics at a slow-normal pace.
Reading	Graded readers at levels 2–3, short nonfiction and learner news; one or two books a week; close reading once a week (EN-8).	Reads graded novels independently; finds the main idea and key details in a short article.
Speaking	Telling a story, giving an opinion with a reason, describing a picture or a process; the 4/3/2 every week; asking for clarification (EN-12).	Tells a two-minute story and gives an opinion with a reason; keeps a simple conversation going.
Writing	The paragraph (topic sentence, support, closing); personal emails; a short story; journal three times a week (EN-15).	Writes a clear paragraph with a topic sentence and support, and a short story with a beginning, middle and end.
Words	Up to 2,000 high-frequency words; collocations (make a mistake, do homework); word families (EN-10).	Knows about 2,000 words; notices and records useful phrases while reading.
Grammar	Present perfect, past continuous, first conditional, must, should and have to, relative clauses (who, which, that), the passive (present and past), linkers (although, however, so that). Lessons: GR-8, GR-11, GR-14, GR-15, GR-18 to GR-22, GR-24, PU-2, PU-5.	Uses present perfect and past simple correctly; joins ideas with linkers.

WHO

Students at A2 who can manage daily topics but can't yet keep a conversation going or write a full paragraph.

LENGTH

One season of about 16 weeks at about 6 hours a week.

THE WEEK

Daily: 10 minutes of word cards, 25 minutes of reading, 10 minutes of listening; weekly 4/3/2; three journal entries.

FREE MATERIALS

Free graded readers and audio at levels 2–3; BBC Learning English; public-library e-books.

EXIT CHECK

Three-minute story and opinion; reads a new level-3 reader; writes a paragraph and a short story; word check of 2,000.

EXAM MARKERS

Cambridge A2 Key, then B1 Preliminary for Schools (optional).

Core: B1, made secure

Speaking and writing fundamentals.

STRAND	WHAT WE TEACH	EXIT CAN-DO
Sounds + intonation	Intonation for questions, lists and contrast; pausing; the student's remaining high-priority errors only (EN-13).	Delivers a two-minute talk that a new listener understands without effort.
Listening	Natural-speed podcasts and talks with transcripts; note-taking with key words; summarizing what was heard (EN-9).	Follows a short talk on a familiar topic and summarizes its main points.
Reading	Graded readers at levels 3–4 moving to young-adult novels; articles; main idea, inference and the writer's purpose (EN-7, EN-8).	Reads a young-adult novel with support; explains main ideas and makes simple inferences.
Speaking	The structured talk (point, reason, example, point); discussions; describing experiences, dreams and plans; conversation repair (EN-11, EN-12).	Explains a view with reasons and examples in a two- to three-minute talk; handles follow-up questions.
Writing	Sentence combining; the paragraph mastered; multi-paragraph pieces (intro, body, conclusion); narrative and opinion writing; revision (EN-14 to EN-16).	Writes an organized four- to five-paragraph piece with clear topic sentences and few errors that block meaning.
Words	The core 3,000 general words (lists such as the New General Service List cover about 90% of ordinary text); collocations; word formation (EN-10).	Knows about 3,000 words; uses varied vocabulary instead of repeating the same few words.
Grammar	Tense control across a story; second conditional; reported speech; passive; articles; subject-verb agreement; sentence boundaries; each student's personal top-10 error list (EN-17). Lessons: GR-7, GR-23 to GR-27, GR-29, GR-30, PU-3, PU-4, PU-6.	Personal top-10 errors cut by at least half from placement.

WHO

Grades 7–12 at roughly A2+ to B1: they communicate, but errors and gaps hold back their writing and speaking.

LENGTH

12 weeks with weekly sessions and feedback loops. Repeat the season if the exit isn't met.

THE WEEK

One session; daily words and 30 minutes of reading; two speaking tasks; one writing piece revised from feedback.

FREE MATERIALS

Level 3–4 graded readers; library young-adult novels; talks and podcasts with transcripts.

EXIT CHECK

Structured three-minute talk with questions; timed multi-paragraph piece; error-log comparison; word check of 3,000.

EXAM MARKERS

B1 Preliminary for Schools; IELTS about 4.0–5.0 (B1).

Advanced: B1+ to B2

Academic writing and communication.

STRAND	WHAT WE TEACH	EXIT CAN-DO
Delivery	Presentation delivery: pace, pausing, emphasis and eye contact; recorded and reviewed (EN-13, EN-22).	Presents for five minutes from notes, clearly and with control.
Listening	Lectures and long-form talks; Cornell notes; summarizing and responding to a speaker's argument (EN-18).	Takes usable notes from a 10-minute lecture and summarizes the argument accurately.
Reading	Authentic young-adult and adult fiction; long-form journalism; textbook science and history; annotation; SAT-style passages (EN-8, EN-18).	Reads authentic articles and textbook chapters; identifies claim, evidence and the writer's stance.
Speaking	Seminar discussion; building on others' points; academic presentations; interview practice (EN-20, EN-22).	Takes part in an academic discussion and defends a position with evidence.
Writing	Essay structure and argumentation; summary and paraphrase; compare and contrast; the timed essay; bi-weekly assignments with detailed edits (EN-16, EN-19).	Writes a well-organized argumentative essay with a clear thesis, evidence and a counterargument.
Words	The 570 word families of the Academic Word List; hedging and stance language (suggests, may, arguably); register (EN-10).	Uses academic vocabulary accurately in writing; switches register for audience.
Grammar	Complex sentences; noun phrases and nominalization; third and mixed conditionals; cohesion (this approach, such evidence); punctuation for clarity. Lessons: GR-25, GR-28, GR-29; review PU-2 to PU-4.	Writes varied, complex sentences with good control; errors rarely affect meaning.

WHO

Grades 7–12 at B1 or above, preparing for academic work in English, international schools or study abroad.

LENGTH

12–16 weeks with detailed feedback on writing and speaking. Most students need two seasons for the full step to B2.

THE WEEK

One session; 45 minutes of reading daily; one lecture with notes; a writing assignment every two weeks; one discussion or presentation.

FREE MATERIALS

Public-domain classics (Project Gutenberg); quality journalism; free university lectures; official free sample tests.

EXIT CHECK

Timed argumentative essay; five-minute presentation with questions; lecture-notes summary; academic word check.

EXAM MARKERS

B2 First; IELTS 5.5–6.5; TOEFL iBT 4–4.5; Duolingo English Test about 100–125.

Elite: B2 to C1

Narrative, persuasion and voice.

STRAND	WHAT WE TEACH	EXIT CAN-DO
Delivery	Rhetorical delivery: rhythm, emphasis, storytelling, and composure under questioning (EN-20, EN-22).	Speaks persuasively and naturally, adjusting tone to the audience.
Listening	Fast natural speech across accents; debates and interviews; listening for stance, irony and implication.	Understands extended speech and implied meaning on unfamiliar topics.
Reading	Literary fiction, op-eds, essays and primary sources; rhetorical analysis; reading like a writer.	Reads demanding texts independently and analyzes how a writer persuades.
Speaking	Formal debate on both sides of a motion; persuasive speeches; admissions and scholarship interviews (EN-20, EN-22).	Argues and rebuts in real time; tells a personal story with impact.
Writing	Personal narrative (college-essay style); persuasive op-ed; analytical essay; voice, concision and style (EN-21).	Writes in a clear, personal voice; drafts that need editing, not rescuing.
Words	Toward the 8,000 word families needed to read authentic text with about 98% coverage; idiom, nuance and connotation.	Chooses the precise word; uses idiom naturally.
Grammar	Style as grammar: parallelism, inversion and cleft sentences for emphasis, varied sentence rhythm, concision. Lessons: GR-23, GR-28, PU-4 as tools of style.	Controls grammar fully; uses structure deliberately for effect.

WHO

Grades 7–12 at B2, aiming for selective schools and universities, scholarships and leadership in English.

LENGTH

16 weeks with close feedback on every piece. The full step to C1 usually takes two seasons.

THE WEEK

One or two sessions; daily reading of demanding texts; a debate or speech each week; a piece of writing revised to green light.

FREE MATERIALS

Op-ed and essay archives in public libraries; debate motions and recorded rounds; public-domain speeches.

EXIT CHECK

Personal narrative and persuasive essay; debate round; mock interview; optional C1 exam.

EXAM MARKERS

C1 Advanced; IELTS 7.0–8.0; TOEFL iBT 5–5.5; Duolingo English Test about 130–150. Selective US colleges often look for about IELTS 7.0 or a legacy TOEFL near 100; check each college.

The Lesson Book

44 one-page lessons: speak first, then every rule of grammar and punctuation, with practice and answers.

WHAT THIS IS

One page for every core skill of spoken and written English: 8 speaking lessons to get a beginner talking, 30 grammar lessons from word order to parallel structure, 6 punctuation lessons, and the 70 irregular verbs every learner needs.

HOW TO USE EACH PAGE

1 · Read the rule in the gold box. **2 · Study the table. 3 · Say every example out loud**, twice. **4 · Read the mistakes**: they are the ones learners really make. **5 · Do Say It**, out loud. **6 · Do Try It** in writing, then check the answers.

STARTING FROM ZERO

Begin with Speak First (SP-1 to SP-8). Use a helper or a translation app to understand the rule box, but never for the examples: say those in English. Reading won't make anyone a speaker. Saying every example aloud, every day, gets you most of the way.

WITH A COACH OR TEACHER

Each rung page lists its lessons. In the session (EN-4), teach one lesson chosen from the student's own errors (EN-17), then assign Say It and Try It for the week.

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Hello, I’m…

Your first conversation.

SP-1
LESSON

THE RULE

Say hello, say who you are, and ask the other person. Use **I am** (I’m) for yourself and **Are you…?** or **What’s your…?** to ask.

TO SAY	YOU SAY	THEY MIGHT ANSWER
Hello	Hello. / Hi. / Good morning.	Hi! / Good morning.
Your name	My name is Linh. / I’m Linh.	Nice to meet you. I’m Sam.
Your age	I’m fourteen (years old).	Me too! / I’m fifteen.
Where you’re from	I’m from Indonesia. I live in Surabaya.	Cool. I’m from Manila.
How you are	How are you?	I’m fine, thanks. And you?
School	I’m in grade 8.	Which school do you go to?
Goodbye	Goodbye. See you tomorrow.	Bye! See you.

REMEMBER **I’m** = I am, **what’s** = what is. Short forms (contractions) sound natural when you speak.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- A: Hi, I’m Ana. What’s your name?
- B: Hi, Ana. I’m Kiet. Nice to meet you.
- A: Nice to meet you too. Where are you from?
- B: I’m from Thailand. And you?

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~I am 14 years.~~ ✓ **I am 14 years old. / I’m 14.**

✗ ~~My name Linh.~~ ✓ **My name is Linh.**

✗ ~~I have 14 years old.~~ ✓ **I am 14 years old.**

SAY IT

Stand up and introduce yourself in five sentences: name, age, where you’re from, your grade, one thing you like. Say it three times, faster each time.

TRY IT

1. My name ___ Ana.
2. I ___ thirteen years old.
3. Where ___ you from?
4. Nice to ___ you.

ANSWERS 1 is · 2 am · 3 are · 4 meet

Numbers, Time and Money

Count it, tell it, pay for it.

SP-2
LESSON

THE RULE

Learn 0 to 20 by heart, then the tens (30, 40, 50…). Bigger numbers are built from parts: 245 = **two hundred forty-five**.

NUMBERS	TIME	DAYS, DATES, MONEY
1 one · 2 two · 3 three	7:00 seven o'clock	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday
11 eleven · 12 twelve · 13 thirteen	7:15 seven fifteen / quarter past seven	Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday
20 twenty · 21 twenty-one	7:30 seven thirty / half past seven	January, February … December
30 thirty · 40 forty · 50 fifty	7:45 seven forty-five / quarter to eight	May 3: May third / the third of May
100 one hundred · 1,000 one thousand	a.m. = morning · p.m. = afternoon, night	$5.50: five dollars and fifty cents
1st first · 2nd second · 3rd third	What time is it? It's nine o'clock.	How much is it? It's twenty dollars.

REMEMBER Listen for the stress: thir**TEEN** (13) but **THIR**ty (30). It's the only difference you can hear. Time words: **at** 7:00, **on** Monday, **in** May.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- My birthday is **on** June 2nd.
- School starts **at** 7:30 a.m.
- The bus costs two dollars.
- There are thirty students in my class.

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~The book costs 10 dollar.~~ ✓ **The book costs 10 dollars.**

✗ ~~at Monday~~ ✓ **on Monday**

✗ ~~in 7 o'clock~~ ✓ **at 7 o'clock**

SAY IT

Say your phone number, your birthday, and the times you wake up, eat lunch and go to bed. Then ask a partner the same.

TRY IT

1. Write in words: 15
2. Write in words: 50
3. Say it two ways: 8:30
4. Write in words: $3.25

ANSWERS 1 fifteen · 2 fifty · 3 eight thirty / half past eight · 4 three dollars and twenty-five cents

Asking Questions

Seven words that open every door.

SP-3
LESSON

THE RULE

Question word + helper verb + subject + main verb. The helper is **do / does / did**, a form of **be**, or a word like **can**.

WORD	ASKS ABOUT	EXAMPLE
Who	a person	Who is your teacher?
What	a thing or an action	What do you like to eat?
Where	a place	Where do you live?
When	a time	When does school start?
Why	a reason	Why are you tired? Because I…
How	the way; how old, how much, how many	How do you get to school? How old are you?
Which	a choice	Which book do you want?

REMEMBER Yes/no questions start with the helper: **Do** you like music? **Is** she here? **Can** you swim? Short answers: Yes, I do. No, she isn't. (More in GR-13.)

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- **Where do** you live? I live near the market.
- **Does** your brother play football? Yes, he does.
- **What time is** it?
- **How many** brothers **do** you have?

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~Where you live?~~ ✓ **Where do you live?**

✗ ~~What you are doing?~~ ✓ **What are you doing?**

✗ ~~Does she likes rice?~~ ✓ **Does she like rice?**

SAY IT

Interview a partner, or record yourself asking: one question with each word (who, what, where, when, why, how, which). Answer each in a full sentence.

TRY IT

1. Put in order: you / where / do / study?
2. Put in order: is / name / what / your?
3. Put in order: she / does / like / tea?
4. Put in order: can / swim / you?

ANSWERS 1 Where do you study? · 2 What is your name? · 3 Does she like tea? · 4 Can you swim?

My Day

Talk about your routine.

SP-4
LESSON

THE RULE

For things you do every day, use the present simple. **I / you / we / they wake up**, but **he / she / it wakes up** (add -s). Say how often with **always, usually, sometimes, never**.

WHEN	I…	SHE…
Morning	I wake up at six.	She wakes up at six.
	I brush my teeth.	She brushes her teeth.
	I eat breakfast.	She eats breakfast.
Day	I go to school by bus.	She goes to school by bus.
	I study math and English.	She studies math and English.
Evening	I do my homework.	She does her homework.
Night	I go to bed at ten.	She goes to bed at ten.

REMEMBER **always** (100%) · usually · often · sometimes · rarely · **never** (0%). They go **before** the main verb: I **usually** walk. But **after** be: I am **always** late.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- I **usually** walk to school.
- My mother **always cooks** dinner.
- We **never** eat meat on Fridays.
- He **sometimes plays** games after school.

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~She go to school.~~ ✓ **She goes to school.**
✗ ~~I always am late.~~ ✓ **I am always late.**
✗ ~~He study every day.~~ ✓ **He studies every day.**

SAY IT

Tell your whole day in ten sentences, from waking up to going to bed. Then tell the day of someone in your family with he or she. Listen for every -s.

TRY IT

1. He ___ (watch) TV every night.
2. I ___ (not / drink) coffee.
3. My sister ___ (do) yoga.
4. We ___ (go) to the market on Sundays.

ANSWERS 1 watches · 2 don't drink · 3 does · 4 go

Help Phrases

Never be stuck again.

SP-5
LESSON

THE RULE

When you don't understand, say so, in English. These phrases keep a conversation going and turn every confusion into a lesson.

WHEN…	SAY
You didn't hear	Sorry? / Could you repeat that, please?
They speak too fast	Could you speak more slowly, please?
You don't know a word	What does "___" mean?
You need a word	How do you say "___" in English?
You need the spelling	How do you spell that?
You want to check	Do you mean…? / So you're saying…
You need time to think	Let me think. / Just a moment.
You need help	Excuse me, can you help me? / Where is the…?

REMEMBER **Please** and **thank you** make every request polite. **Could you…?** is softer than **Can you…?**

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- Excuse me, where is the library?
- Sorry, what does "deadline" mean?
- How do you say this in English?
- Thank you so much for your help.

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~Repeat!~~ ✓ **Could you repeat that, please?**

✗ ~~What means "deadline"?~~ ✓ **What does "deadline" mean?**

✗ ~~How to say this in English?~~ ✓ **How do you say this in English?**

SAY IT

Learn all eight phrases by heart. In every class this week, use at least two of them, and count how many times you used English instead of your first language to get help.

TRY IT

1. Your teacher talks very fast.
2. You see a new word: "huge."
3. You can't find the restroom.
4. You need a moment to think.

ANSWERS 1 Could you speak more slowly, please? · 2 What does "huge" mean? · 3 Excuse me, where is the restroom? · 4 Let me think.

Likes, Wants and Opinions

Say what you think, and why.

SP-6
LESSON

THE RULE

I like + noun or -ing for things you enjoy. **I want** + noun or **to** + verb for wishes. **I'd like** is the polite way to ask. **I think… because…** gives an opinion with a reason.

PATTERN	EXAMPLE
I like / love / hate + noun	I love music. I hate homework.
I like / love / enjoy + -ing	I like playing basketball. I enjoy reading.
I want + noun	I want a new phone.
I want to + verb	I want to be a doctor.
I'd like + noun / to + verb	I'd like some water, please. I'd like to go.
I think (that)… because…	I think English is useful because it opens doors.
In my opinion,…	In my opinion, school should start later.
I agree / I disagree, because…	I disagree, because phones help us learn.

REMEMBER Always ask back: **What about you? Do you agree?** An opinion without a reason is just a feeling; add **because**.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- My favorite subject is science **because** I like experiments.
- I **don't like** waking up early.
- I **want to** study abroad.
- I think so. / I don't think so.

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~I want go home.~~ ✓ **I want to go home.**

✗ ~~I like play football.~~ ✓ **I like playing football. / I like to play football.**

✗ ~~I am agree.~~ ✓ **I agree.**

SAY IT

Give three opinions about your school, each with because. Then answer out loud: "What do you want to be, and why?"

TRY IT

1. I enjoy ___ (swim).
2. She wants ___ (learn) Korean.
3. I ___ (agree) with you.
4. ___ like some tea, please. (polite)

ANSWERS 1 swimming · 2 to learn · 3 agree · 4 I'd

Keep the Conversation Going

Answer, add, ask back.

SP-7
LESSON

THE RULE

A conversation is a ball passed back and forth. The formula: **answer + add one detail + ask back**.

MOVE	PHRASES
Answer + add	Yes, I do. I play every weekend.
Ask back	And you? / What about you? / How about you?
Show interest	Really? / That's interesting! / Wow. / Nice.
Ask for more	Why? / What happened next? / What was it like?
Agree	Me too. / So do I. · Me neither. (after a negative)
Change the topic	By the way,... / Speaking of...,
End politely	It was nice talking to you. See you later!

REMEMBER One-word answers (Yes. No. Fine.) end conversations. Every answer is a chance to add one detail.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- A: Do you like movies?
- B: Yes, I love them. I watched a funny one last night. What about you?
- A: Me too! What was it called?
- B: *Inside Out*. Have you seen it?

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~Yes.~~ ✓ **Yes, I do. I play on weekends. Do you play?**

✗ ~~Me too. (after "I don't like it.")~~ ✓ **Me neither.**

✗ ~~And you? And you? And you?~~ ✓ **Vary it: What about you? How about you?**

SAY IT

Have a two-minute conversation with a partner or a recording. Every answer must use the formula. Count how many times you asked back.

TRY IT

1. Improve: "Do you have a pet?" "Yes."
2. Improve: "Did you have a good weekend?" "No."
3. Improve: "Do you like math?" "Yes."

ANSWERS Samples: 1 Yes, I have a cat named Mochi. Do you have a pet? · 2 Not really. I was sick, so I stayed home. How was yours? · 3 Yes, it's my favorite subject. What about you?

The Sounds of English

Be understood the first time.

SP-8
LESSON

THE RULE

English has a beat: important words are **long and strong**, small words are short. Get the stress right first, then the sounds that change meaning. Coaching: EN-13.

SOUND	PRACTICE	TIP
Short i / long ee	ship / sheep · live / leave	Long ee: smile wide.
th	think, three · this, they	Tongue between the teeth.
r / l	right / light · rice / lice	r: tongue touches nothing. l: tongue behind the top teeth.
v / w / b	very / berry · vest / west	v: top teeth on the lower lip.
Final sounds	bed / bet · cap / cab	Say the last sound. Always.
-s ending	cats (s) · dogs (z) · buses (iz)	Never drop it: it changes meaning.
-ed ending	worked (t) · played (d) · wanted (id)	A new syllable only after t or d.
Word stress	PHOtograph · phoTOGraphy	Stress moves. Learn it with the word.

REMEMBER Your accent is part of who you are. The goal is to be understood easily, not to sound American or British.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- I **WANT** to **GO** to the **BEACH** on **SAT**urday. (capitals = stress)
- She **walked** (t) to school and **played** (d) football.
- I have three **cats**. (say the s)
- Is it a **ship** or a **sheep**?

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~He work-ed. (two syllables)~~ ✓ **He worked. (one syllable: "workt")**

✗ ~~I have three cat.~~ ✓ **I have three cats.**

✗ ~~pho-to-GRAPH~~ ✓ **PHO-to-graph**

SAY IT

Read the practice pairs aloud and record them. Ask someone to tell you which word you said. Repeat until they get 8 out of 10.

TRY IT

1. How many syllables? played
2. How many syllables? wanted
3. How many syllables? watched
4. Where is the stress? banana
5. Where is the stress? hotel

ANSWERS 1 one · 2 two · 3 one · 4 ba-NA-na · 5 ho-TEL

Parts of Speech

Nine jobs a word can do.

GR-1
LESSON

THE RULE

Every word in a sentence has a job. The job tells you where the word goes and how it changes.

PART	JOB	EXAMPLES
Noun	a person, place, thing or idea	teacher, Bangkok, phone, freedom
Pronoun	takes the place of a noun	I, you, she, it, they, this
Verb	an action or a state	run, eat, think, is, have
Adjective	describes a noun	big, happy, red, interesting
Adverb	describes a verb, an adjective or another adverb	quickly, very, always, well
Preposition	shows place, time or direction	in, on, at, under, before, to
Conjunction	joins words or clauses	and, but, because, although
Article / determiner	introduces a noun	a, an, the, this, some, my
Interjection	shows feeling	Oh! Wow! Oops!

REMEMBER One word can do different jobs: I **run** (verb) every day. I went for a **run** (noun).

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- **The** (article) **small** (adjective) **dog** (noun) **ran** (verb) **quickly** (adverb).
- **She** (pronoun) sat **under** (preposition) the tree.
- I was tired, **but** (conjunction) I finished.
- **Wow** (interjection), that's fast!

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~She is very beauty.~~ ✓ **She is very beautiful. (adjective, not noun)**

✗ ~~He drives careful.~~ ✓ **He drives carefully. (adverb for a verb)**

✗ ~~I am interesting in music.~~ ✓ **I am interested in music.**

SAY IT

Pick one object in the room. In one sentence, say a noun, two adjectives, a verb and an adverb about it: "The old black fan turns slowly."

TRY IT

1. She is <u>happy</u>.
2. We met <u>at</u> noon.
3. He speaks <u>slowly</u>.
4. <u>They</u> live here.

ANSWERS 1 adjective · 2 preposition · 3 adverb · 4 pronoun

Word Order

Subject, verb, object: the backbone of English.

GR-2
LESSON

THE RULE

English word order is strict: **subject + verb + object**, then **place**, then **time**. Adjectives go **before** the noun. Every sentence needs a subject.

SUBJECT	VERB	OBJECT	PLACE + TIME
I	eat	rice	at home every day.
My brother	plays	football	in the park on Sundays.
The students	read	a story	in class yesterday.
She	gave	me a gift	at school this morning.
We	will visit	our grandparents	in the city next week.
It	is	hot	today.

REMEMBER Adjective before noun: a **red** car (not a car red). Weather and time need **it**: **It** is raining. **It** is 5 o'clock.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- I like English **very much**.
- She speaks English **well**.
- **It** is raining.
- Yesterday **I went** to the market.

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~I like very much English.~~ ✓ **I like English very much.**

✗ ~~Is very hot today.~~ ✓ **It is very hot today.**

✗ ~~Yesterday I to the market went.~~ ✓ **Yesterday I went to the market.**

SAY IT

Make five sentences about your week with subject, verb, object, place, time. Use a different subject each time: I, my friend, we, they, she.

TRY IT

1. coffee / drinks / my father / every morning
2. a / bought / she / bag / blue
3. is / it / cold / today
4. at school / English / we / study

ANSWERS 1 My father drinks coffee every morning. · 2 She bought a blue bag. · 3 It is cold today. · 4 We study English at school.

Nouns: One, Many, Some

Countable, uncountable, and the plurals.

GR-3
LESSON

THE RULE

Countable nouns have a plural: **one book, two books**. Uncountable nouns have no plural and no a/an: **water, rice, money, homework, information, advice**.

RULE	SINGULAR → PLURAL
Most nouns: add -s	book → books · girl → girls
Ends in s, sh, ch, x: add -es	bus → buses · watch → watches · box → boxes
Consonant + y: change to -ies	city → cities · baby → babies
Vowel + y: add -s	day → days · boy → boys
-f / -fe: often -ves	leaf → leaves · knife → knives
Irregular	man → men · woman → women · child → children · person → people · tooth → teeth · foot → feet
No change	sheep → sheep · fish → fish

REMEMBER Countable: **many** books, **a few** books. Uncountable: **much** water, **a little** water, **a glass of** water. Both: **some, any, a lot of**.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- There are three **children** in the park.
- I need some **advice**.
- How **many** people? How **much** money?
- Can I have **a piece of** paper?

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~I have many homeworks.~~ ✓ **I have a lot of homework.**

✗ ~~She gave me an advice.~~ ✓ **She gave me some advice.**

✗ ~~two childs~~ ✓ **two children**

SAY IT

Describe your kitchen out loud: what there is, how many, how much. Use many, much, some and a lot of in at least two sentences each.

TRY IT

1. Plural: box
2. Plural: story
3. Plural: tooth
4. Plural: key
5. How ___ water? (many / much)
6. How ___ friends? (many / much)

ANSWERS 1 boxes · 2 stories · 3 teeth · 4 keys · 5 much · 6 many

Articles

A, an, the, or nothing.

GR-4

LESSON

THE RULE

Use **a / an** for one thing the listener doesn't know yet. Use **the** when you both know which one. Use **no article** for things in general.

USE	WHEN	EXAMPLE
a	one thing, not specific; before a consonant sound	a dog · a university ("you" sound)
an	the same, before a vowel sound	an apple · an hour (silent h)
the	specific, already mentioned, or only one exists	I saw a dog. The dog was big. · the sun
the	with superlatives and ordinal numbers	the best · the first · the same
—	plural or uncountable things in general	Dogs are loyal. I love music.
—	most names: people, cities, countries, meals, sports	Maria · Jakarta · Vietnam · lunch · football
the	some names: oceans, rivers, plural countries	the Pacific · the Mekong · the Philippines

REMEMBER Jobs need a / an: She is **a** doctor. He is **an** engineer. (Not: She is doctor.)

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- I have **a** cat. **The** cat is black.
- **The** moon is bright tonight.
- I go to school by bus.
- Water is important for life.

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~She is teacher.~~ ✓ **She is a teacher.**

✗ ~~I like the music. (music in general)~~ ✓ **I like music.**

✗ ~~I live in Philippines.~~ ✓ **I live in the Philippines.**

SAY IT

Tell a short story about your trip to school today. Use a the first time you mention each thing and the every time after.

TRY IT

1. She wants to be ___ engineer.
2. ___ sky is blue.
3. I love ___ chocolate.
4. I bought ___ book. ___ book is about space.

ANSWERS 1 an · 2 The · 3 — (no article) · 4 a, The

Pronouns

I, me, my, mine, myself.

GR-5

LESSON

THE RULE

Pronouns change form with their job: **subject** (does the action), **object** (receives it), **possessive** (owns it), **reflexive** (the same person).

SUBJECT	OBJECT	POSSESSIVE + NOUN	ALONE	REFLEXIVE
I	me	my book	mine	myself
you	you	your book	yours	yourself
he	him	his book	his	himself
she	her	her book	hers	herself
it	it	its color	—	itself
we	us	our book	ours	ourselves
they	them	their book	theirs	themselves

REMEMBER English uses **he** for a man and **she** for a woman, even if your language uses one word for both. **They** can mean one person when you don't know or don't say.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- **She** called **me**.
- This is **my** pen. That one is **yours**.
- **They** built it **themselves**.
- My mother loves **her** job.

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~Me and my friend went home.~~ ✓ **My friend and I went home.**

✗ ~~My father, he is a farmer.~~ ✓ **My father is a farmer.**

✗ ~~My sister lost his phone.~~ ✓ **My sister lost her phone.**

SAY IT

Describe your family: one sentence per person with he, she, his, her, they, their. Say the name first, then switch to the pronoun.

TRY IT

1. This is ___ (I) bag.
2. Please help ___ (we).
3. The book is ___ (she).
4. They made it ___ (they).

ANSWERS 1 my · 2 us · 3 hers · 4 themselves

The Verb “Be”

The most important verb in English.

GR-6

LESSON

THE RULE

Be joins a subject to a description, a place, a job, an age or a feeling. It changes with the subject and the time.

SUBJECT	PRESENT	PAST	NEGATIVE	QUESTION
I	am (I’m)	was	I’m not	Am I…?
he / she / it	is (’s)	was	isn’t / wasn’t	Is she…?
you / we / they	are (’re)	were	aren’t / weren’t	Are they…?
there + one	there is	there was	there isn’t	Is there…?
there + many	there are	there were	there aren’t	Are there…?

REMEMBER Use **be**, not have, for age, hunger and feelings: I **am** 15. I **am** hungry. I **am** cold. Use **there is / there are** to say something exists (not: Have many people).

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- She **is** a student. They **are** in class.
- We **were** tired yesterday.
- **There are** 30 students in my class.
- **Is** he your brother? Yes, he **is**.

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~She a teacher.~~ ✓ **She is a teacher.**

✗ ~~I am agree.~~ ✓ **I agree. (agree is already a verb)**

✗ ~~Have many people here.~~ ✓ **There are many people here.**

SAY IT

Describe your classroom in ten sentences with there is / there are. Then describe your last birthday with there was / there were.

TRY IT

1. They ___ happy now.
2. I ___ sick last week.
3. ___ there a bank near here?
4. He ___ (not) at home.

ANSWERS 1 are · 2 was · 3 Is · 4 isn’t

Subject–Verb Agreement

Singular subject, singular verb.

GR-7
LESSON

THE RULE

The verb must match its subject. In the present tense, a singular third-person subject (**he, she, it**, one person, one thing) takes **-s**: she **runs**, it **works**. Plural subjects don't: they **run**.

TRICKY SUBJECT	RULE	CORRECT
Words between subject and verb	ignore them; find the real subject	The box of pencils **is** here.
A and B	plural	My brother and sister **are** tall.
A or B, either…or, neither…nor	match the subject closer to the verb	Either my parents or my sister **is** coming.
everyone, each, nobody, someone	singular	Everyone **is** ready. Each student **has** a book.
one of the…	singular (one)	One of my friends **lives** in Seoul.
there is / there are	match the noun after it	There **are** two problems.
Uncountable nouns	singular	The information **is** useful.
family, team, class (US English)	usually singular	My family **is** big.

REMEMBER Find the subject by asking **who or what** does the action. Cover phrases like *of the students* or *with my friends*; they never change the verb.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- The students in my class **are** friendly.
- My teacher, along with her students, **is** on the trip.
- Neither of the answers **is** correct.
- Math and science **are** my favorites.

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~She have a dog.~~ ✓ **She has a dog.**

✗ ~~The list of names are long.~~ ✓ **The list of names is long.**

✗ ~~Everybody are here.~~ ✓ **Everybody is here.**

SAY IT

Say ten sentences about the people in your family, one person at a time: My mother works…, My brother likes… Record it and listen for every -s.

TRY IT

1. The dogs in the yard ___ (bark).
2. Each of the girls ___ (have) a phone.
3. My friend and I ___ (be) late.
4. One of the books ___ (be) missing.
5. There ___ (be) a lot of people.

ANSWERS 1 bark · 2 has · 3 are · 4 is · 5 are

The Tense Map

Twelve tenses on one page.

GR-8
LESSON

THE RULE

Every English tense combines a **time** (past, present, future) with an **aspect**: simple (a fact or habit), continuous (in progress), perfect (before another time), or perfect continuous (how long, up to a time).

	SIMPLE	CONTINUOUS	PERFECT	PERFECT CONTINUOUS
PAST	I worked	I was working	I had worked	I had been working
PRESENT	I work	I am working	I have worked	I have been working
FUTURE	I will work	I will be working	I will have worked	I will have been working
USE	facts, habits, finished actions	in progress at a moment	before another time; result now	how long, up to a time

REMEMBER Most everyday English uses six: present simple, present continuous, past simple, past continuous, present perfect, and the future with will or going to. Master those first (GR-9 to GR-12); the rest follow the same building rules.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- I **work** on Saturdays. (habit)
- I **am working** now. (in progress)
- I **have worked** here for two years. (up to now)
- By 6 p.m., I **will have finished**. (before a future time)

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~I am working here since 2024.~~ ✓ **I have been working here since 2024.**

✗ ~~I will working tomorrow.~~ ✓ **I will work / I will be working tomorrow.**

✗ ~~When I arrived, the movie already started.~~ ✓ **When I arrived, the movie had already started.**

SAY IT

Say one true sentence about yourself in each of the six main tenses, using the same verb: study. Then do it again with eat.

TRY IT

1. Name the tense: She has eaten.
2. They were sleeping.
3. I will call.
4. He had left.
5. We are reading.

ANSWERS 1 present perfect · 2 past continuous · 3 future simple · 4 past perfect · 5 present continuous

Present: Simple or Continuous?

Always, or right now?

GR-9
LESSON

THE RULE

Present simple for habits, facts and timetables: I **play**. **Present continuous** (am / is / are + -ing) for now, around now and fixed plans: I **am playing**.

	PRESENT SIMPLE	PRESENT CONTINUOUS
Form	I play · she plays	I am playing · she is playing
Negative	I don't play · she doesn't play	I'm not playing · she isn't playing
Question	Do you play? Does she play?	Are you playing? Is she playing?
Use	habits, facts, timetables	now, this week, temporary, plans
Signal words	every day, usually, always, on Mondays	now, right now, at the moment, today, Look!
Usually not -ing	know, like, want, need, believe, understand, own	I know (not: I am knowing)

REMEMBER Spelling: make → mak**ing** (drop the e) · sit → si**tt**ing (double the last letter) · lie → l**y**ing.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- Water **boils** at 100°C.
- She **is talking** on the phone right now.
- I **am meeting** my friend tomorrow.
- The train **leaves** at 8:15.

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~I am knowing the answer.~~ ✓ **I know the answer.**

✗ ~~Look! It rains.~~ ✓ **Look! It's raining.**

✗ ~~He doesn't plays.~~ ✓ **He doesn't play.**

SAY IT

Look around and say what five people or things are doing right now. Then say what each one usually does.

TRY IT

1. She usually ___ (walk), but today she ___ (take) the bus.
2. I ___ (want) a drink.
3. ___ you ___ (listen) to me?
4. The sun ___ (rise) in the east.

ANSWERS 1 walks, is taking · 2 want · 3 Are, listening · 4 rises

Past: Simple or Continuous?

What happened, and what was happening.

GR-10
LESSON

THE RULE

Past simple for finished actions: I **walked**, I **went**. **Past continuous** (was / were + -ing) for an action in progress when something else happened.

	PAST SIMPLE	PAST CONTINUOUS
Form	I walked · I went (irregular)	I was walking · they were walking
Negative	I didn't walk · I didn't go	I wasn't walking
Question	Did you walk? Did you go?	Were you walking?
Use	finished actions; one event after another	background; an interrupted action
Signal words	yesterday, last week, ago, in 2020	while, when, at 8 p.m. last night
Together	I **was cooking** when the phone **rang**.	While she **was sleeping**, it **started** to rain.

REMEMBER After **did / didn't**, use the base verb: Did you **go**? I didn't **see**. The most common verbs are irregular: go → went, have → had, see → saw, get → got, make → made. Full list: REF-1.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- I **visited** my grandmother last Sunday.
- We **ate** noodles and **watched** a movie.
- What **were** you **doing** at 9 p.m.?
- She **was walking** home when she **saw** the accident.

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~I go to the market yesterday.~~ ✓ **I went to the market yesterday.**

✗ ~~Did you went?~~ ✓ **Did you go?**

✗ ~~I was go to school.~~ ✓ **I went / I was going to school.**

SAY IT

Tell the story of yesterday from morning to night in the past simple. Then add three sentences with while.

TRY IT

1. I ___ (see) a movie last night.
2. She ___ (not / come) to class.
3. They ___ (play) when it ___ (start) to rain.
4. Where ___ you ___ (go) yesterday?

ANSWERS 1 saw · 2 didn't come · 3 were playing, started · 4 did, go

The Present Perfect

The past that still matters now.

GR-11
LESSON

THE RULE

have / has + past participle connects the past to now: life experiences, changes, and actions that started in the past and continue. If you say **when** it happened, use the past simple instead.

USE	EXAMPLE	KEY WORDS
Life experience	I have visited Singapore. Have you ever eaten durian?	ever, never, before
Up to now	She has lived here for three years / since 2023.	for (a length), since (a start)
Recent result	I have lost my key. (I can't get in.)	just, already, yet
Unfinished time	I have drunk two coffees today.	today, this week, so far
Not with finished time	I visited Singapore **last year**. (past simple)	yesterday, ago, last…, in 2020

REMEMBER Form: I / you / we / they **have** worked · he / she / it **has** worked · **Have** you…? · I **haven't**… Past participles: worked, gone, seen, eaten, written (REF-1).

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- I **have never been** on a plane.
- **Have** you **finished** your homework yet?
- He **has** just **arrived**.
- We **have known** each other since grade 1.

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~I have seen him yesterday.~~ ✓ **I saw him yesterday.**
✗ ~~I live here since 2020.~~ ✓ **I have lived here since 2020.**
✗ ~~She has went home.~~ ✓ **She has gone home.**

SAY IT

Ask a partner five "Have you ever…?" questions. Answer each with Yes, I have / No, I haven't, then add one detail in the past simple: "Yes, I have. I went last year."

TRY IT

1. I ___ (never / see) snow.
2. She ___ (live) here for five years.
3. We ___ (go) to Bali last summer.
4. ___ you ___ (eat) yet?

ANSWERS 1 have never seen · 2 has lived · 3 went · 4 Have, eaten

Talking About the Future

Will, going to, and plans.

GR-12
LESSON

THE RULE

will + verb for decisions made now, promises and predictions. **be going to + verb** for plans and predictions you can see coming. **Present continuous** for arrangements with a time.

FORM	USE	EXAMPLE
will + verb	a decision made now	I'm thirsty. I'll get some water.
will + verb	a promise or offer	I will help you. I won't tell anyone.
will + verb	a prediction (opinion)	I think it will be hot tomorrow.
be going to + verb	a plan made before	I'm going to study medicine.
be going to + verb	a prediction with evidence	Look at those clouds! It's going to rain.
am / is / are + -ing	a fixed arrangement	We're flying to Seoul on Friday.
present simple	timetables	The bus leaves at 7.

REMEMBER After **when, if, before, after, as soon as** about the future, use the present: When I **finish** school, I will travel. (Not: when I will finish.)

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- **I'll** call you later.
- She**'s going to** be a lawyer.
- What **are** you **doing** this weekend?
- If it **rains**, we**'ll** stay home.

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~I will to go.~~ ✓ **I will go.**

✗ ~~When I will grow up, I want…~~ ✓ **When I grow up, I want…**

✗ ~~I go to visit her tomorrow.~~ ✓ **I'm going to visit / I'm visiting her tomorrow.**

SAY IT

Talk for one minute about the future: next weekend (going to and -ing), tonight (will), and ten years from now (I think I will…).

TRY IT

1. The phone is ringing. I ___ (answer) it!
2. We ___ (visit) Grandma next Sunday. It's planned.
3. I promise I ___ (not / be) late.
4. When she ___ (arrive), we'll eat.

ANSWERS 1 'll answer · 2 are going to visit / are visiting · 3 won't be · 4 arrives

Questions and Negatives

The helper verb does the work.

GR-13
LESSON

THE RULE

To make a question, put the helper verb (be, have, a modal) **before** the subject. To make a negative, put **not** after the helper. No helper? Add **do / does / did**.

STATEMENT	QUESTION	NEGATIVE
She is tired.	Is she tired?	She isn't tired.
They have finished.	Have they finished?	They haven't finished.
He can swim.	Can he swim?	He can't swim.
You like tea.	Do you like tea?	You don't like tea.
She likes tea.	Does she like tea?	She doesn't like tea.
They went home.	Did they go home?	They didn't go home.
Someone called you.	Who called you? (no do)	Nobody called you.

REMEMBER Short answers repeat the helper: Do you like it? **Yes, I do.** Is she here? **No, she isn't.** Tag questions check: It's hot, **isn't it?** You don't eat meat, **do you?**

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- **Did** you **finish** the book? No, I **didn't**.
- **Where does** he work?
- I **don't** understand.
- You're coming, **aren't you?**

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~He don't know.~~ ✓ **He doesn't know.**
✗ ~~Who did call you?~~ ✓ **Who called you?**
✗ ~~You like tea? (in writing)~~ ✓ **Do you like tea?**

SAY IT

Turn ten statements about your partner into questions and check them: "You have a sister." → "Do you have a sister?" "Yes, I do."

TRY IT

1. Question: She speaks French.
2. Question: They were late.
3. Question: He went to Japan.
4. Negative: I can drive.
5. Negative: She works here.

ANSWERS 1 Does she speak French? · 2 Were they late? · 3 Did he go to Japan? · 4 I can't drive. · 5 She doesn't work here.

Modal Verbs

Can, could, should, must, might.

GR-14
LESSON

THE RULE

Modals add meaning (ability, permission, advice, necessity, possibility) to a main verb. After a modal, use the **base verb**: no -s, no to. She **can swim**.

MODAL	MEANING	EXAMPLE
can / can't	ability, permission, requests	I can swim. Can I go? Can you help me?
could	past ability, polite requests, possibility	I could read at four. Could you open the door?
may / might	possibility; may = polite permission	It might snow. May I come in?
should / shouldn't	advice; the right thing to do	You should sleep more.
must / mustn't	strong necessity; not allowed	You must wear a seatbelt. You mustn't smoke here.
have to / don't have to	necessity from outside; not necessary	I have to work. You don't have to come.
would	polite offers; imagined situations	Would you like tea? I would buy a house.
will	future, promises, requests	Will you help me?

REMEMBER **mustn't** = it's not allowed. **don't have to** = it's not necessary (you can if you want). They are very different.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- She **can speak** three languages.
- You **should see** a doctor.
- Students **must wear** a uniform.
- **Could** you repeat that, please?

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~She cans swim.~~ ✓ **She can swim.**

✗ ~~You should to study.~~ ✓ **You should study.**

✗ ~~I must to go.~~ ✓ **I must go. / I have to go.**

SAY IT

Give a new student advice about your school: three things they should do, two they must do, and two they don't have to do.

TRY IT

1. You ___ drink more water. (advice)
2. I ___ play the guitar. (ability)
3. You ___ bring food; we have lunch. (not necessary)
4. You ___ use phones in the exam. (not allowed)

ANSWERS 1 should · 2 can · 3 don't have to · 4 mustn't / can't

-ing or to?

Some verbs want -ing; some want to.

GR-15
LESSON

THE RULE

When one verb follows another, the second is either **-ing** (a gerund) or **to + verb** (an infinitive). The first verb decides, so learn them in pairs.

PATTERN	COMMON WORDS	EXAMPLE
verb + -ing	enjoy, finish, mind, avoid, keep, practice, suggest, miss	I enjoy reading.
verb + to	want, need, decide, hope, plan, learn, agree, promise	I want to travel.
either, same meaning	like, love, hate, start, begin, continue	I like swimming. / I like to swim.
preposition + -ing	interested in, good at, before, after, without	She is good at drawing.
-ing as the subject	—	Swimming is good exercise.
to for a purpose	—	I went to the shop to buy milk.
adjective + to	easy, hard, happy, ready	I'm happy to help.

REMEMBER Careful: **stop + -ing** = quit (I stopped smoking). **stop + to** = pause in order to (I stopped to rest). **remember + to** = don't forget; **remember + -ing** = recall the past.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- He **finished doing** his homework.
- We **decided to stay** home.
- I'm **interested in learning** Japanese.
- Thank you **for helping** me.

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~I enjoy to read.~~ ✓ **I enjoy reading.**
✗ ~~I want going home.~~ ✓ **I want to go home.**
✗ ~~I'm good at draw.~~ ✓ **I'm good at drawing.**

SAY IT

Tell a partner three things you enjoy doing, three things you want to do this year, and one thing you're good at doing.

TRY IT

1. She avoids ___ (eat) sugar.
2. They hope ___ (win).
3. I'm tired of ___ (wait).
4. He went out ___ (buy) bread.

ANSWERS 1 eating · 2 to win · 3 waiting · 4 to buy

Adjectives and Adverbs

Describe it, then compare it.

GR-16
LESSON

THE RULE

Adjectives describe nouns: a **quick** car. Adverbs describe verbs, often with **-ly**: she drives **quickly**. To compare, short adjectives take **-er / -est**; long ones take **more / most**.

ADJECTIVE	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
one syllable: tall	taller than	the tallest
ends in e: nice	nicer	the nicest
short vowel + consonant: big	bigger	the biggest
ends in y: happy	happier	the happiest
two or more syllables: beautiful	more beautiful	the most beautiful
irregular: good / bad	better / worse	the best / the worst
irregular: far / much, many	farther / more	the farthest / the most

REMEMBER Adverb exceptions: good → **well**, fast → **fast**, hard → **hard**. Equal: as tall **as**. Several adjectives go in this order: opinion, size, age, color, material: a **lovely big old red wooden** box.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- My brother is **taller than** me.
- This is **the most interesting** book I've read.
- She sings **beautifully**.
- He plays football **well**.

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~more better~~ ✓ **better**

✗ ~~She is more tall than me.~~ ✓ **She is taller than me.**

✗ ~~He speaks English very good.~~ ✓ **He speaks English very well.**

SAY IT

Compare three people in your family: who is the tallest, the oldest, the funniest? Then say how each does one thing: drives carefully, cooks well.

TRY IT

1. This test is ___ (easy) than the last one.
2. She's the ___ (good) player on the team.
3. He runs ___ (quick).
4. Bangkok is ___ (big) than Chiang Mai.

ANSWERS 1 easier · 2 best · 3 quickly · 4 bigger

Prepositions

At, on, in, and friends.

GR-17
LESSON

THE RULE

Time and place follow one pattern: **at** for a point, **on** for a surface or a day, **in** for an inside space or a longer period.

	AT · a point	ON · a surface, a day	IN · inside, a period
TIME	at 7:00, at noon, at night	on Monday, on May 5th, on my birthday	in May, in 2026, in the morning, in summer
PLACE	at home, at school, at the door, at the bus stop	on the table, on the wall, on the bus, on the 2nd floor	in the box, in the room, in Jakarta, in a car
MOVEMENT	to: go to school	into: walk into the room	from… to: from home to school

REMEMBER Common pairs: interested **in**, good **at**, afraid **of**, depend **on**, listen **to**, wait **for**, arrive **at / in**. No preposition: go **home**, call **me**, discuss **it**.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- The meeting is **at** 3 p.m. **on** Friday.
- My keys are **on** the table **in** the kitchen.
- I was born **in** 2011.
- We're waiting **for** the bus.

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~in Monday~~ ✓ **on Monday**

✗ ~~I arrived to the airport.~~ ✓ **I arrived at the airport.**

✗ ~~We discussed about the plan.~~ ✓ **We discussed the plan.**

SAY IT

Describe where ten things are in your room (on, in, under, next to, between, behind). Then say when five things happen in your week (at, on, in).

TRY IT

1. I'll see you ___ Tuesday.
2. She lives ___ Manila.
3. Class starts ___ 8:30.
4. He's afraid ___ dogs.
5. We go to the beach ___ summer.

ANSWERS 1 on · 2 in · 3 at · 4 of · 5 in

Phrasal Verbs

Verb + small word = a new meaning.

GR-18
LESSON

THE RULE

A phrasal verb is a verb plus a small word (up, out, on, off, for…). Together they mean something new, so learn them like new words.

PHRASAL VERB	MEANING	EXAMPLE
wake up / get up	stop sleeping / leave bed	I wake up at 6 but get up at 6:15.
look for	try to find	I'm looking for my phone.
look up	find information	Look up the word in a dictionary.
find out	discover	I found out the truth.
give up	stop trying	Don't give up!
turn on / turn off	start / stop a machine	Turn off the lights.
put on / take off	clothes, shoes	Put on your jacket.
come back	return	When will you come back?
pick up	lift; collect someone	Can you pick me up at 5?

REMEMBER Many can split around an object: turn **the light** off = turn off the light. With a pronoun you must split: turn **it** off (not turn off it).

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- She **gave up** sugar.
- **Hurry up**! We're late.
- Can you **turn** the music **down**?
- I **ran into** an old friend. (met by chance)

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~Turn off it.~~ ✓ **Turn it off.**

✗ ~~I am looking my keys.~~ ✓ **I am looking for my keys.**

✗ ~~Wake up me at 6.~~ ✓ **Wake me up at 6.**

SAY IT

Tell your morning routine using at least six phrasal verbs: wake up, get up, put on, turn on, pick up, set off.

TRY IT

1. I can't find my bag. Help me look ___ it.
2. It's cold. Put ___ your coat.
3. Please turn the TV ___. I'm sleeping.
4. Never give ___.

ANSWERS 1 for · 2 on · 3 off · 4 up

Phrases and Clauses

Independent clauses stand alone. Dependent clauses can't.

GR-19
LESSON

THE RULE

A **clause** has a subject and a verb. An **independent clause** is a complete thought and can be a sentence by itself. A **dependent clause** starts with a word like *because*, *when*, *if*, *although*, *who* and can't stand alone. A **phrase** has no subject-and-verb pair.

TYPE	EXAMPLE	A SENTENCE ON ITS OWN?
Phrase	in the morning · the tall boy · running fast	No
Independent clause	I went home.	Yes
Dependent clause	because I was tired	No: because… what?
Independent + dependent	I went home because I was tired.	Yes
Dependent + independent	Because I was tired, I went home.	Yes (comma after the dependent clause)
Relative clause (dependent)	the girl who won the prize	No

REMEMBER The test: read it alone. If it leaves the listener waiting (*When I got home…* then what?), it's dependent and needs an independent clause.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- **She studied** (independent) **because the test was hard** (dependent).
- **If it rains**, **we'll stay inside**.
- The book **that I borrowed** is great.
- **After the game** (phrase), **we celebrated** (independent).

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~Because I was hungry.~~ ✓ **I ate because I was hungry.**

✗ ~~When she arrived.~~ ✓ **When she arrived, we started.**

✗ ~~Although it was late. We kept working.~~ ✓ **Although it was late, we kept working.**

SAY IT

Your partner says a dependent clause ("When I was young…", "If I had a million dollars…"); you finish it with an independent clause. Switch roles. Ten rounds.

TRY IT

1. after the game
2. after the game ended
3. we celebrated
4. who lives next door
5. the dog barked

ANSWERS 1 phrase · 2 dependent · 3 independent · 4 dependent · 5 independent

FANBOYS

Seven words that join two sentences.

GR-20
LESSON

THE RULE

The coordinating conjunctions are **F**or, **A**nd, **N**or, **B**ut, **O**r, **Y**et, **S**o. They join two equal parts. When they join two **independent clauses**, put a **comma before** the conjunction.

WORD	MEANING	EXAMPLE
for	because (formal)	She was tired, for she had worked all night.
and	adds	I cooked, and my sister washed the dishes.
nor	adds a negative (helper before subject)	He doesn't eat meat, nor does he eat fish.
but	contrast	I like cats, but I prefer dogs.
or	choice	We can walk, or we can take a taxi.
yet	surprising contrast	It was raining, yet they played outside.
so	result	I was hungry, so I made a sandwich.

REMEMBER No comma when the second part has no subject of its own: I cooked **and** cleaned. FANBOYS are the only words that can join two sentences with just a comma; *however* and *therefore* can't (GR-24, GR-29).

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- I studied hard, **so** I passed.
- She called, **but** nobody answered.
- Do you want tea, **or** would you like coffee?
- He sang **and** danced. (no comma: one subject)

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~I was tired so I slept.~~ ✓ **I was tired, so I slept.**

✗ ~~I like apples, and bananas.~~ ✓ **I like apples and bananas.**

✗ ~~It was late, I went home.~~ ✓ **It was late, so I went home.**

SAY IT

Make one true sentence about your life with each FANBOYS word. Read them aloud and make the comma a short pause.

TRY IT

1. Join: It was cold. I wore a jacket.
2. Join: She is rich. She is not happy.
3. Join: You can stay. You can leave.
4. Join: I called him. He didn't answer.

ANSWERS 1 It was cold, so I wore a jacket. · 2 She is rich, but (yet) she is not happy. · 3 You can stay, or you can leave. · 4 I called him, but he didn't answer.

Because, Although, When

Dependent clauses show how ideas connect.

GR-21
LESSON

THE RULE

Subordinating conjunctions start dependent clauses and show the relationship: reason, contrast, time or condition. Dependent clause **first**: use a comma. Dependent clause **second**: usually no comma.

RELATIONSHIP	WORDS	EXAMPLE
Reason	because, since, as	I stayed home because I was sick.
Contrast	although, though, even though, whereas	Although it was late, we kept working.
Time	when, while, before, after, until, as soon as	After the movie ended, we went home.
Condition	if, unless, as long as	You'll pass if you study.
Purpose	so that	Speak clearly so that everyone can hear.
Place	where, wherever	Sit wherever you like.

REMEMBER Don't double up: **Although** it rained, we played (not: Although it rained, but we played). **Because** + a clause; **because of** + a noun: because of the rain.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- **When** I get home, I'll call you.
- I'll call you **when** I get home.
- **Even though** she was nervous, she gave a great speech.
- **Unless** you hurry, you'll miss the bus.

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~Although he is rich, but he is unhappy.~~ ✓ **Although he is rich, he is unhappy.**

✗ ~~Because of it was raining.~~ ✓ **Because it was raining. / Because of the rain.**

✗ ~~Because I was late. The teacher was angry.~~ ✓ **Because I was late, the teacher was angry.**

SAY IT

Make six sentences about your day, each starting with a different word: because, although, when, if, after, until. Then say each one again with the dependent clause at the end.

TRY IT

1. Comma? If you need help call me.
2. Comma? Call me if you need help.
3. Comma? While I was cooking the lights went out.
4. Comma? We left before the rain started.

ANSWERS 1 If you need help, call me. · 2 no comma · 3 While I was cooking, the lights went out. · 4 no comma

Who, Which, That

Relative clauses describe a noun.

GR-22
LESSON

THE RULE

Relative clauses add information about a noun: **who** for people, **which** for things, **that** for people or things, **whose** for possession, **where** for places.

TYPE	PUNCTUATION	EXAMPLE
Defining: tells you which one	no commas; that is fine	The student **who won** is my cousin.
Non-defining: extra information	commas; never that	My mother, **who is a nurse**, works nights.
whose	possession	That's the girl **whose bike** was stolen.
where	a place	This is the café **where we met**.
Leaving out the pronoun	only when it is the object	The book (that) I read was long.

REMEMBER Comma test: remove the clause. If you still know exactly which person or thing, the clause is extra: use commas. If not, it's defining: no commas.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- I have a friend **who** speaks five languages.
- Jakarta, **which** is the capital, is very busy.
- The movie **(that)** we watched was scary.
- He's the teacher **whose** class I love.

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~The man which called you...~~ ✓ **The man who called you...**
✗ ~~My father, that is a doctor,...~~ ✓ **My father, who is a doctor,...**
✗ ~~The book that I read it was long.~~ ✓ **The book that I read was long.**

SAY IT

Define ten things without naming them: "It's a person who...", "It's a thing that...", "It's a place where...". Your partner guesses.

TRY IT

1. A doctor is a person ___ helps sick people.
2. This is the house ___ I was born.
3. The bag ___ is on the chair is mine.
4. She's the girl ___ brother is in my class.

ANSWERS 1 who · 2 where · 3 that / which · 4 whose

The Four Sentence Types

Simple, compound, complex, compound-complex.

GR-23
LESSON

THE RULE

A sentence's type depends on the clauses inside it. Good writing mixes all four, so it never sounds robotic.

TYPE	FORMULA	EXAMPLE
Simple	one independent clause	The rain stopped.
Compound	independent + (comma + FANBOYS, or ;) + independent	The rain stopped, and we went outside.
Complex	independent + dependent	When the rain stopped, we went outside.
Compound-complex	two or more independent + at least one dependent	When the rain stopped, we went outside, but the ground was still wet.

REMEMBER Short, simple sentences hit hard; save them for emphasis. Longer sentences carry connected ideas. A paragraph of only one type is the fastest way to sound like a beginner.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- I ran. (simple)
- I ran, but I missed the bus. (compound)
- Because I woke up late, I missed the bus. (complex)
- Because I woke up late, I missed the bus, so I walked. (compound-complex)

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~I woke up. I ate. I went to school. I studied.~~ ✓ **After I woke up and ate, I went to school, where I studied all day.**

✗ ~~Although I was tired.~~ ✓ **Although I was tired, I finished.**

✗ ~~I was tired and I was hungry and I went home and I slept.~~ ✓ **I was tired and hungry, so I went home and slept.**

SAY IT

Tell a 30-second story about your weekend that uses all four types. Your partner raises a finger each time they hear a new type.

TRY IT

1. She laughed.
2. She laughed because the joke was funny.
3. She laughed, but he didn't.
4. Although the joke was old, she laughed, and he smiled.

ANSWERS 1 simple · 2 complex · 3 compound · 4 compound-complex

Fragments, Run-Ons, Comma Splices

The three sentence errors, and five ways to fix them.

GR-24
LESSON

THE RULE

A **fragment** is missing a subject, a verb, or an independent clause. A **run-on** joins two independent clauses with nothing. A **comma splice** joins them with only a comma.

	EXAMPLE
Fragment	Because I was late. · Going to the store.
Run-on	I was late I ran.
Comma splice	I was late, I ran.
Fix 1 · a period	I was late. I ran.
Fix 2 · comma + FANBOYS	I was late, so I ran.
Fix 3 · semicolon	I was late; I ran.
Fix 4 · make one clause dependent	Because I was late, I ran.
Fix 5 · semicolon + transition + comma	I was late; therefore, I ran.

REMEMBER *However, therefore, then* and *also* are not FANBOYS: they can't join two sentences with just a comma. Not: It was raining, however we played.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- The test was hard**, but** I passed.
- The test was hard**;** I passed anyway.
- **Although** the test was hard, I passed.
- I like fruit, **such as** mangoes. (not: Such as mangoes.)

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~I love English, it is fun.~~ ✓ **I love English because it is fun.**

✗ ~~She studied all night she still failed.~~ ✓ **She studied all night, yet she still failed.**

✗ ~~Such as apples and bananas.~~ ✓ **I like fruit, such as apples and bananas.**

SAY IT

Read your last piece of writing aloud. Every time you pause at a comma between two complete sentences, you've found a splice. Fix it with one of the five fixes.

TRY IT

1. Label (F, RO, CS, OK): We went to the beach, it was sunny.
2. After the concert ended.
3. He's smart he never studies.
4. I called, but she was busy.

ANSWERS 1 CS · 2 F · 3 RO · 4 OK

Conditionals

If this, then that.

GR-25
LESSON

THE RULE

Conditionals describe real, unlikely and impossible situations. The tense in the **if** clause controls the meaning. Comma after the if clause when it comes first.

TYPE	FORM	USE	EXAMPLE
Zero	if + present, present	always true	If you heat ice, it melts.
First	if + present, will + verb	real future possibility	If it rains, we will stay home.
Second	if + past, would + verb	unreal or unlikely now	If I had a million dollars, I would travel.
Third	if + had + past participle, would have + past participle	unreal past; regret	If I had studied, I would have passed.
Mixed	if + had + past participle, would + verb	past cause, present result	If I had slept, I wouldn't be tired now.

REMEMBER With be in the second conditional, use **were**: If I **were** you, I would apologize. Never put will or would in the if clause. **Unless** = if not.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- If you **mix** red and blue, you **get** purple.
- If she **calls**, **I'll** tell her.
- If I **were** taller, **I'd** play basketball.
- If we **had left** earlier, we **wouldn't have missed** the train.

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~If I will see him, I will tell him.~~ ✓ **If I see him, I will tell him.**

✗ ~~If I would have money, I would buy it.~~ ✓ **If I had money, I would buy it.**

✗ ~~If I had known, I would told you.~~ ✓ **If I had known, I would have told you.**

SAY IT

Chain game: "If I win the lottery, I'll buy a car. If I buy a car, I'll drive to the beach…" Keep it going for one minute. Then play again in the second conditional (If I won…, I would…).

TRY IT

1. If you ___ (touch) fire, you get burned.
2. If I ___ (be) you, I'd study more.
3. If she ___ (come), we'll go together.
4. If they had asked me, I ___ (help).

ANSWERS 1 touch · 2 were · 3 comes · 4 would have helped

The Passive Voice

When the action matters more than who did it.

GR-26
LESSON

THE RULE

Passive = **be + past participle**. The object of the active sentence becomes the subject. Use it when the doer is unknown, obvious or unimportant. Add **by** to name the doer.

TENSE	ACTIVE	PASSIVE
Present simple	People speak English here.	English is spoken here.
Past simple	Someone stole my bike.	My bike was stolen.
Present continuous	They are building a bridge.	A bridge is being built.
Present perfect	They have cancelled the game.	The game has been cancelled.
Future	They will announce the results.	The results will be announced.
Modal	You must finish the work.	The work must be finished.

REMEMBER In essays, the active voice is usually clearer and stronger: *The committee approved the plan* beats *The plan was approved by the committee*. Use the passive on purpose, not by habit.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- Rice **is grown** in many countries.
- The window **was broken** last night.
- *Hamlet* **was written by** Shakespeare.
- You **will be picked up** at 6.

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~The car was wash.~~ ✓ **The car was washed.**

✗ ~~The letter was wrote.~~ ✓ **The letter was written.**

✗ ~~It was happened yesterday.~~ ✓ **It happened yesterday. (happen has no passive)**

SAY IT

Explain how something from your country is made (coffee, rice, silk, a favorite dish) using the passive: “First, the beans are picked. Then they are dried…”

TRY IT

1. Passive: They clean the room every day.
2. Passive: Someone found my wallet.
3. Passive: They will open the store at 9.
4. Passive: People have seen the movie millions of times.

ANSWERS 1 The room is cleaned every day. · 2 My wallet was found. · 3 The store will be opened at 9. · 4 The movie has been seen millions of times.

Reported Speech

Telling what someone said.

GR-27
LESSON

THE RULE

When you report what someone said in the past, the verb usually moves **one step back** in time, and pronouns and time words change to fit.

DIRECT	REPORTED
"I am tired."	She said (that) she was tired.
"I'm working."	She said she was working.
"I have finished."	He said he had finished.
"I will call you."	She said she would call me.
"Can you help?"	He asked if I could help.
"Where do you live?"	She asked where I lived. (not: where did I live)
"Sit down."	He told me to sit down.

REMEMBER **say** + what was said: She said (that)… · **tell** + a person: She told **me** (that)… Time words shift: today → that day, tomorrow → the next day, here → there.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- My teacher **said** the test **was** easy.
- He **told me** he **would** come.
- She **asked** me **if** I **was** okay.
- They **told** us **not to** run.

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~She said me that…~~ ✓ **She told me that… / She said that…**

✗ ~~He asked where did I go.~~ ✓ **He asked where I went.**

✗ ~~She told to me…~~ ✓ **She told me…**

SAY IT

Ask a partner five questions. Then report their answers to someone else: "She said she…", "She told me…", "I asked her if…".

TRY IT

1. Report: "I am hungry," said Tom.
2. Report: "We will win," they said.
3. Report: "Do you speak English?" she asked me.
4. Report: "Close the door," he told me.

ANSWERS 1 Tom said he was hungry. · 2 They said they would win. · 3 She asked me if I spoke English. · 4 He told me to close the door.

Parallel Structure and Modifiers

Matching parts, and words in the right place.

GR-28
LESSON

THE RULE

Parallel structure: items in a list, pair or comparison take the same form.
Modifiers must sit next to the word they describe, or the meaning changes.

PROBLEM	WRONG	RIGHT
List not parallel	I like swimming, to read, and hikes.	I like swimming, reading, and hiking.
Pair not parallel	She is not only smart but also works hard.	She is not only smart but also hardworking.
Comparison not parallel	Walking is better than to drive.	Walking is better than driving.
Dangling modifier	Walking to school, the rain started.	Walking to school, I got caught in the rain.
Misplaced modifier	He bought a car for his wife with a broken engine.	He bought his wife a car with a broken engine.

REMEMBER These errors are tested on the SAT and ACT and noticed by every academic reader. Test a list by reading each item after the sentence's start: "I like swimming. I like to read. I like hikes." The odd one jumps out.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- The job requires **speaking** English, **writing** reports, and **managing** a team.
- **Either** call me **or** text me.
- **After finishing my homework**, I watched TV.
- She is **smart, kind, and funny**.

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~She likes to dance, sing, and painting.~~ ✓ **She likes to dance, sing, and paint.**

✗ ~~Running down the hall, the bell rang.~~ ✓ **Running down the hall, I heard the bell.**

✗ ~~He is tall, strong, and has intelligence.~~ ✓ **He is tall, strong, and intelligent.**

SAY IT

Describe your perfect weekend in one sentence with four activities in the same form (-ing). Then say it again with to + verb for all four.

TRY IT

1. Fix: To succeed, you need patience, practice, and to be confident.
2. Fix: Covered in mud, I washed the dog.
3. Fix: The movie was long, boring, and nobody liked it.

ANSWERS 1 patience, practice, and confidence · 2 I washed the dog, which was covered in mud. · 3 The movie was long and boring, and nobody liked it.

Transitions

Signposts that guide the reader.

GR-29
LESSON

THE RULE

Transitions show how one idea connects to the next. Between two sentences, put a period or a semicolon **before** the transition and a comma **after** it: It rained**; however,** we played.

PURPOSE	TRANSITIONS
Add	also, in addition, furthermore, moreover
Contrast	however, on the other hand, in contrast, nevertheless
Result	therefore, as a result, consequently
Example	for example, for instance; such as (+ noun)
Sequence	first, next, then, after that, finally
Emphasis	in fact, indeed, especially
Conclusion	in conclusion, overall, in short

REMEMBER Don't put a transition at the start of every sentence. One good transition where the direction of the argument changes is plenty.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- The rent is cheap. **However,** the location is bad.
- She practiced every day**; as a result,** she won.
- Many fruits, **such as** mangoes, grow here.
- **First,** wash the rice. **Then** add water.

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~It was raining, however we played.~~ ✓ **It was raining; however, we played.**

✗ ~~For example: apples.~~ ✓ **For example, apples are full of fiber.**

✗ ~~Moreover, also, the food was good.~~ ✓ **Moreover, the food was good.**

SAY IT

Explain how to cook your favorite dish in six steps using first, next, then, after that and finally. Then give two opinions about it joined with however.

TRY IT

1. I was sick; ___, I stayed home.
2. The phone is expensive. ___, it's very good.
3. She speaks Thai; ___, she speaks English.
4. ___, English is a skill worth learning. (last paragraph)

ANSWERS 1 therefore / as a result · 2 However / Nevertheless · 3 in addition / also · 4 In conclusion / Overall

Commonly Confused Words

They sound alike. They mean different things.

GR-30
LESSON

THE RULE

These pairs sound the same or almost the same, so speech hides the mistake and writing shows it. Check them in every final draft.

WORDS	MEANING	EXAMPLE
its / it's	belonging to it / it is	The dog wagged its tail. It's late.
your / you're	belonging to you / you are	Is this your bag? You're right.
their / there / they're	belonging to them / a place / they are	Their house is there. They're home.
then / than	next in time / comparing	We ate, then left. She's taller than me.
to / too / two	toward or + verb / also, very / 2	I want to go too. It's too hot. Two cats.
affect / effect	verb: to change / noun: a result	Sleep affects grades. The effect is big.
lose / loose	not find / not tight	Don't lose your keys. The shirt is loose.
fewer / less	things you count / amounts	fewer people · less time
who's / whose	who is / belonging to whom	Who's there? Whose pen is this?

REMEMBER The contraction test: say the full form (it is, you are, they are, who is). If the sentence still makes sense, use the apostrophe.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- **It's** time to feed the cat; **its** bowl is empty.
- **They're** putting **their** bags over **there**.
- This is harder **than** I thought.
- There are **fewer** cars and **less** noise today.

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~Their going to the park.~~ ✓ **They're going to the park.**

✗ ~~The company changed it's logo.~~ ✓ **The company changed its logo.**

✗ ~~I have less friends now.~~ ✓ **I have fewer friends now.**

SAY IT

Dictation: read the examples to a partner while they write. Spoken, the pairs sound identical; written, every one must be right.

TRY IT

1. ___ late. (Your / You're)
2. The cat licked ___ paw. (its / it's)
3. She is older ___ me. (then / than)
4. ___ coming tomorrow. (There / Their / They're)

ANSWERS 1 You're · 2 its · 3 than · 4 They're

Capitals and End Marks

Start strong. Stop clearly.

PU-1
LESSON

THE RULE

Every sentence starts with a capital letter and ends with a period (.), a question mark (?) or an exclamation point (!).

CAPITALIZE	EXAMPLE
The first word of a sentence	**T**he class starts at nine.
The word I, always	My friend and **I** went home.
Names of people and places	**M**aria · **K**uala **L**umpur · the **M**ekong **R**iver
Days, months, holidays	**M**onday · **J**uly · **N**ew **Y**ear's **D**ay
Languages, nationalities, religions	**E**nglish · **T**hai · **F**ilipino · **B**uddhism
Titles of books and films (main words)	*The Old Man and the Sea*
Titles before names	**D**octor Lee · **M**r. Tan · **P**rofessor Kim
Not: seasons and school subjects	summer · math · science (but **E**nglish)

REMEMBER Period for statements and commands. Question mark for direct questions only (*I wonder where he is.* takes a period). Exclamation points are rare in formal writing, and one is enough!

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- My sister lives in **S**eoul.
- **W**hat time does the bus leave**?**
- **W**e won the game**!**
- **I** asked her where she lives.

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~i live in jakarta.~~ ✓ **I live in Jakarta.**

✗ ~~I study english on monday.~~ ✓ **I study English on Monday.**

✗ ~~I asked her where she lives?~~ ✓ **I asked her where she lives.**

SAY IT

Dictation: your partner reads five sentences; you write them with every capital and end mark. Check together and count the misses.

TRY IT

1. Correct: my sister speaks korean and japanese.
2. Correct: do you like summer
3. Correct: we met mr. lim in april.

ANSWERS 1 My sister speaks Korean and Japanese. · 2 Do you like summer? · 3 We met Mr. Lim in April.

Commas, Part 1

Joining, introducing and listing.

PU-2
LESSON

THE RULE

A comma is a short pause that keeps the reader from getting lost. These four rules cover most of the commas you will ever write.

RULE	EXAMPLE
1 · Before FANBOYS joining two independent clauses (GR-20)	I was tired, but I finished my homework.
2 · After an introduction: a word, a phrase or a dependent clause	However, … · After lunch, … · When I got home, …
3 · Between items in a list of three or more	We need eggs, rice, and milk.
4 · Between two adjectives that each describe the noun	a long, boring movie

REMEMBER Rule 3: the last comma before *and* (the Oxford comma) is optional, but it prevents confusion; pick one style and use it every time. Rule 4 test: if *and* fits between the adjectives (long and boring), use a comma. A **big red** ball takes no comma.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- She studied, so she passed.
- If you're hungry, eat something.
- I invited my parents, Ana, and Kim.
- It was a cold, dark night.

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~I like tea, and coffee.~~ ✓ **I like tea and coffee. (two nouns, not two clauses)**

✗ ~~We bought apples bananas and oranges.~~ ✓ **We bought apples, bananas, and oranges.**

✗ ~~When the bell rang we left.~~ ✓ **When the bell rang, we left.**

SAY IT

Read sentences aloud and pause at every comma. If a pause sounds wrong when you say it, the comma is probably wrong when you write it.

TRY IT

1. Add commas: When the bell rang we left.
2. Add commas: I called her but she didn't answer.
3. Add commas: She bought pens paper and glue.
4. Add commas: It was a hot sunny day.

ANSWERS 1 rang, we · 2 her, but · 3 pens, paper, and glue · 4 hot, sunny

Commas, Part 2

Extra information, and where commas never go.

PU-3
LESSON

THE RULE

Use commas to set off information the sentence could live without, and for a few everyday patterns. Never put a comma where it splits things that belong together.

RULE	EXAMPLE
5 · Around extra (non-essential) information	My brother, who lives in Perth, is a chef.
6 · Around a noun that renames another	Mr. Chen, my teacher, is strict.
7 · Names you speak to; yes and no	Ana, come here. · Yes, I agree.
8 · Dates, places, big numbers, quotes	May 5, 2026 · Bangkok, Thailand · 10,000 · She said, “Hi.”
NEVER · between subject and verb	✗ My best friend from school, lives here.
NEVER · between two sentences alone (GR-24)	✗ I was late, I ran.
NEVER · around information you need	✗ The student, who won, is my cousin.

REMEMBER Commas in the middle of a sentence come in pairs: open one, close one. A dependent clause at the end of a sentence usually takes no comma: I stayed home because I was sick.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- Let’s eat, Grandma! (One comma saves Grandma.)
- Mrs. Rivera, our principal, spoke first.
- No, thank you.
- She was born on June 3, 2010, in Cebu.

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~My mother, works at a bank.~~ ✓ **My mother works at a bank.**

✗ ~~The man, who called you, is here. (which man?)~~ ✓ **The man who called you is here.**

✗ ~~Hello Mai how are you?~~ ✓ **Hello, Mai. How are you?**

SAY IT

Write five sentences about people you know, each with extra information in commas: “My uncle, who drives a taxi, knows every street.” Read them aloud with a pause at each comma.

TRY IT

1. Fix: My sister who is a doctor works nights. (one sister)
2. Fix: Thank you Mr. Ong.
3. Fix: The book, that I lost, was new.
4. Fix: She was born on June 3 2010.

ANSWERS 1 My sister, who is a doctor, works nights. · 2 Thank you, Mr. Ong. · 3 The book that I lost was new. · 4 June 3, 2010

Semicolons, Colons and Dashes

Three marks that make writing sharp.

PU-4
LESSON

THE RULE

A **semicolon (;)** joins two closely related independent clauses. A **colon (:)** comes after a complete sentence to introduce a list, an explanation or a quote. A **dash (—)** adds emphasis or an interruption.

MARK	USE	EXAMPLE
;	joins two related independent clauses	I love mangoes; my brother hates them.
;	before a transition joining two clauses	It rained; however, we played.
;	separates list items that contain commas	We visited Hue, Vietnam; Penang, Malaysia; and Cebu, Philippines.
:	introduces a list after a complete sentence	Bring three things: a pen, a notebook, and water.
:	introduces an explanation or a quote	There was one problem: we were lost.
—	emphasis or an interruption	She had one dream—to fly.

REMEMBER Colon test: the words **before** the colon must be a complete sentence. ✗ We need: eggs and milk. ✓ We need two things: eggs and milk. ✓ We need eggs and milk.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- The plan was simple; the work was not.
- I have one goal: to study in London.
- My teacher said it best: “Practice beats talent.”
- The answer—after hours of work—was simple.

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~I like it; because it’s fun.~~ ✓ **I like it because it’s fun.**

✗ ~~My favorite foods are: rice and fish.~~ ✓ **My favorite foods are rice and fish.**

✗ ~~It’s late, I’m going home.~~ ✓ **It’s late; I’m going home.**

SAY IT

Write three sentences about your family: one with a semicolon, one with a colon, one with a dash. Read them aloud: a semicolon is a medium pause; a colon says “here it comes.”

TRY IT

1. ; or : She was exhausted ___ she had run ten miles.
2. ; or : You need one thing ___ patience.
3. ; or : Pack these ___ shoes, socks, and a hat.
4. Correct? The reasons are: time and money.

ANSWERS 1 ; · 2 : · 3 : · 4 No: The reasons are time and money. / There are two reasons: time and money.

Apostrophes

Ownership and missing letters. Never plurals.

PU-5
LESSON

THE RULE

Apostrophes do two jobs: they show **possession** ('s) and **missing letters** in contractions. They never make a word plural.

USE	RULE	EXAMPLE
One owner	add 's	the girl's bag · James's book
Plural owners ending in s	add ' only	the girls' bags · my parents' house
Plural owners not ending in s	add 's	the children's toys · women's rights
Two owners, one thing	's on the last name	Ana and Ben's house
Contractions	' replaces the missing letters	do not → don't · I am → I'm · they are → they're
Plurals	no apostrophe	✗ apple's for sale → ✓ apples for sale · the 1990s
Possessive pronouns	no apostrophe	its, yours, hers, ours, theirs, whose

REMEMBER Formal essays usually avoid contractions: write *do not* and *cannot*. In conversation, messages and personal essays, contractions sound natural.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- That's **Mai's** pen.
- The **students'** books are on the desk.
- **It's** raining, and the dog hurt **its** paw.
- My **brother's** car is red.

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~My brothers car.~~ ✓ **My brother's car.**

✗ ~~The dog hurt it's leg.~~ ✓ **The dog hurt its leg.**

✗ ~~I have two cat's.~~ ✓ **I have two cats.**

SAY IT

Point to ten things in the room and say whose they are: "That's Mai's pen." "Those are the teachers' desks." Then write them down.

TRY IT

1. Write it: the toys of the baby
2. Write it: the toys of the babies
3. Write it: the room of the men
4. Contraction: they are

ANSWERS 1 the baby's toys · 2 the babies' toys · 3 the men's room · 4 they're

Quotation Marks, Titles and Hyphens

Exact words, named works, joined words.

PU-6
LESSON

THE RULE

Quotation marks show someone's **exact words**. In American English, periods and commas go **inside** the closing quotation mark.

USE	EXAMPLE
Exact words	She said, "I'm ready."
Quote first	"I'm ready," she said.
A question inside the quote	He asked, "Are you ready?"
A quote split in two	"If you're ready," she said, "let's go."
Short works in quotation marks	the song "Imagine" · the article "Why Sleep Matters"
Long works in italics	the book *Animal Farm* · the film *Inside Out*
Hyphen: two words that describe a noun together	a well-known writer · a 15-year-old student
Hyphen: numbers 21 to 99	twenty-one · ninety-nine

REMEMBER Reported speech takes no quotation marks: She said that she was ready (GR-27). British English often uses single marks and puts punctuation outside; choose one style and keep it.

EXAMPLES · SAY EACH ONE ALOUD

- "I'll be there at six," he promised.
- My favorite poem is "The Road Not Taken."
- We read *Wonder* in class.
- It was a **two-hour** exam. The exam took two hours.

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ ~~She said "hello".~~ ✓ **She said, "Hello."**

✗ ~~He is 15-years-old.~~ ✓ **He is 15 years old. / He is a 15-year-old boy.**

✗ ~~I read "Animal Farm".~~ ✓ **I read *Animal Farm*.**

SAY IT

Write a short scene where three people talk. Punctuate every line of dialogue, then read it aloud with three different voices.

TRY IT

1. Punctuate: I'm hungry said Tom
2. Punctuate: She asked where are you going
3. Hyphen? a ten minute walk

ANSWERS 1 "I'm hungry," said Tom. · 2 She asked, "Where are you going?" · 3 a ten-minute walk

70 Irregular Verbs

Base form, past simple, past participle. Say all three aloud: go, went, gone.

BASE	PAST	PAST PARTICIPLE
be	was / were	been
become	became	become
begin	began	begun
bite	bit	bitten
break	broke	broken
bring	brought	brought
build	built	built
buy	bought	bought
catch	caught	caught
choose	chose	chosen
come	came	come
cost	cost	cost
cut	cut	cut
do	did	done
draw	drew	drawn
drink	drank	drunk
drive	drove	driven
eat	ate	eaten
fall	fell	fallen
feel	felt	felt
fight	fought	fought
find	found	found
fly	flew	flown
forget	forgot	forgotten

BASE	PAST	PAST PARTICIPLE
get	got	gotten (US) / got
give	gave	given
go	went	gone
grow	grew	grown
have	had	had
hear	heard	heard
hide	hid	hidden
hold	held	held
hurt	hurt	hurt
keep	kept	kept
know	knew	known
leave	left	left
lend	lent	lent
let	let	let
lose	lost	lost
make	made	made
mean	meant	meant
meet	met	met
pay	paid	paid
put	put	put
read	read (“red”)	read (“red”)
ride	rode	ridden
run	ran	run
say	said	said

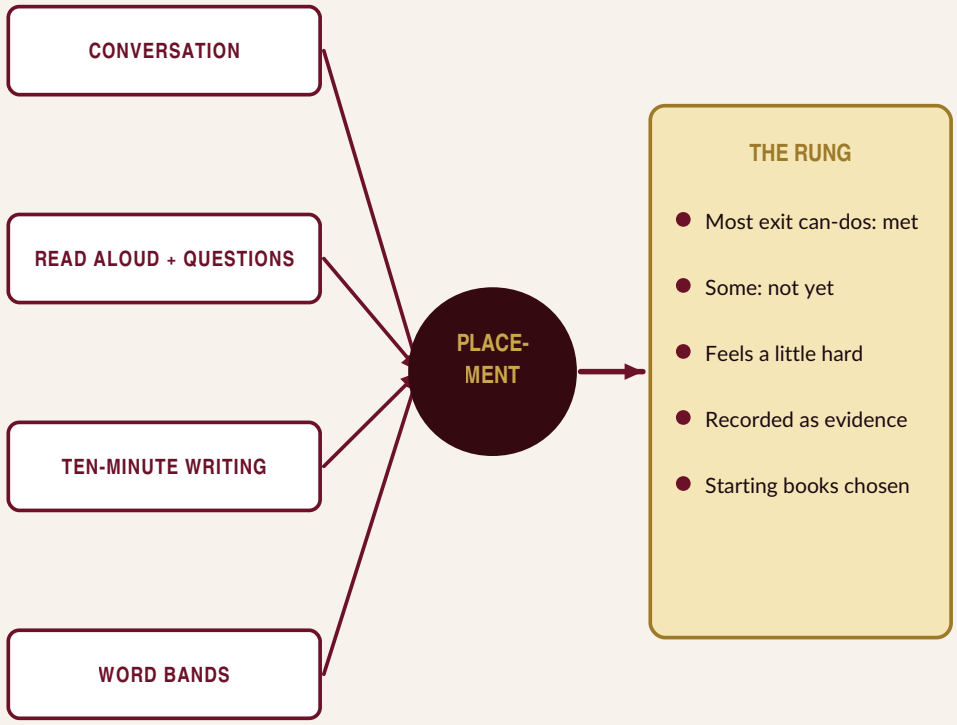
BASE	PAST	PAST PARTICIPLE
see	saw	seen
sell	sold	sold
send	sent	sent
set	set	set
sing	sang	sung
sit	sat	sat
sleep	slept	slept
speak	spoke	spoken
spend	spent	spent
stand	stood	stood
steal	stole	stolen
swim	swam	swum
take	took	taken
teach	taught	taught
tell	told	told
think	thought	thought
throw	threw	thrown
understand	understood	understood
wake	woke	woken
wear	wore	worn
win	won	won
write	wrote	written

Placement

Start on the right rung.

EN-1

PLAY CALL



Placed on evidence, never on age or grade.

FORMATION *Four short checks, one rung.*

SCOREBOARD

Every student placed on recorded evidence in the first session.

SITUATION

Every new student, before the first lesson.

THE PLAY

1. Ten-minute conversation: start easy and go up until the student struggles, then stop.
2. Reading: read a short graded text aloud, then answer questions about it.
3. Writing: ten minutes on “Tell me about yourself and something you did recently.”
4. Words: a quick check against the frequency bands (500, 1,000, 2,000, 3,000).
5. Place on the rung where the student can do most, but not all, of the exit can-dos.

COACHING POINTS

Age and grade say nothing about English level. A student placed too high reads books they can’t understand and quits; placed too low, they’re bored. The right rung feels a little hard.

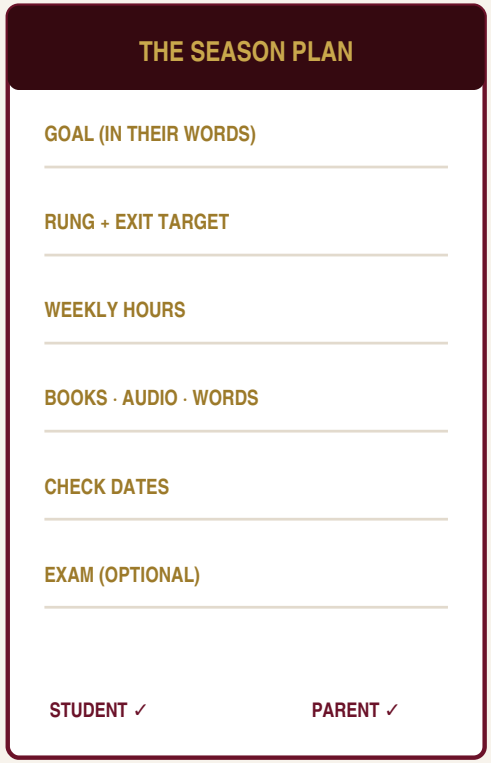
FILM Council of Europe, CEFR Companion Volume (2020) · Nation (2006), vocabulary size

The Season Plan

One page, signed before the first lesson.

EN-2

PLAY CALL



FORMATION *Goal, rung, hours, books, checks, exam.*

SCOREBOARD

Every student starts with a signed one-page Season Plan.

FILM The English Playbook

SITUATION

Week 0, right after placement.

THE PLAY

1. Write the student's goal in their own words (a school, a scholarship, a conversation, a book).
2. Set the rung and its exit target, and the weekly hours the family can actually protect.
3. Choose the first books, audio and word list at the student's level.
4. Put the monthly check dates and any exam date on the family's calendar, and have student and parent sign.

COACHING POINTS

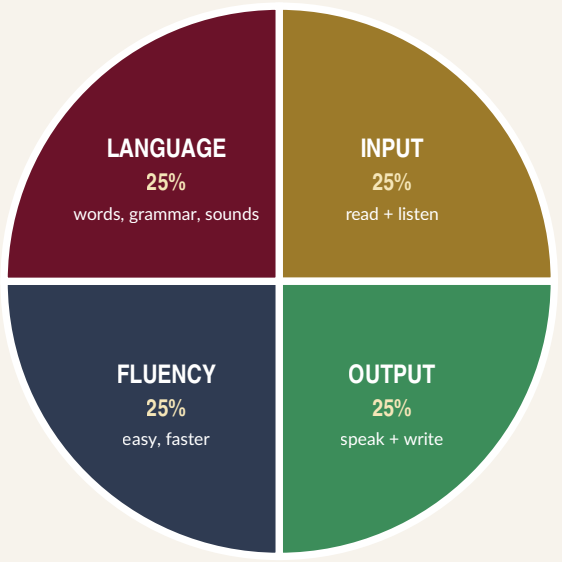
A goal the student chose is the engine; the plan is the steering wheel. Families in different time zones and schedules need the plan on one page they can see.

The Practice Week

Four strands, in balance, every week.

EN-3

PLAY CALL



Every week, every rung. Five practice days or more.

Daily minimum: word cards, reading, listening.

FORMATION *A quarter each: input, output, language study, fluency.*

SCOREBOARD

Five or more practice days a week, with all four strands every week.

FILM Nation (2007), "The four strands," Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching · Nation, What Should Every EFL Teacher Know?

SITUATION

Every week of every rung.

THE PLAY

1. Input (about 25%): reading and listening the student understands.
2. Output (about 25%): speaking and writing to communicate something real.
3. Language study (about 25%): words, grammar, sounds, and feedback on errors.
4. Fluency (about 25%): easy material, done faster: quick reading, 4/3/2 talks, timed easy writing.
5. Daily minimum, every rung: word cards, reading, listening. Five practice days or more.

COACHING POINTS

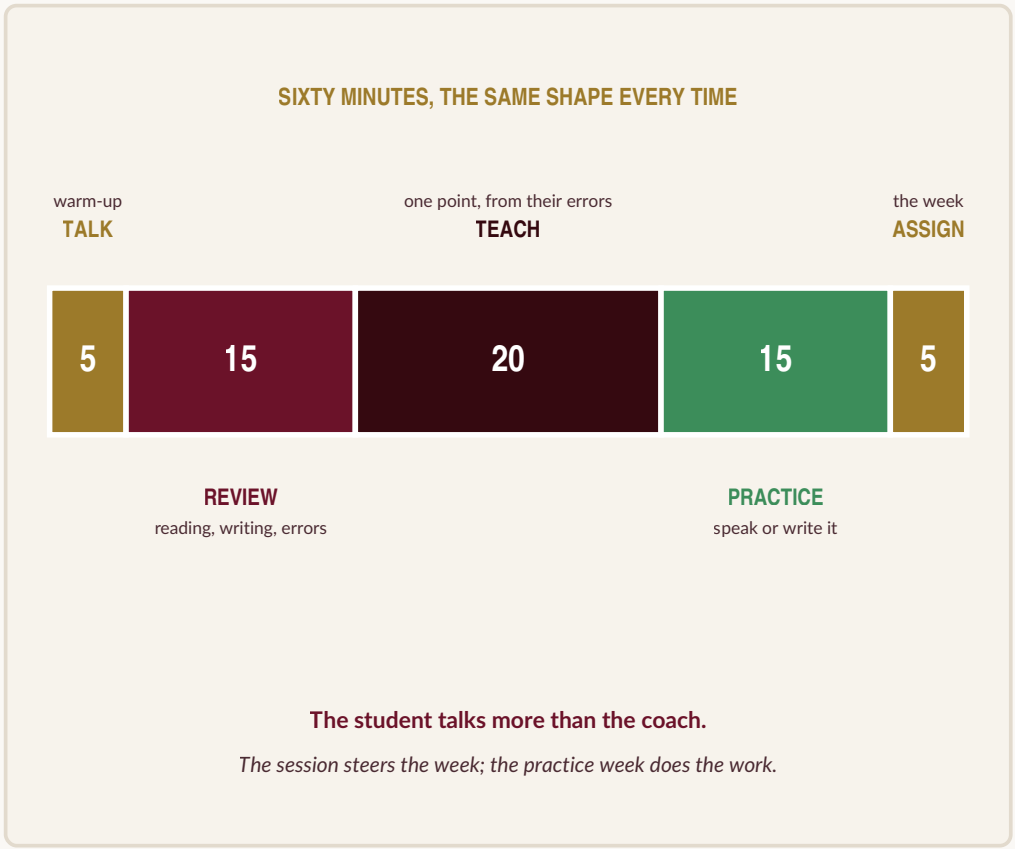
Most English classes are almost all language study. Nation's four strands show why that stalls: without enough input, output and fluency, knowledge never becomes skill.

The Session

Sixty minutes, the same shape every time.

EN-4

PLAY CALL



FORMATION *Talk, review, teach, practice, assign.*

SCOREBOARD

Every session ends with a written plan for the week.

FILM Nation (2007), the four strands

SITUATION

Every coaching session, online or in person.

THE PLAY

1. 5 minutes: warm-up talk about the student's week, in English. The student talks more than the coach.
2. 15 minutes: review the week's reading, writing and error log.
3. 20 minutes: one focused point of language (a structure, a sound, a writing move) taken from the student's own errors.
4. 15 minutes: practice it in speaking or writing, with feedback.
5. 5 minutes: set the week: books, words, tasks, and one thing to celebrate.

COACHING POINTS

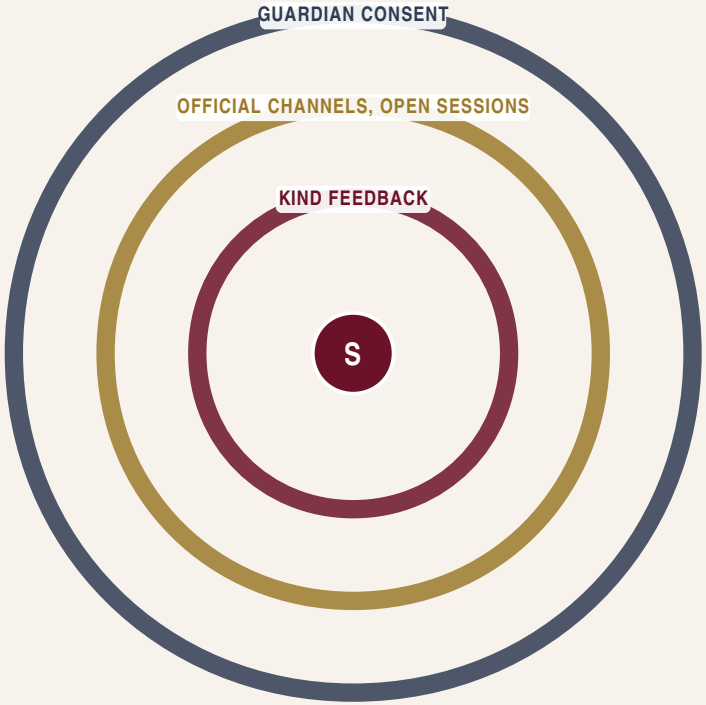
The session steers the week; it isn't the week. Most progress happens in the five or six practice hours between sessions. A predictable shape lets the student spend their energy on English.

Safe + Kind

Minors first, every session.

EN-5

PLAY CALL



Correct the language, never the child.

FORMATION *Guardian consent, open sessions, kind feedback.*

SCOREBOARD

Zero sessions without guardian consent; every concern reported the same day.

FILM Rules of the Game

SITUATION

Every student under 18, every setting.

THE PLAY

1. Written guardian consent before the first session, including for any recording.
2. Sessions only through official channels, with a parent or guardian able to see them; no private messaging with students outside them.
3. Recordings are used only for feedback and checks, stored securely and deleted when the season ends unless the family asks to keep them.
4. Correct the language, never the child: no shaming, no comparisons, praise for effort and risk.
5. Report any safety concern to the parents and the school or program the same day.

COACHING POINTS

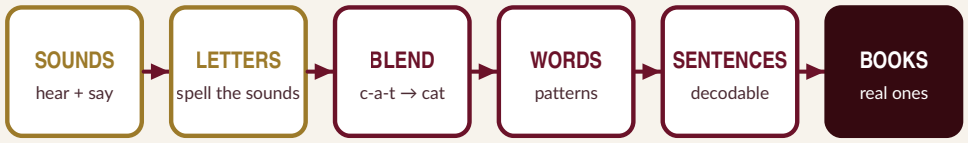
Children who feel safe take risks, and language learning is a series of risks. The rules protect the student, the family and the coach.

Sounds to Letters

Teach the code, then read real books.

EN-6

PLAY CALL



Teach the code, then read real books as soon as the student can blend.

FORMATION *Sounds, letters, blending, words, sentences, books.*

SCOREBOARD

Reads new decodable words accurately by the end of Rung 1.

FILM National Reading Panel (2000) · August and Shanahan, eds. (2006), Developing Literacy in Second-Language Learners

SITUATION

Rungs 1–2, and any student who can't yet decode unfamiliar words.

THE PLAY

1. Teach the sounds first by listening and saying, then the letters that spell them.
2. Blend sounds into short words (c-a-t), then build to longer words and common spelling patterns.
3. Practice with decodable sentences built only from patterns already taught.
4. Move to real picture books and first graded readers as soon as the student can blend, and keep going.

COACHING POINTS

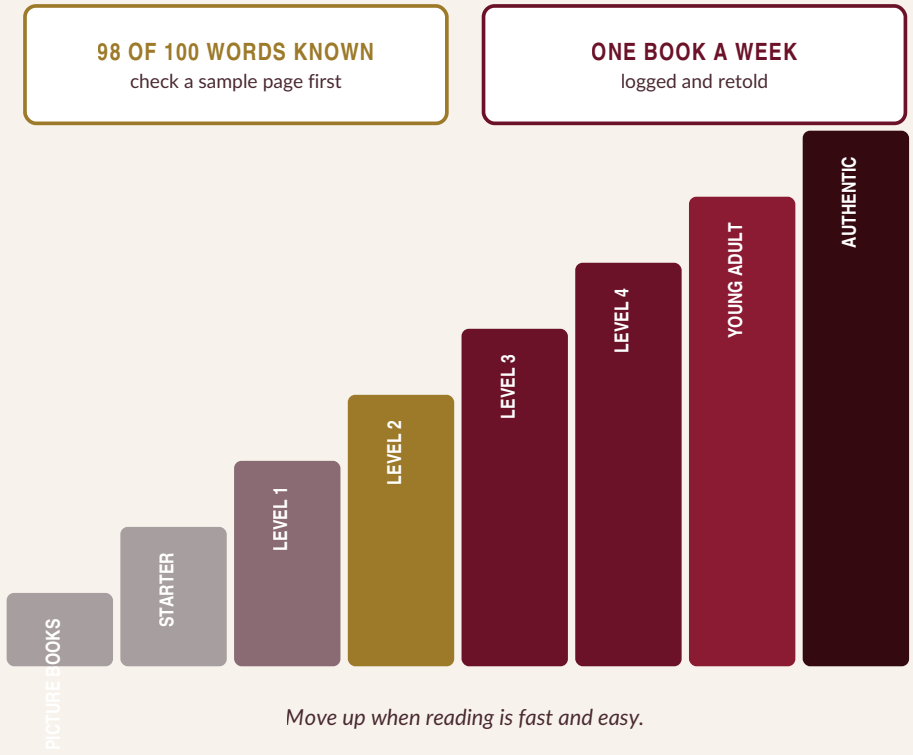
English spelling is irregular but not random. Research on English learners finds they benefit from explicit instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics, alongside vocabulary and comprehension.

The Reading Ladder

A book a week, at the right level.

EN-7

PLAY CALL



FORMATION *Graded levels, 98% known words, one book a week.*

SCOREBOARD

One or more books a week, logged and retold.

SITUATION

Every rung, every week.

THE PLAY

1. Check the level: on a sample page, the student should know about 98 of every 100 words. Too many unknowns: drop a level.
2. Read at least one graded book a week, for pleasure, without stopping to look up every word.
3. Keep a reading log: title, level, pages, one line on what happened.
4. Retell each book in two minutes, in English or the home language.
5. Move up a level when reading is fast and easy, not when the calendar says so.

COACHING POINTS

Extensive reading is the single biggest source of input most learners can get. Comprehension starts to work at about 95–98% known words; below that, reading becomes decoding and students quit.

FILM Hu and Nation (2000), Reading in a Foreign Language · Day and Bamford (1998), Extensive Reading in the Second Language Classroom · Extensive Reading Foundation

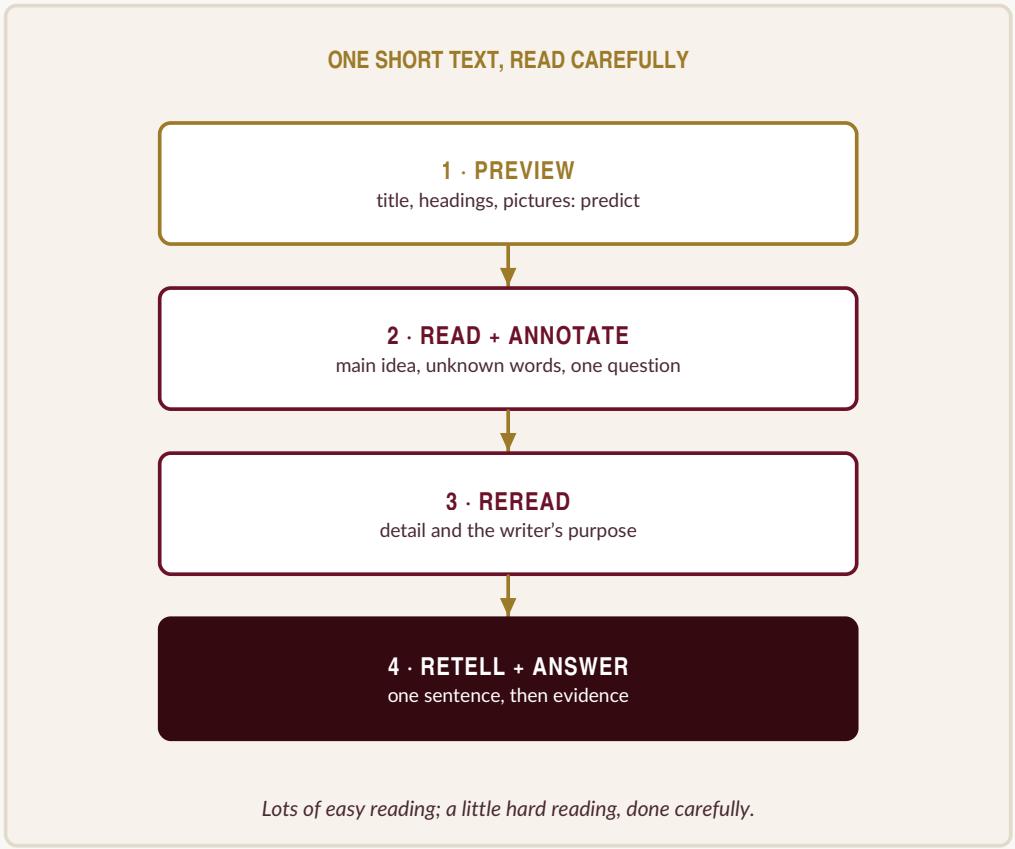
INPUT

Close Reading

One short text, read three times.

EN-8

PLAY CALL



FORMATION *Preview, read and annotate, retell and answer.*

SCOREBOARD

Main idea stated correctly in one sentence for every close-read text.

FILM Nation (2007), the four strands (language-focused learning) · College Board, SAT Reading and Writing (for Rungs 5–6)

SITUATION

Once a week from Rung 3; daily practice for exam students.

THE PLAY

1. Preview: title, headings, pictures. Predict what it's about.
2. Read and annotate: underline the main idea, circle unknown words, write one question in the margin.
3. Reread for detail and the writer's purpose; look up only the words that matter.
4. Retell the main idea in one sentence, then answer comprehension questions with evidence from the text.

COACHING POINTS

Extensive reading builds fluency; close reading builds precision. Both are needed, in that ratio: lots of easy reading, a little hard reading done carefully.

Listening Every Day

Ten minutes a day, five ways.

EN-9

PLAY CALL



Ten minutes a day connects the sounds of English to words on the page.

FORMATION *Listen, read along, listen again, shadow, dictate.*

SCOREBOARD

Ten or more minutes of listening logged five days a week.

FILM Nation (2007), the four strands (meaning-focused input)

SITUATION

Every rung, every day.

THE PLAY

1. Listen once for the gist, no text.
2. Listen again while reading the transcript or the graded reader.
3. Listen a third time without the text, and notice how much more is clear.
4. Shadow: repeat a short clip just behind the speaker, copying rhythm and stress.
5. Once a week: a short dictation of known sentences, checked against the text.

COACHING POINTS

Listening is the skill learners practice least and need first. Reading along connects the sounds of English to words the student already knows on the page.

Word Power

Frequent words first, reviewed on a schedule.

EN-10

PLAY CALL



FORMATION *Frequency bands; review spaced out over days and weeks.*

SCOREBOARD

Words known, checked monthly against the rung target.

SITUATION

Every rung, ten minutes a day.

THE PLAY

1. Learn the most frequent words first: about 1,000 by Rung 2, 2,000 by Rung 3, 3,000 by Rung 4, then the Academic Word List.
2. Make word cards with the word, an example sentence from real reading, and a picture or translation.
3. Review by recalling, not rereading: look at the word, say the meaning, then check.
4. Space the reviews out (next day, a few days later, a week, a month), with any free spaced-repetition app or paper cards.
5. Use new words in speech and writing within the week.

COACHING POINTS

A few thousand frequent words cover most of everyday English, so they come first. Spaced retrieval beats cramming: research consistently finds that spreading out practice improves long-term recall.

FILM Nation (2006), Canadian Modern Language Review · Browne, Culligan and Phillips (2013), New General Service List · Coxhead (2000), Academic Word List · Nakata (2015), SSLA

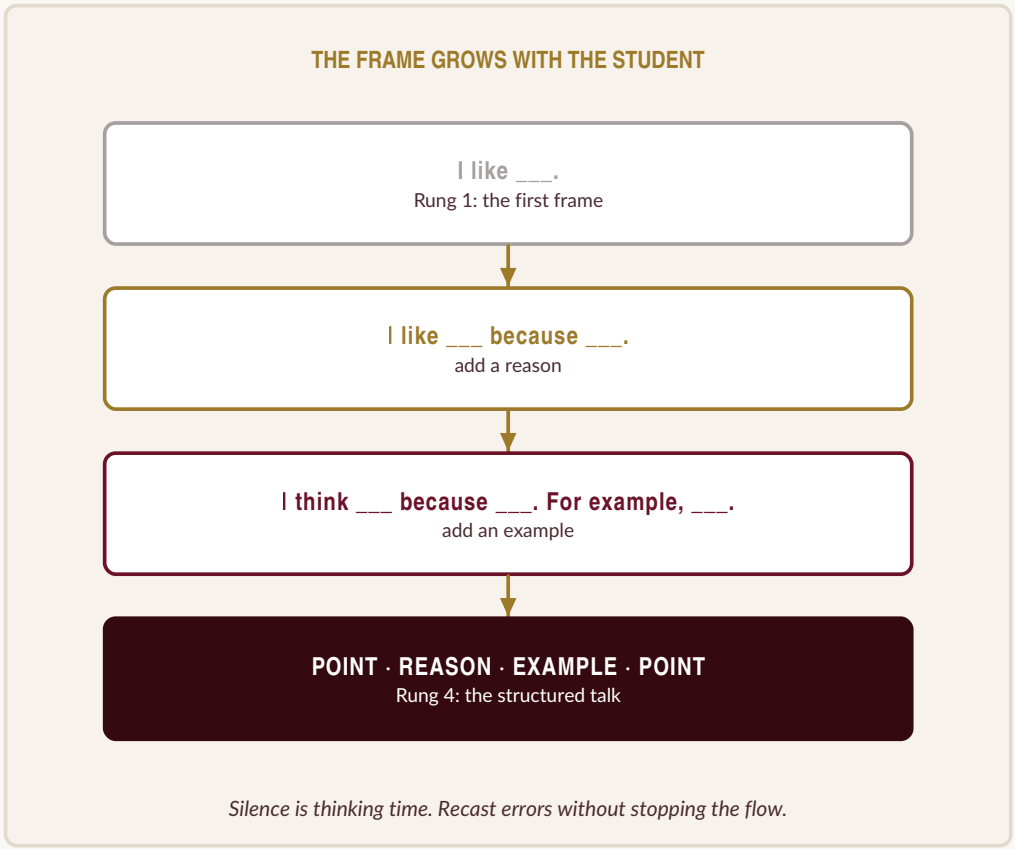
OUTPUT

Speak from Day One

Sentence frames turn silence into speech.

EN-11

PLAY CALL



FORMATION *Frame, reason, example.*

SCOREBOARD

The student talks more than the coach in every session.

FILM Nation (2007), the four strands (meaning-focused output)

SITUATION

Every session, every rung, starting at Rung 1.

THE PLAY

1. Give a frame the student can fill: "I like ___."
2. Grow the frame: "I like ___ because ___."
3. Grow it again: "I think ___ because ___. For example, ___."
4. Ask a real question every session and wait. Silence is thinking time, not failure.
5. Recast errors: say the sentence back correctly and let the student repeat it, without stopping the flow.

COACHING POINTS

Students who speak in the first week believe they are English speakers. Frames remove the fear of the blank, and by Rung 4 the same frame becomes the structured talk (point, reason, example, point).

OUTPUT

The 4/3/2

Same talk, three partners, less time.

EN-12

PLAY CALL



FORMATION *Four minutes, then three, then two.*

SCOREBOARD

One 4/3/2 a week, with all three rounds completed.

FILM Maurice (1983) · Nation (1989), System · Nation (2007), the four strands (fluency development)

SITUATION

Weekly from Rung 3; shorter rounds (2, 1.5, 1) at Rungs 1–2.

THE PLAY

1. The student picks a topic they know well (a trip, a favorite game, a problem they solved).
2. Tell it to partner one in four minutes, partner two in three, partner three in two. Listeners don't interrupt.
3. Online or at home: record three times to a timer instead of three partners.
4. Afterward, note one thing that got easier and one word or phrase to learn.

COACHING POINTS

Repeating the same content under shrinking time pushes speech to become faster and smoother. Studies of the activity report faster speech and fewer hesitations by the third round.

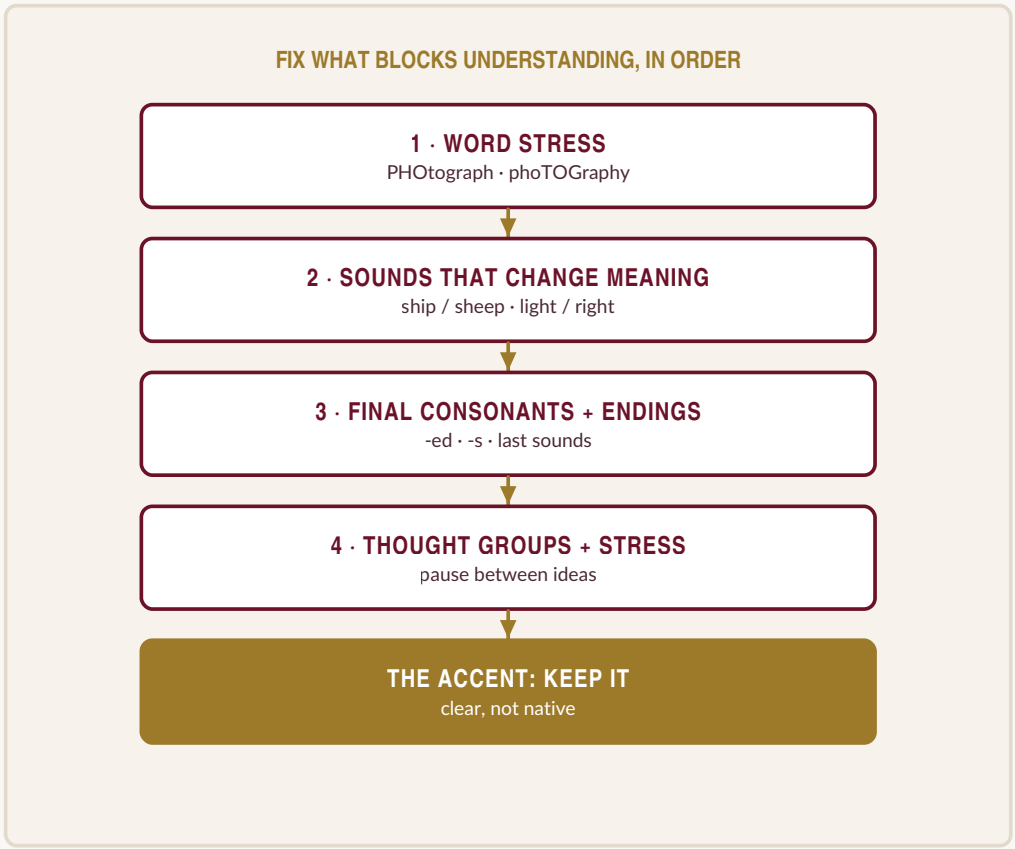
OUTPUT

Clear Speech

Understood easily. Accent welcome.

EN-13

PLAY CALL



FORMATION *Fix what blocks understanding, in priority order.*

SCOREBOARD

A new listener understands the student's two-minute recording without effort.

SITUATION

Rungs 2–6, on the student's own recordings.

THE PLAY

1. Record the student speaking freely; have a new listener note where they lost the meaning.
2. Fix word stress first (PHOtograph, phoTOGraphy): wrong stress often blocks understanding most.
3. Then the specific sounds that change meaning for this student (ship and sheep, light and right), and dropped final consonants and endings.
4. Then thought groups and sentence stress: pause between ideas, stress the new information.
5. Leave the rest of the accent alone.

COACHING POINTS

Research separates accent from intelligibility: a strong accent can be perfectly clear. Teaching should target what makes listeners work hard to understand, not what sounds foreign.

FILM Munro and Derwing (1995), Language Learning · Derwing and Munro (2015), Pronunciation Fundamentals · Levis (2005), TESOL Quarterly

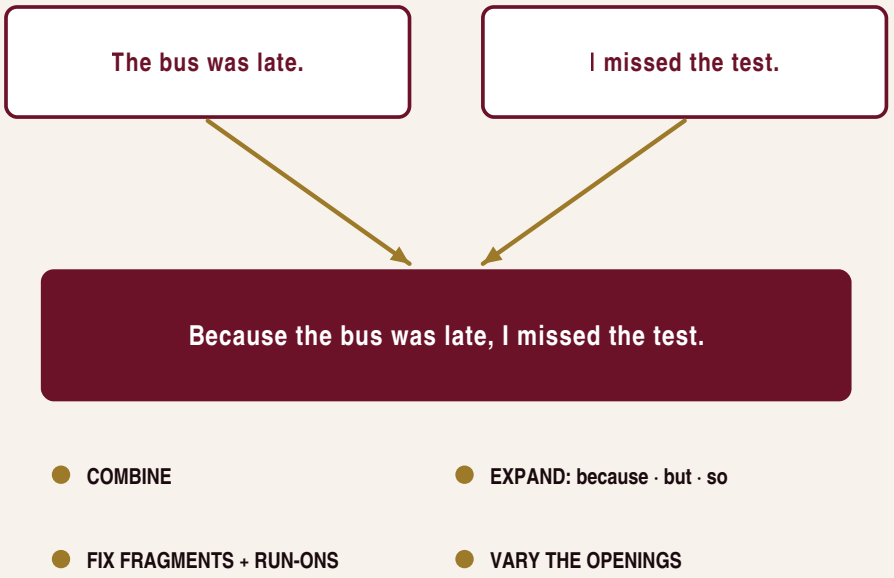
OUTPUT

Sentences First

Good writing is built one sentence at a time.

EN-14

PLAY CALL



FORMATION *Two short sentences become one strong one.*

SCOREBOARD

No fragments or run-ons in the final draft of each piece.

FILM Graham and Perin (2007), Writing Next · Hochman and Wexler (2017), The Writing Revolution

SITUATION

Rungs 2–5, a few minutes in every writing lesson.

THE PLAY

1. Combine: “The bus was late. I missed the test.” becomes “Because the bus was late, I missed the test.”
2. Expand with because, but and so: “Plants need light because ___.”, “Plants need light, but ___.”
3. Fix fragments and run-ons in the student’s own sentences.
4. Vary sentence openings in every paragraph.

COACHING POINTS

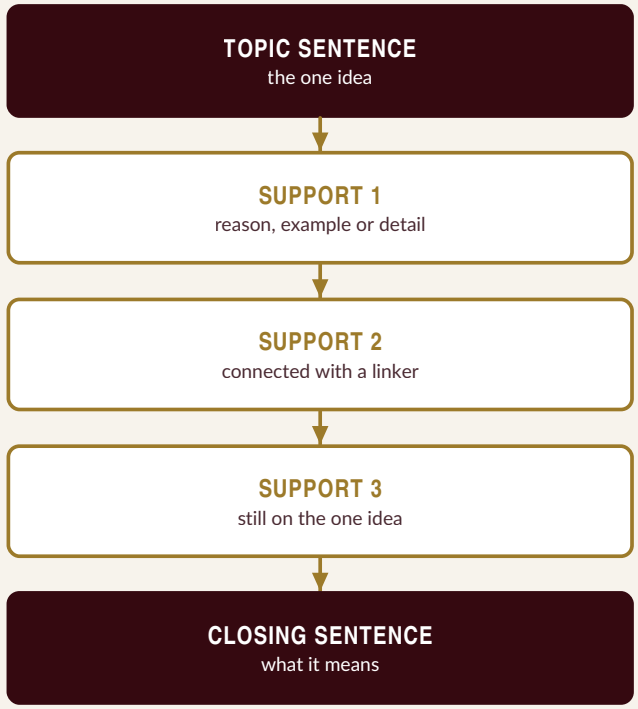
Sentence-combining is one of the writing approaches with the strongest research support. Students who control sentences write better paragraphs, and better paragraphs make better essays.

The Paragraph

Topic, support, close.

EN-15

PLAY CALL



Plan it as notes first. Revise once before it counts.

FORMATION *One idea, proved, then closed.*

SCOREBOARD

Every paragraph has a clear topic sentence and support that stays on it.

FILM Hochman and Wexler (2017), The Writing Revolution

SITUATION

Rungs 2–4, until it is automatic.

THE PLAY

1. Plan before writing: the one idea, then three supporting points as notes, not sentences.
2. Topic sentence: the one idea, clearly.
3. Support: three sentences with reasons, examples or details, each connected with a linker.
4. Closing sentence: what it means, not a repeat.
5. Revise once from feedback before it counts.

COACHING POINTS

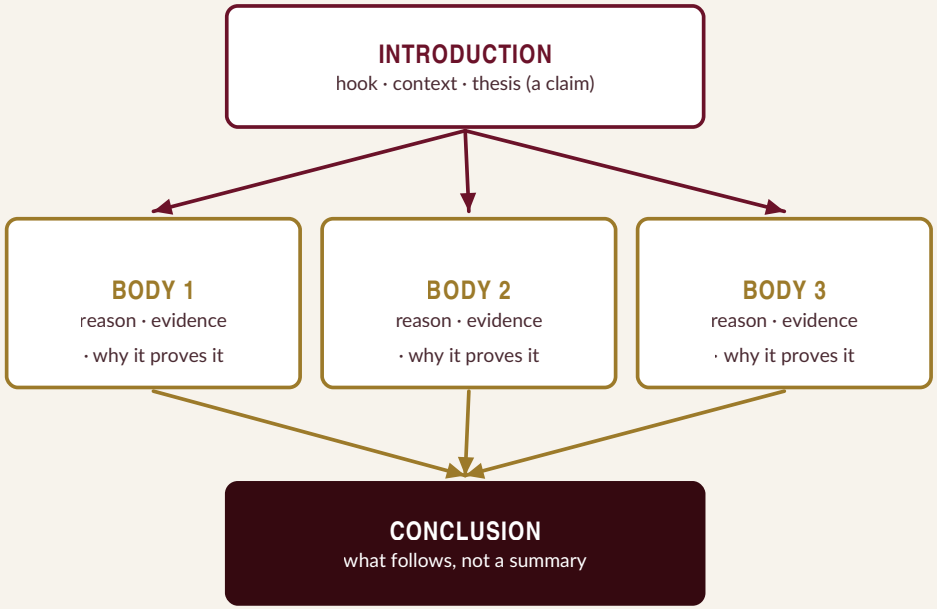
The paragraph is the unit of English writing. Once a student can build one reliably, every longer form (the email, the essay, the application) is paragraphs in a row.

The Essay

A claim, proved in paragraphs.

EN-16

PLAY CALL



FORMATION *Introduction, body paragraphs, conclusion.*

SCOREBOARD

One complete, revised essay every two weeks at Rungs 5–6.

FILM Graham and Perin (2007), Writing Next · The Admissions Playbook (BOPP)

SITUATION

Rungs 4–6, a full piece every two weeks.

THE PLAY

1. Introduction: hook, context, and a thesis that makes a claim someone could disagree with.
2. Body: one paragraph per reason, each with evidence and an explanation of why it proves the claim.
3. Conclusion: what follows from the argument, not a summary of it.
4. Draft, get feedback, revise. A piece isn't finished until it's been revised once.
5. Every few weeks, write one under time for exam practice.

COACHING POINTS

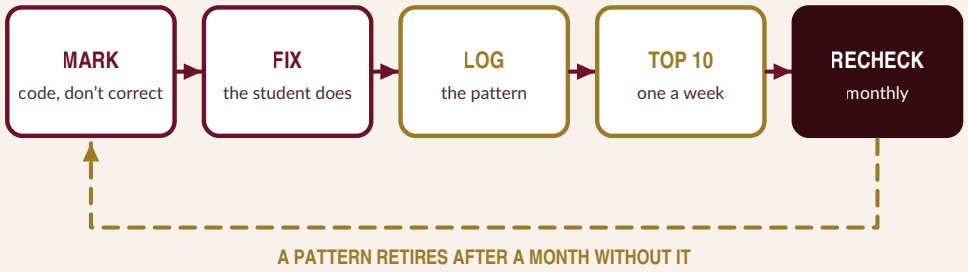
The essay is where reading, thinking and language come together, and it is what schools, scholarships and exams test. Feedback on drafts, not grades on finals, is what improves it.

Grammar That Sticks

Teach the errors the student actually makes.

EN-17

PLAY CALL



T tense · A article · SV agreement · WO word order

FORMATION *Mark, fix, log, recheck.*

SCOREBOARD

Top-10 error patterns cut by at least half each rung.

FILM Ferris (2011), Treatment of Error in Second Language Student Writing

SITUATION

Every piece of writing and every recorded talk.

THE PLAY

1. Mark errors with a code (T for tense, A for article, SV for agreement, WO for word order) instead of correcting them.
2. The student fixes them, then logs each pattern in an error log.
3. Keep a personal top-10 list of the most frequent patterns, and teach one per week in the session (EN-4) from the matching Lesson Book page.
4. Recheck the top 10 at every monthly check; retire a pattern after a month without it.

COACHING POINTS

Fixing every error teaches nothing; fixing a few patterns the student owns teaches a lot. Students who correct their own coded errors learn the rule; students who copy corrections learn to copy.

Academic Reading + Notes

Read and listen like a university student.

EN-18

PLAY CALL



Cover the notes; answer the cues. That's the review.

FORMATION *Cues, notes, summary.*

SCOREBOARD

A usable summary from every academic text and lecture.

FILM Pauk, How to Study in College (Cornell notes) · Coxhead (2000), Academic Word List

SITUATION

Rungs 5–6: textbooks, articles and lectures.

THE PLAY

1. Survey the text or lecture topic first, and write two questions to answer.
2. Take Cornell notes: notes on the right, key words and questions on the left, a summary at the bottom.
3. After reading or listening, write a three-sentence summary in the student's own words.
4. Review notes by covering the right column and answering the questions on the left.

COACHING POINTS

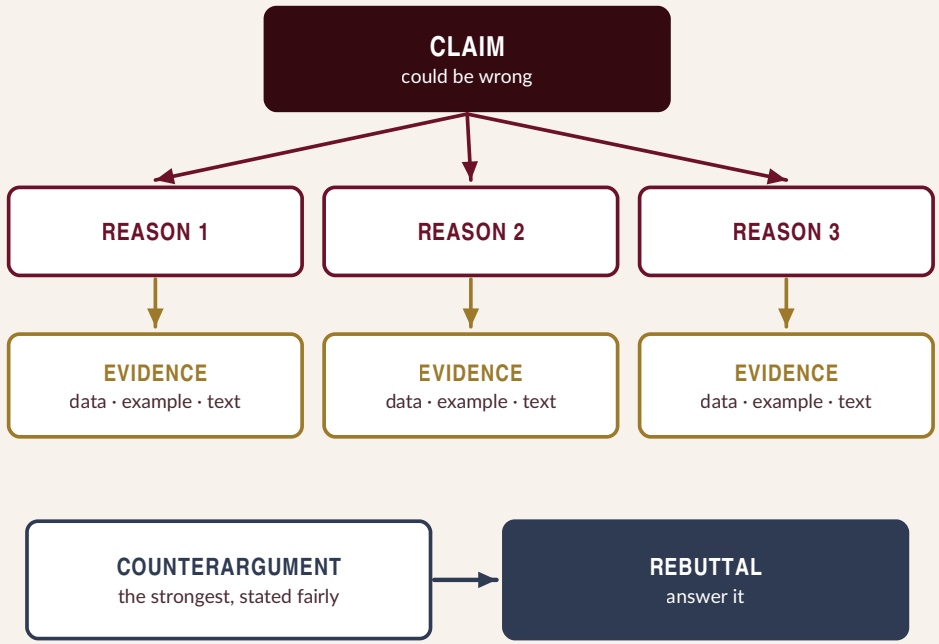
International schools and universities assume students can learn from English texts and lectures without help. Note-taking makes that skill visible and teachable.

Argument + Evidence

Claim, reason, evidence, answer the other side.

EN-19

PLAY CALL



FORMATION *Claim, reasons, evidence, counterargument, rebuttal.*

SCOREBOARD

Every argument includes evidence and a fair counterargument.

FILM Graham and Perin (2007)

SITUATION

Rungs 5–6, in writing and speaking.

THE PLAY

1. Make a claim that could be wrong.
2. Give two or three reasons, each supported by evidence: data, an example, an expert, a text.
3. Explain how the evidence proves the reason; evidence doesn't speak for itself.
4. State the strongest counterargument fairly, then answer it.

COACHING POINTS

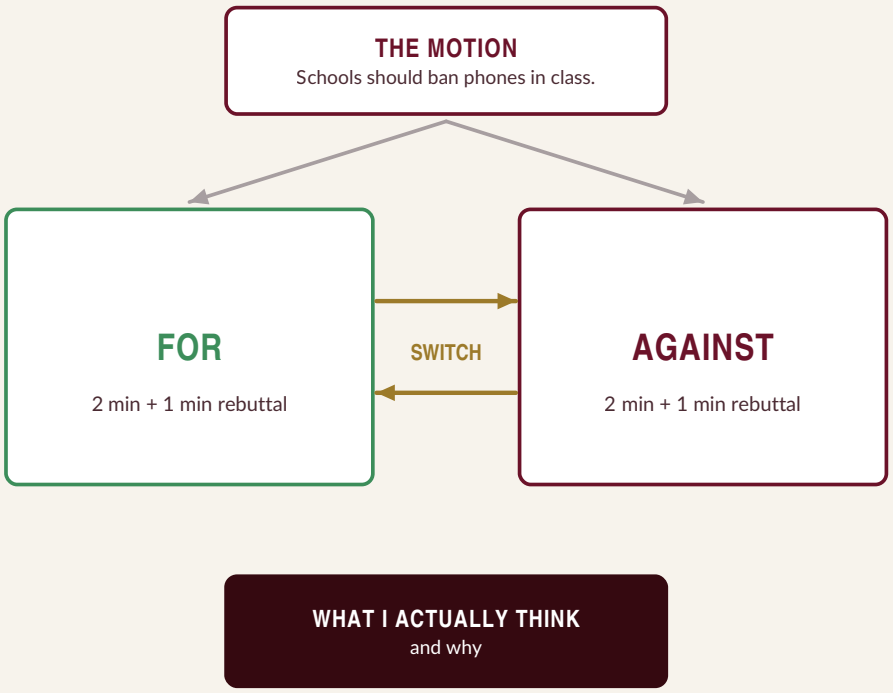
Persuasion is the skill the top rungs build, and the one exams and admissions readers reward. Students from systems that reward memorization often need explicit permission to disagree.

Debate-Style Thinking

Argue both sides before choosing one.

EN-20

PLAY CALL



FORMATION *For, against, switch sides.*

SCOREBOARD

One debate round a week at Rung 6, both sides argued.

FILM Rules of the Game

SITUATION

Rung 6 weekly; Rung 5 monthly.

THE PLAY

1. Give a motion: “Schools should ban phones in class.”
2. Prepare both sides for ten minutes; argue the side assigned by a coin toss.
3. Each speaker gets two minutes; then one minute to rebut.
4. Switch sides and repeat; finish with what the student actually believes and why.

COACHING POINTS

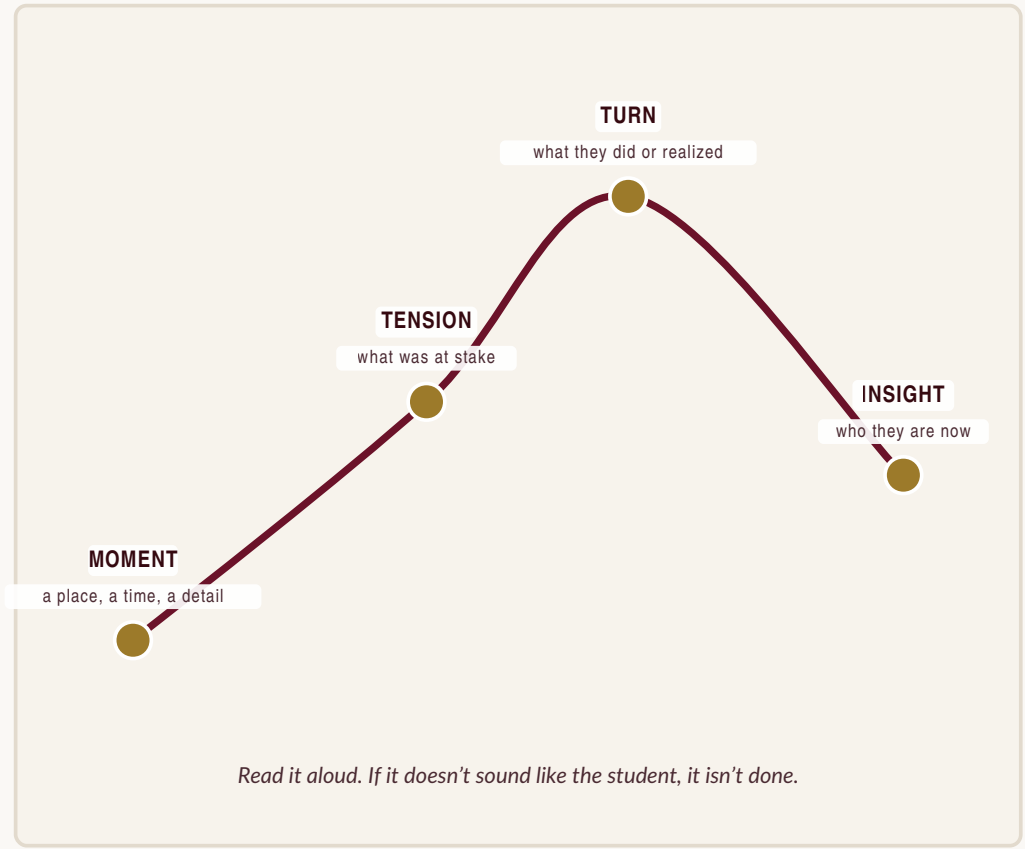
Arguing a side you don’t hold forces you to understand it. That is what makes an argument strong, and what makes a speaker calm under questions in interviews and seminars.

Story + Voice

A moment, a turn, an insight.

EN-21

PLAY CALL



FORMATION *Moment, tension, turn, insight.*

SCOREBOARD

A personal narrative that sounds like the student, read aloud and approved by them.

FILM The Admissions Playbook, The Essays

SITUATION

Rung 6, and Rung 5 students preparing applications.

THE PLAY

1. Start in a specific moment: a place, a time, a detail.
2. Build tension: what was at stake, what went wrong or was uncertain.
3. Show the turn: what the student did, decided or realized.
4. Close with the insight: what changed, and what it says about who they are.
5. Read it aloud. If it doesn't sound like the student, it isn't done.

COACHING POINTS

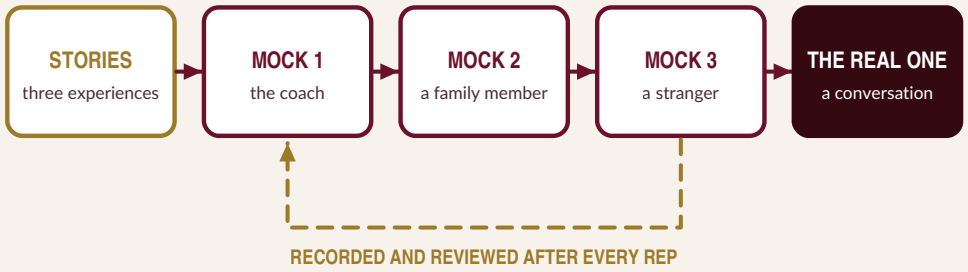
Personal storytelling is the bridge from English to admissions. The student's voice in English should sound like the student, not like a template or a translation.

The Interview

Practiced until it feels like a conversation.

EN-22

PLAY CALL



Stories, not scripts. Point, reason, example, point.

FORMATION *Stories, three recorded mocks, the real one.*

SCOREBOARD

Three recorded mock interviews before every real one.

FILM The Admissions Playbook, Interviews (ST-15)

SITUATION

Rungs 4–6 before school, scholarship and university interviews, and before presentations.

THE PLAY

1. Prepare stories, not scripts: three experiences that show who the student is.
2. Practice answering common questions with the structured talk (point, reason, example, point).
3. Run three mock interviews (coach, a family member, a stranger), recorded and reviewed.
4. Practice asking good questions back.

COACHING POINTS

Interviewers listen for a person, not perfect grammar. Practice turns a frozen student into one who can talk about themselves comfortably in English.

Test Day

The right exam, at the right level, at the right time.

EN-23

PLAY CALL

RUNGS 1–2	Pre A1 Starters · A1 Movers · A2 Flyers
RUNG 3	A2 Key → B1 Preliminary for Schools
RUNG 4 · B1	B1 Preliminary · IELTS about 4.0–5.0
RUNG 5 · B2	B2 First · IELTS 5.5–6.5 · TOEFL 4–4.5 · DET 100–125
RUNG 6 · C1	C1 Advanced · IELTS 7.0+ · TOEFL 5–5.5 · DET 130+

Book it when practice scores meet the target. Check what each school accepts.

FORMATION *Rung to exam band.*

SCOREBOARD

Every exam booked with practice scores at or above the target.

SITUATION

Any rung, when a school, scholarship or university asks for a score.

THE PLAY

1. Find out exactly which exams and scores the target schools accept.
2. Match the exam to the rung: Cambridge young learners at Rungs 1–2; A2 Key and B1 Preliminary at Rungs 3–4; IELTS, TOEFL iBT, Duolingo or B2 First and C1 Advanced at Rungs 5–6.
3. Practice the format with official free sample tests, timed, in the last 4–6 weeks.
4. Book the test only when practice scores are at or above the target.

COACHING POINTS

An exam taken too early wastes money and confidence. The ladder builds the English; the format practice is the last mile.

FILM ETS, TOEFL iBT scores (1–6 scale from January 2026) · IELTS and the CEFR (ielts.org) · Duolingo English Test CEFR alignment · Cambridge English Qualifications

Parents Without English

You don't need English to raise an English speaker.

EN-24

PLAY CALL

1. **A TIME + A PLACE**
   same time every day
2. **"TELL ME THE STORY"**
   in your home language
3. **CHECK THE LOG**
   not the English
4. **CELEBRATE STREAKS**
   and finished books
5. **ONE CALL A MONTH**
   with the coach

No English required. The routine does the teaching.

FORMATION *Five things any parent can do.*

SCOREBOARD

Five or more practice days a week, confirmed by the family.

FILM Cummins (1979), Review of Educational Research

SITUATION

Every family, especially parents who don't speak English.

THE PLAY

1. Protect a daily time and a quiet place for English practice, the same time every day.
2. Ask the child to retell the day's book in your home language. If they can, they understood it.
3. Check the log, not the English: did they read, listen and review words today?
4. Celebrate streaks and finished books, not test scores.
5. If there is a teacher or coach, talk with them once a month, with an interpreter if needed.

COACHING POINTS

Parents are the most important part of the routine, and the routine does the teaching. A parent who can't check the grammar can still check the habit, and that matters more.

The Self-Taught Track

A phone, 45 minutes and the ladder.

EN-25

PLAY CALL



Weekly: one 4/3/2 to a timer, one paragraph.

Monthly: this month's recording next to last month's.

FORMATION *Ten, twenty, ten, five.*

SCOREBOARD

Forty-five minutes a day, five days a week, logged.

FILM Nation (2007), the four strands · StoryWeaver (Pratham Books, CC BY 4.0) · Extensive Reading Foundation

SITUATION

Any student without a coach or a class, and any student between sessions.

THE PLAY

1. Place yourself with the can-do lists on the rung pages; start one rung lower if unsure.
2. Every day: 10 minutes of word cards, 20 minutes of a graded book, 10 minutes of listening, 5 minutes of speaking aloud and recording yourself.
3. Every week: one 4/3/2 to a timer and one paragraph or journal entry.
4. Every month: compare this month's recording and writing with last month's.
5. Find a practice partner: a classmate, a sibling, an online study group run by a school or library.

COACHING POINTS

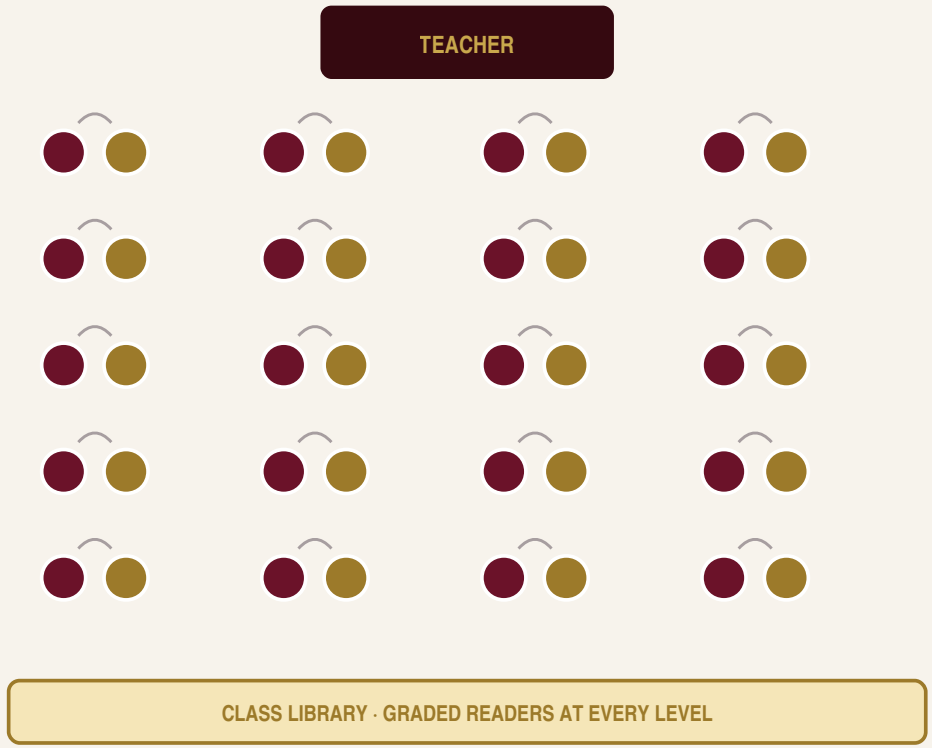
Most of the curriculum is practice the student can do alone. Coaching speeds things up and catches errors, but the ladder works without it, and it costs nothing.

The Classroom

Forty students, all of them talking.

EN-26

PLAY CALL



Forty students, twenty pairs: everyone speaks every lesson.

FORMATION *Pairs, a class library, a weekly rhythm.*

SCOREBOARD

Every student speaks in every lesson; class monthly checks shared with families.

FILM Nation (2007), the four strands · Day and Bamford (1998)

SITUATION

Schools and programs running the curriculum with whole classes.

THE PLAY

1. Place students by rung, not grade, and group by rung where possible.
2. Build a class library of graded readers at every level; ten minutes of silent reading every lesson.
3. Pair work by default: 4/3/2 in rotating pairs, peer retelling, partner dictation, so every student speaks every lesson.
4. Use the same session shape (EN-4) and monthly checks (EN-28) for the whole class.
5. Give every teacher this playbook and the rung pages, and meet once a month to compare checks.

COACHING POINTS

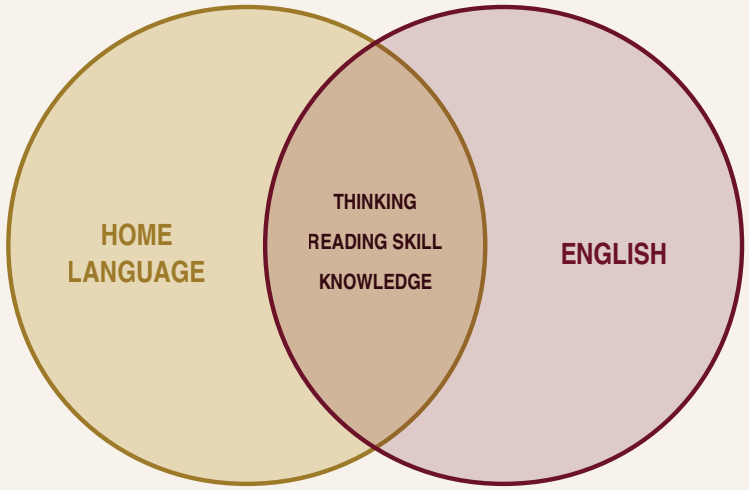
In a class of forty, the teacher can't talk to every student, but every student can talk to a partner. Pair work multiplies speaking time by twenty.

Keep the Home Language

Two languages, one brain.

EN-27

PLAY CALL



Skills built in one language transfer to the other.

Bilingual is the goal.

FORMATION *Home language and English share one foundation.*

SCOREBOARD

Home-language reading continues at home for every student.

SITUATION

Every student, every rung.

THE PLAY

1. Keep reading and talking in the home language at home. Don't switch the family to English.
2. Use the home language as a tool: retelling, explaining a hard idea, checking understanding.
3. Connect what students already know in their home language to English (topics, ideas, reading skills).
4. Treat bilingualism as the goal and say so to the student. It is an advantage, not a problem.

COACHING POINTS

Research on bilingual children finds that reading and thinking skills built in one language transfer to the other. A strong home language makes a stronger English learner, and keeps the child connected to family and culture.

FILM Cummins (1979, 1981), linguistic interdependence · August and Shanahan, eds. (2006)

The Monthly Check

Same four checks every month.

EN-28

PLAY CALL



Last month's recording next to this month's, shared with the family.

FORMATION *Recording, writing, words, books.*

SCOREBOARD

Every check shared with the family within a week.

FILM Council of Europe, CEFR Companion Volume (2020)

SITUATION

Weeks 4, 8 and 12 of every season.

THE PLAY

1. Speaking: a two-minute recording on a standard prompt for the rung.
2. Writing: a timed piece on a standard prompt.
3. Words: a quick check against the rung's word target.
4. Reading: books and minutes from the log.
5. Compare with last month, side by side, and share it with the student and family.

COACHING POINTS

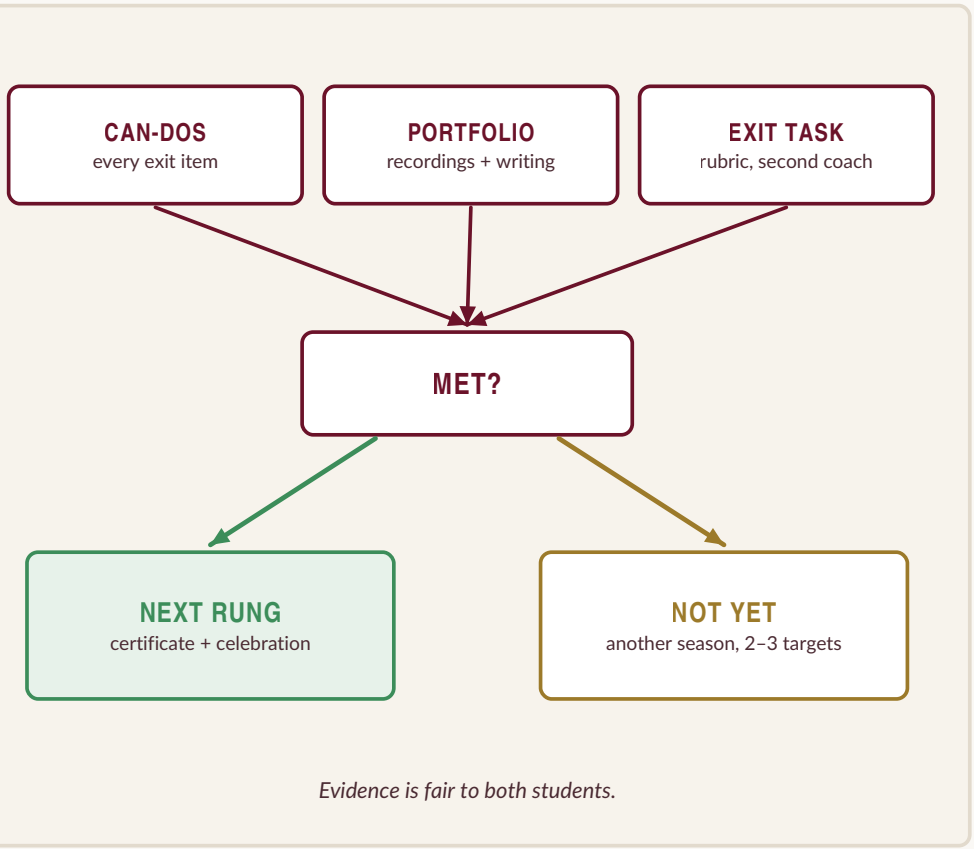
Students don't notice their own progress because it happens slowly. Last month's recording next to this month's is the most motivating thing in the curriculum.

Rung Exit

Move up on evidence, not on the calendar.

EN-29

PLAY CALL



FORMATION *Can-dos, portfolio, exit task.*

SCOREBOARD

Every rung exit decided on the can-do evidence.

FILM Council of Europe, CEFR Companion Volume (2020) · The Admissions Playbook, Green Light standard

SITUATION

Weeks 12–16 of a season.

THE PLAY

1. Check every exit can-do on the rung page against recordings and writing from the portfolio.
2. Run the rung's exit task, scored with the rung rubric by a second teacher or coach where possible.
3. Pass: celebrate, mark the rung complete, and plan the next rung.
4. Not yet: name the two or three can-dos that are missing and run another season aimed at them.

COACHING POINTS

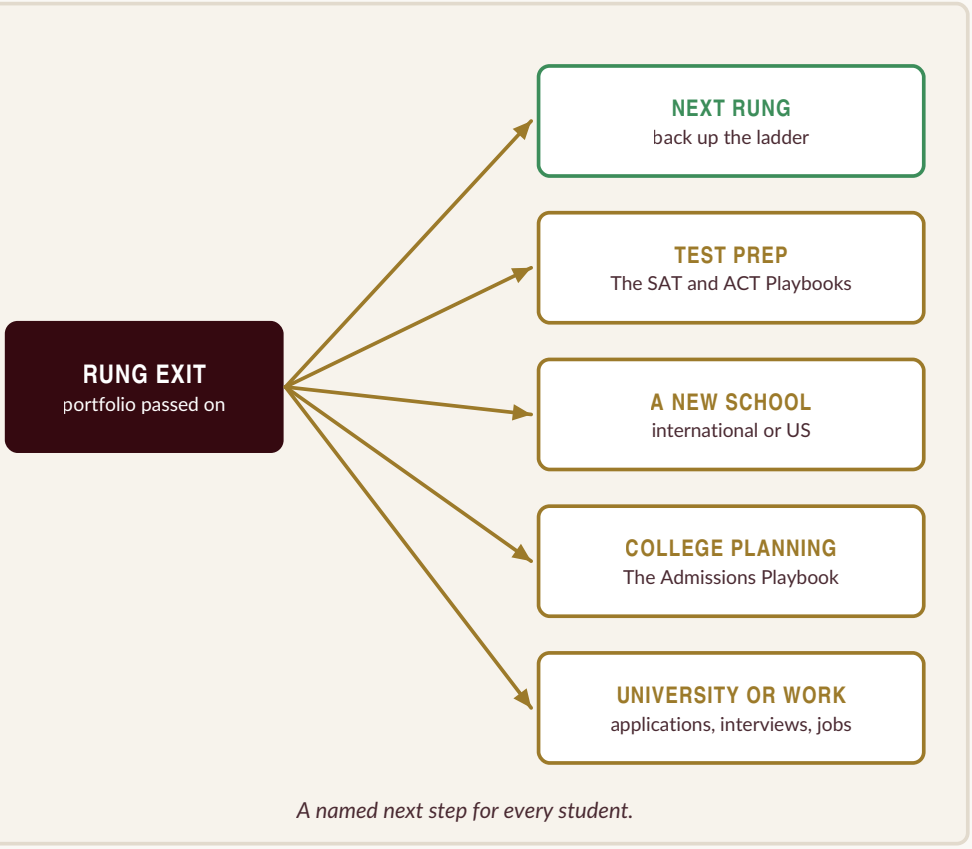
A student pushed up before they're ready starts the next rung behind. A student held back without a reason loses heart. Evidence is fair to both.

The Hand-Off

English is the beginning, not the end.

EN-30

PLAY CALL



A named next step for every student.

FORMATION *Ladder to what comes next.*

SCOREBOARD

Every graduating student leaves with a named next step.

FILM The SAT Playbook · The ACT Playbook · The Admissions Playbook

SITUATION

After any rung exit, and whenever a family's goal changes.

THE PLAY

1. Ask what the English is for now: a school, an exam, a university, a job.
2. Test prep for the SAT or ACT when the student is at Rung 5 or above (The SAT Playbook, The ACT Playbook, both free).
3. School and college planning for students aiming at US or international schools (The Admissions Playbook, free).
4. College applications in grade 12, with Story + Voice (EN-21) already done.

COACHING POINTS

English is what makes the next step possible. Plan the hand-off: carry the portfolio, the recordings and the writing into whatever comes next.



We don't just get students in.
We build who they become.

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