

MASARYK UNIVERSITY
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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

**BENEFIT ASSESSMENT OF A SELF-DESIGNED
COURSEBOOK**

DIPLOMA THESIS

BRNO 2020

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Declaration

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Bc. Nikola Chaloupková

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Bibliography

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Annotation

The diploma thesis titled “Benefit Assessment of a Self-Designed Coursebook” deals with the matter of self-designed coursebooks in a language school environment and whether such material may provide any benefits compared to a commercially published coursebooks. The thesis analyses and compares aspects of two coursebooks based on a list of set criteria with the aim to determine whether designing own material is worth it. The theoretical part focuses on teaching materials, within which textbooks are highlighted, and language schools, both in a general and more specific sense, while the empirical part provides the reader with the research, detailed with the coursebooks' descriptions, the analysis itself and the results. The methods used in the thesis include interviews with directors of studies of various language schools about the coursebooks they use and their policy on them, a questionnaire conducted with a foreign language school about their self-designed coursebook, and analysis of the two coursebooks based on set criteria and their comparison.

Key words

teaching materials, coursebooks, textbooks, self-designed coursebook, commercially published coursebook, benefits of a self-designed coursebook, assessment, benefit assessment, language schools, coursebook analysis, selecting a coursebook, evaluating a coursebook

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Anotace

Diplomová práce s názvem „Zhodnocení výhod vlastně-vytvořené učebnice“ se zabývá tématem vlastně-vytvořených učebnic v prostředí jazykových škol, a zda takový materiál může poskytnout určité výhody v porovnání s komerčně vydávanými učebnicemi. Tato práce analyzuje a porovnává aspekty dvou učebnic na základě vybraných kritérií s cílem zjistit, zda vytváření vlastní učebnice stojí za to úsilí. Teoretická část práce se zabývá výukovým materiálem obecně, později se zaměřuje konkrétně na učebnice, a jazykovými školami z obecného i více specifického hlediska. Empirická část nabízí samotný výzkum, konkrétně s popisem vybraných učebnic, analýzou a výsledky. Metody, které byly v práci využity, zahrnují rozhovor s jazykovými školami o učebnicích, které využívají a jejich přístup k nim, dotazník se zahraniční jazykovou školou o jejich vlastně-vytvořené učebnici, a analýza dvou učebnic na základě daných kritérií s jejich následnou komparací.

Klíčová slova

výukové materiály, učebnice, vlastní učebnice, komerčně vydávaná učebnice, výhody vlastně-vytvořené učebnice, zhodnocení, zhodnocení výhod, jazykové školy, analýza učebnice, výběr učebnice, hodnocení učebnice

Table of Contents

Introduction	9
THEORETICAL PART	11
1. Teaching materials.....	11
1.1. Categories	11
1.2. Benefits and importance of use	12
1.3. Creating materials.....	13
2. Textbooks.....	15
2.1. Advantages and limitations of textbooks.....	16
2.2. Selecting and evaluating textbooks	18
2.2.1. Evaluating individual sections.....	19
3. Language schools	22
4. Interviews.....	25
4.1. The language schools.....	26
4.2. Transcripts of the interviews	29
5. Questionnaire	39
5.1. The language school	40
5.2. Analysis of the questionnaire	41
EMPIRICAL PART.....	45
6. The comparison of the chosen coursebooks.....	46
6.1. General description.....	46
6.2. Choosing the units	52
6.3. Criteria for analysis	53
6.4. Analysis of the coursebooks in comparison	58
6.4.1. General	59
Organisation	59
Visuals	62
Topics/Subject content	63
Culture/Social values.....	65
Summary.....	68
6.4.2. Language content	69
General	69
Grammar.....	72
Vocabulary	76

Phonology.....	80
Discourse	83
Varieties of English	85
Summary.....	86
6.4.3. Language skills.....	88
General	88
Listening.....	93
Speaking	96
Reading.....	99
Writing.....	103
Summary.....	107
Summary of language content and language skills in figures	108
6.4.4. Methodology	111
Summary.....	115
6.5. Summary.....	115
Conclusion.....	117
Bibliography	119
Appendices	123

MOTTO

“One child,

one teacher,

one book,

and one pen

can change the world”

- Malala Yousafzai

Introduction

Whether or not to use coursebooks has been a widely discussed topic, often causing quite a lot of controversy with differing opinions. There are teachers and experts alike who are for using coursebooks, highlighting the advantages a bound pile of sheets of paper embodies. On the other hand, there are those who are against coursebooks, claiming it takes away the creativity of a teacher. Even though the thesis briefly touches upon both sides of this story, it is not the primary goal of the thesis. The thesis deals with the matter of self-designed coursebooks in the environment of language schools. Ultimately, if one is not satisfied with the commercially published materials, what is stopping them from creating their own? The question then is whether such materials truly offer any valuable advantages that it would be worth entering the lengthy and time-consuming process of creating one, which introduces the thesis's aim as it is to uncover whether self-designed coursebooks offer any benefits compared to the commercially published ones. Comparing the self-designed material with a commercially published one deemed appropriate as the side-by-side comparison would provide the desired effect of knowing the content of both and thus being able to better recognise the benefits and limitations.

The idea of the topic was born during my study stay at a language school in Australia, which used their own coursebook. Since I had never encountered one before, I was immediately intrigued. The instant question that popped into my mind was whether the process was worth it and what it really meant to create one's own material.

The thesis consists of two parts, a theoretical and empirical one. The theoretical part is comprised of five chapters. The first three chapters introduce teaching materials in general, then focus more narrowly on textbooks and their benefits and limitations, as well as the process of choosing and evaluating textbooks. The third chapter introduces language schools in a general sense. The following two chapters provide a theoretical basis for the empirical part, as they focus on introducing six language schools in the Czech Republic which use commercially published coursebooks and one foreign language school which uses a self-designed coursebook. The fourth chapter targets the language schools in the Czech Republic, which are introduced in terms of their history and the courses they offer. The chapter was written with the help of interviews which had been conducted face-to-face with directors of studies of the schools and provided an insight into what coursebooks the school used, how the coursebooks were worked with and possibly what their opinion on self-designed coursebooks was. The fifth chapter is dedicated to the foreign language school which uses the self-designed coursebook. It is again introduced in terms of its history and the courses, furthermore it mentions the system within

which the coursebook functions. The chapter was written with the help of a questionnaire which had been sent to the school in Australia and the local director kindly answered questions concerned with the reasons for creating their own coursebook. It also touches upon the subject of the process, as well as the maintaining of the coursebook, and how the coursebook is worked with.

The empirical part consists solely of the analysis and comparison of the two coursebooks. The commercially published one was chosen as a representative based on the interviews and its title is *English File*, and the self-designed one, *K+ notes*. The analysis was conducted with the help of set criteria and questions about the language content, language skills, methodology and the more general aspects, such as organisation, visuals, culture and topics. This part consists of one chapter titled “The Comparison of the chosen coursebooks”. The chapter is comprised of various sub-chapters which further specify the topic, such as the general introduction of the two coursebooks, the process of choosing the units to compare and analyse, the criteria for analysis and the actual analysis, which helped determine whether the self-designed coursebook offers any benefits.

THEORETICAL PART

1. Teaching materials

The following chapter of the thesis deals with the issue of teaching materials, in terms of teaching aids and instructional materials. In the chapter, the materials are categorised and their benefits are mentioned, as well as the process of developing own teaching materials and why that is sometimes the case. Although the chapter provides a general overview of the different kinds of materials, the thesis is more concerned with textbooks, which are dealt with in the upcoming chapter.

1.1.Categories

Education, as Dostál (2008)¹ claims, is a complex process of interaction between an educator and educatee. This process, however, can be made easier and more effective by using teaching materials, if they are correctly incorporated. The effectiveness is often justified by the educatees having a real object to manipulate with, not just relying on visual perception, thus combining theory and practice (p. 7).

Dostál (2008) further mentions that the more general term is didactive means, which are all materials the teacher can use for achieving the set learning goals. These didactive means are further specified and categorised in the following table (p. 16):

DIDACTIVE MEANS	
IMMATERIAL MEANS	MATERIAL MEANS
teaching methods	teaching aids
organizational forms	didactive devices
didactive principles	school facilities
pedagogical mastery	equipment of the educator and educatee

Table 1: Didactive means (source: Dostál, 2008, p. 16)

With the focus of the thesis being teaching aids and textbooks in particular, Dostál (2008) further specifies the teaching aids in another table (p. 19):

¹ All quotes from “Dostál (2008)” were translated by the author.

TEACHING AIDS	
original objects	audio-visual aids
models	literary aids
visual aids	PC programmes and the Internet
auditory aids	other special aids

Table 2: Teaching aids (source: Dostál, 2008, p. 19)

Dostál (2008) then continues to define and specify what materials belong to each category. Within the original objects, he lists made products, examples of materials, natural products, but also natural phenomena. Models are defined as objects, static or dynamic, picturing an object or a principle. Visual aids include photos, pictures, drawings or maps, and auditory aids consist of music, sounds, speeches or broadcast. Audio-visual aids are TV programmes or documentaries. Within literary aids he mentions textbooks, workbooks and worklists, or academic literature. Within the special aids he includes sets for experiments and trainers (p. 18).

1.2. Benefits and importance of use

When it comes to the benefits teaching materials provide, Patel and Jain (2008) mention that they first and foremost prevent indiscipline and monotony. Some of the aids are designed in a way that the learners need to fully engage with more than one sensory organ, thus making the learning long-lasting. Using teaching materials is beneficial not only for the learners, as the materials help them understand the issue at hand better, but they are helpful for the teachers as well as they save time and energy when explaining the issue (p. 67).

Kapur (2019) adds other benefits of teaching materials, such as motivating the learners through usage of various materials, developing knowledge and skills not only of the learners but the teacher as well. She further claims that engaging with teaching aids helps the learners with effective understanding of the concepts and long-term “retention of information” (p. 3).

While these are the overall benefits of teaching materials, Amadioha (2009) focused more on the actual importance of using any teaching materials. He claims that using teaching materials supports the teacher's methodology which should be backed up by ideas of experts. As was mentioned before that using teaching materials make leaning more permanent, Amadioha (2009) agrees while adding that it also reduces any meaningless working environment. He continues with claiming that teaching materials make the learning

more interesting as well, thus sparking motivation in the learners, which may lead to their own self-activity. He finishes by stating that the use of these materials “exposes the learners to primary experiences and this enriches learning” (p. 63).

1.3. Creating materials

Kapur (2019) merges also into the development of materials, which she describes in a three-step process. The first is called “collection” and is concerned with collecting various materials, which are later analysed based on the aspects needed for the intended materials, such as “ethnicity, religion, gender, age, race, educational qualifications, skills, socio-economic background”, etc. Secondly, the next step is “preparation”, which takes into consideration the background of the learners who the materials are intended for, for instance their level, the subject, concepts, learning abilities or academic goals. The third step is called “maintenance”, which deals with the need to maintain the designed materials in a good condition for future use, such as the way to store them or how to carefully use them (pp. 10 - 12).

However, Hutchinson and Water (1987) cited in Marjanovikj-Apostolovski (2019) claim that designing own teaching materials should be the last option for teachers. On the other hand, Basturkmen and Bocanegra-Valle (2018) cited in the same source counter-argue that many teachers are actually left with having to design their own materials as the “commercially published” ones are not suitable for their group of learners, especially if the group is specially focused (p. 160).

The problem with commercially published coursebooks is, that even though they are designed by experts, “competent and experienced professionals”, these professionals try to avoid writing materials if the market is limited, as it would probably increase the price of the material. On the other hand, writing and designing own materials provides an opportunity for the institution to be different, thus building and enhancing their reputation. These materials can have a wide range of possible terms, such as “in-house materials, tailor-made materials, locally produced materials, self-designed materials, internal materials, and home-made or home-grown materials” (Marjanovikj-Apostolovski, 2019, pp. 161 - 162).

As was suggested above, developing own materials is a complex process. Marjanovikj-Apostolovski (2019) recommends starting by reviewing already existing and available materials, which can be, if needed, adapted based on the specific criteria. The long-term issue with own materials is the need to review them after a certain period of time and alter them based on the current trends, issues, concepts, etc. Furthermore, even if there

are suitable materials, some teachers may still feel the need to provide additional ones for the learners as an extra material for practice (p. 162).

Tomlinson (1998) cited in Marjanovikj-Apostolovski (2019) gives a basic framework for developing materials. He lists that in order for the material writing to be effective, the learners and their needs are to be thoroughly understood. Additionally, the teachers should have at least a basic knowledge about material writing. Thirdly, creating a self-designed material also helps with developing criteria for evaluation of already published materials, thus developing professionally. And lastly, in order for the developing of the material to be successful, the material needs to be trialled and evaluated first. This trial should be conducted by the learners as they are the ones actually using the materials and their opinion and feedback should be valued (pp. 163 – 164). The feedback, not only from the learners but teachers and sponsors as well, can be conducted by questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations, etc. (Barnard and Zemach, 2003, cited in Marjanovikj-Apostolovski, 2019, p. 170). Marjanovikj-Apostolovski (2019) ends her article by stating that developing own materials is very time-consuming and enough time should be devoted to it beforehand, as well as mentioning that the process of development any new material is based on “trial and error” (p. 176).

Harmer (2007) also provides an insight into the development of own materials as a solution for not being satisfied with the existing textbooks. He states that developing own materials is an “attractive approach” as it can focus directly on the needs of the particular group, work closely with their motivation, as well as making the programme more dynamic and varied. He however warns that in order to be able to create successful self-designed materials, the teacher needs to be aware of the various materials and have access to them, such as workbooks, videos, magazines, novels, etc. He adds that the teacher would need to create a wide variety of materials and would need to have a great knowledge of and confidence in when to use what, which results in more time-consuming and complicated lesson-planning. Another risk according to him is the incoherence of the collected materials. What he suggests instead is using the textbook as a “springboard” for deciding for what situations and how to use it, rather than strictly following it to the letter as a manual (p. 182).

2. Textbooks

The following chapter provides a closer insight into the issue of textbooks. At first it gives a general outline of what a textbook is, the different kinds and roles a textbook can offer. It deals with their advantages as well as limitations, and last but not least it covers the topic of selecting and evaluating textbooks.

Richards (2001) states that textbooks are a crucial part of any language programme. He claims that textbooks are the main sources of language input for the learners as well as the main component of language practice. Apart from providing the content of the lesson, they balance the use of the four skills as well as the different kinds of language practice. Despite being a major source of help for the learners, as textbooks provide the most wholesome contact the learners have with the language, textbooks offer a source of support for teachers as well, mainly for the not yet experienced ones. Textbooks help with planning as well as conducting of the lessons (p. 1).

Grant (1987) distinguishes two major categories of textbooks, however he admits that not all textbooks can be divided into only two categories. The first type of textbook is a traditional textbook. Traditional textbooks are designed in a way that they try to provide the learners with knowledge about the language and present it more as a system. The emphasis is greatly on forms and patterns, accuracy is important and it narrowly focuses on syllabus and examinations. The biggest disadvantage is that the learners practise the language in the individual activities but they are not able to use the language in real life after completing the course. The other type of textbooks is a communicative textbook. The main aim of this type is to get the learners to communicate. Among the other characteristics are the use of authentic language, balance of all four skills, emphasis is on skills in general, group and pair work, and preference of fluency to accuracy. Grant (1987) claims that we “learn by doing” and if the aim of language is to be able to communicate, then the learners need to do just that in the lessons (pp. 12 – 15).

Cunningsworth (1995) also devotes a bit of his book to the different roles of textbooks. He states that a textbook is a source of material and activities for practice. As it provides explanations of grammar, for example, it also becomes a “reference source” not only for the said grammar but also vocabulary, pronunciation, etc. It also functions as a resource for self-study and individual work, if the textbook is designed in that way. However, textbooks can be helpful for teachers as well as they provide a general syllabus and a plethora of ideas for activities. They also function as a support for the less experienced teachers (p. 7).

The textbook industry has increased its publications with the English language gaining a global status of an international language. The goal of teaching then started to focus mainly on the ability to communicate, which until recently has been associated mainly with native speakers. However, due to globalisation, this aspect of English teaching has been changing. What remained was the lack of other nationalities, meaning English language users of another mother tongue, being presented in the textbooks. Not including, or seldom including, multilingual people has been a negative aspect of textbooks. Similarly, textbooks have been known for limiting cultural content to native English speaking countries. On the other hand, bilingual English language teachers have the advantage of including other cultures as well (Meidani and Pishghadam, 2012, pp. 84 – 86). Furthermore, bilingual teachers have the awareness of what it takes and what it is like to learn another language, which is another great benefit.

2.1. Advantages and limitations of textbooks

According to O'Neill (1982) the learners attending schools and institutions are often mixed together, coming from different backgrounds, having different goals and different level of knowledge. It is therefore difficult to pick a material that would be suitable to all their individual needs. The practical solution is to choose a material from the variety of already published textbooks (p. 104).

However, he also adds that there are many teachers, even some individuals within the teacher training process, who regard textbooks unsuitable. The reason for this is the inability to respond more precisely to the individual needs of the learners. Another issue with textbooks is the idea of using “someone else's material” and thus being uncreative and avoiding the surprise of what is coming next in the programme (O'Neill, 1982, p. 105).

Even though all of these are legitimate arguments, O'Neill (1982) states that there is usually a common basis of needs within the groups, usually identified by the need to learn the same grammatical rules and functional frameworks to be able to use the language successfully in various situations. Textbooks therefore provide the needed examples and frameworks which might be useful for the learners in the future. Another major benefit of textbooks for the learners is the option to catch up if one misses a lesson, or on the other hand be able to prepare for the lesson in advance (p. 106).

Richards (2001) provides a plethora of reasons why he considers the use of textbooks to be of advantage to teachers. He lists that textbooks provide a syllabus for the language programme, they help with standardizing instructions in a sense that learners from

different groups but same levels are provided with the same content and can thus be tested the same way, if needed. Another of his reasons is the fact that textbooks usually come in whole packs which consist of workbooks, CDs, videos or other materials making the learning and teaching more effective (p. 1).

Published textbooks also have the advantage of quality of appearance and presentation, which home-made materials may lack due to a bad quality of photocopies and may be more difficult to store and maintain. Additionally, separately distributed photocopies or sheets of paper may get easily lost. On the other hand, the pages in textbooks are already bound together and are thus easier to carry around and use anytime and anywhere (O'Neill, 1982, p. 107). Richards (2001) also commented on the quality of published materials and highlights that they have been tried and tested, which ensures that the learners are exposed to well-developed materials (p. 1).

McKay (2002) also adds other advantages of published materials, such as functioning as a map for both learners and teachers, and the teachers being able to devote their time and energy to other matters in the classroom, other than having to deal with its content. With the latter advantage agrees also Richards (2001, p. 1), and Tsiplakides (2011) who adds that the published materials save time in the preparation process (p. 759). McKay also continues with O'Neill's (1982) thought of the learners knowing what is coming in the next lesson, and adds that they thus gain a sense of safety and security in the classroom. Similarly for teachers, having a ready-made material may help them feel secure and confident in their position, especially if they are at the beginning of their teaching journey (p. 71). This is something that Richards (2001) also mentions in a sense that textbooks provide good models also for teachers whose first language is not English (p. 2).

O'Neill (1982) however admits that “no textbooks can expect to appeal to all teachers or learners at a particular level” and that is the main reason for the wide variety on the market (p. 108). Nonetheless, Tsiplakides (2011) adds that should the need to substitute or add other materials arise, textbooks should be designed in a way to allow this to happen. The adaptation of material would be used to better suit the requirements of the group of learners (p. 759).

However, even though there are many advantages and benefits of textbooks, there are also some limitations or disadvantages. Richards (2001) starts off his list with probably one of the main aspects and that is the lack of authentic language. He continues with saying the many textbooks tend to create the language in contexts specially aimed for the purposes of the textbook but omitting the real language use (p. 2). Tsiplakides (2011) called this

“unnatural scripted models of language” (p. 759). Similarly, they may not be true to the content as they represent “idealised view of the world”. This is often portrayed by avoiding controversial topics, or not presenting current and real issues. He claims that the same can be often said about cultures as the favourable point of view and representation is that of white middle-class world (Richards, 2001, p. 2). Tsiplakides (2011) adds that they can sometimes even directly portray cultural biases in terms of gender, sexism or stereotyping (p. 759).

Another of the disadvantages is that textbooks will never be able to fully respond to the needs of the learners, mainly due to their global market purpose. However, this is when adaptation and creativity of the teachers comes to play an important role. Also, if the textbooks are overused or are the sole source, they may deskill the teacher. And lastly, textbooks are often considered expensive and a financial burden for some students (Richards, 2001, p. 2).

2.2. Selecting and evaluating textbooks

Harmer (1991) mentions that when it comes to choosing a textbook for institutions, the decision is often made for them by some higher authority. This often results in the textbook being used as a syllabus, in a sense that they are supposed to cover certain amount by a certain time, and the teachers become tied to teaching in a similar style (pp. 256 – 257). He however continues by saying that a textbook should be an aid, rather than a “sacred text” (p. 258).

Cunnigsworth (1995) gives the purposes for which textbooks might be evaluated. He states that the most common purpose for evaluation is the search for a new book or if the institutions want to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their current book. The standard procedure is also to evaluate more books in comparison as it gives better insight into the material (p. 14).

When it comes to evaluation of textbooks, there are many angles that it can be looked upon and also different kinds of evaluations. Cunnigsworth (1995) mentions that it is usually the learners who expect high standards and want the textbooks to make the learning easier and enjoyable. He therefore distinguishes two main kinds of evaluation: impressionistic and in-depth. Impressionistic evaluation is characterised by the teacher flicking through the book and relying on the general impression, basically focusing on the bigger picture. This evaluation is effective if the teacher has more books to evaluate and needs to narrow it down. On the other hand, in-depth evaluation looks more closely at the

individual aspects of the book and it is analysed in greater detail. For the best results, he suggests a combination of both types and recommends using checklists (pp. 1 – 2). On the other hand, he states that the number of criteria used should not be overwhelming. According to Cunnigsworth (1995), it is also preferable to work with a group of teachers as this way promises a balance of different opinions, experiences and perceptions (pp. 5 – 6). Grant (1987) however states that the more detailed evaluation is generally less preferable for public schools as it often involves piloting the textbook and that it something public school teachers do not have time for. Hence, they have to trust their instincts (p. 121).

Cunnigsworth (1995) offers another type of evaluation and that refers to when the textbook is evaluated: pre-use, in-use and post-use evaluation. Pre-use evaluation it the most common type as it analyses the potential of the book. In-use evaluation reflects the findings discovered while working with the book, and lastly post-use evaluation is more concerned with the strengths and weaknesses, and whether it is something the teacher would use again (p. 14). Similarly, Ellis (1997) distinguishes predictive (done before using the textbook) and retrospective (done after, deciding whether the material met the expectations) evaluation (p. 36).

When it comes to evaluating a textbook, there is also another perspective that needs to be considered. Both learners' and teachers' factors are to be looked at. For learners the main aspects are age, their proficiency level in the target language, reasons for studying the language, gender, etc. For teachers the aspects to consider are language competence, methodological competence, and awareness and experience of teaching (AbdelWahab, 2013, p. 57).

Sheldon (1988) on the other hand warns that textbook evaluation can sometimes be rushed as teachers more rely on popularity of certain textbooks, rather than focusing on their personal criteria and that it is a very subjective activity. Even though checklists are often recommended by many other authors for evaluation, Sheldon (1988) claims that they might not be always useful not only because not all teachers are aware of them but mainly because the criteria may change overtime and since they are often globally published, they can never apply to all local criteria (pp. 240, 242, 245).

2.2.1. Evaluating individual sections

Evaluating the individual parts is just as important as looking at the textbook as a whole, this sub-chapter provides a brief look into what the individual sections should ideally contain.

Firstly, taking the **topics** into consideration, they should be of various kinds and should portray how the language is really used in real situations and for real purposes. By using interesting and meaningful topics, the learning process also becomes more enjoyable and it motivates the learners more. Depending on the actual content, the topics also enrich learners in a personal way and expand their experience. What is vital for the topics is also to encourage interaction among learners, in a sense of forming opinions and being able to express these opinions (Cunningsworth, 1995, pp. 86, 88).

When it comes to the language content, Cunningsworth (1995) claims that grammar, vocabulary and phonology “form the foundation of everything else” in the language. According to him, the main issue with **grammar** is distinguishing between the form and use and how much to devote to each. He claims that they need to be in balance, though. He also suggests to identify the most difficult grammar items and try to evaluate the book based on these (pp. 31, 32, 34).

When it comes to **vocabulary**, Cunningsworth (1995) states that it has been “a neglected area” of language teaching for a long time and is only now becoming more focused on. The reason given for this is the fact that there cannot be a successful communication without a knowledge of vocabulary. However, selecting vocabulary can be a complex task and most vocabulary activities can be found more in the workbook accompanying the textbook, rather than the book itself. On the other hand, textbooks usually help with developing learning strategies, even though some of the vocabulary-learning takes place outside the classroom (p. 38).

Similarly to vocabulary, **phonology** has been neglected too and only recently has been dealt with in greater extent. Cunningsworth (1995) states that focus should be put at least on the general aspects of phonology, such as weak forms, stress and rhythm, and the individual sounds. He also highlights that there should not be the need to strive for near perfection of native speakers, but it is rather more important to be aware of the problematic areas which might cause misunderstandings. He also praises recordings as a great model for the learners, and on the other hand warns against focusing on terminology (pp. 41 – 43).

The last bit is focused on **discourse**. Cunningsworth (1995) states that discourse is concerned with how the language is actually used for effective communication, in terms of cohesion, paragraphs, structure of text, participation, etc. He mentions that all textbooks provide examples of discourse, however the crucial part is how authentic these examples are (pp. 45 – 46).

When it comes to skills, however, Cunningsworth (1995) says that they focus on the “ability to operate in the language”. He highlights the need to have a balance of the skills with all of them integrated and used within the same topic, however he acknowledges that it also depends on the specific teaching situation. He suggests that with the demand rising for the language in general, the skills should be treated the same way and the activities should be longer and more complex. He also defines skills as the aspects that equip the learners to use the language (pp. 64 – 65, 85).

Cunningsworth (1995) mentions that there are two ways to conduct **listening** activities, either as a simple listening activity done through recordings, or listening together with speaking as a general oral work (e.g. role-plays or dialogues) (p. 67).

With **speaking** practice the textbooks often differ in the way how much is devoted to it, mainly in terms of the topics for discussion, or realistic interactions (such as role-plays, which are useful for practising conversations) (Cunningsworth, 1995, p. 69).

When it comes to **reading**, Cunningsworth (1995) claims that the texts should reflect the way the language is actually used. They should be interesting, authentic, well-presented, and accompanied by useful activities. He suggests that reading activities can be often linked with other skills, such as listening (if the text is recorded) or writing (if the text functions as a model work). With the texts themselves the criteria are often more specified and focus on the length, authenticity, complexity of grammar and vocabulary, vocabulary range, or if any background knowledge is needed. Topics, presentation, genre and the type of comprehension questions asked are also crucial. He distinguishes two major categories of comprehension questions, i.e. literal or surface questions, and straightforward factual questions (pp. 73, 75, 78).

Cunningsworth (1995) states that **writing** activities in textbooks are usually of a guided kind as there is an example present, which results in the learners producing a very similar piece of writing. He however highlights that various genres should be included, such as reports, notes, diary entries, making lists or filling in forms, of course related and suitable for the level. For most of them a discourse structure is essential. Another vital part of textbooks should be the ability of learners to distinguish between a spoken and written production and their individual aspects (pp. 80, 82).

3. Language schools

The following chapter deals with language schools in general. It portrays the way language schools function and the different courses they usually offer. Even though the source mainly applies to the schools in the Czech Republic, I believe that the system is fairly similar in other countries as well.

Only through the knowledge of foreign languages is it possible to improve communication and interaction between people of different mother tongues. This way also supports global mobility, understanding and cooperation, as well as overcoming stereotypes and discrimination. The goals and aspirations of language teaching and learning are to make sure that every person, in any social class, has the opportunity and devices needed for gaining language knowledge and thus being able to use that language (*RVP JŠ*, 2009, p. 6)².

The organisation of education at language schools lawfully refers to an ordinance of the Ministry of Education. However, there are aspects that the school itself is in charge of, for example in regards to what type and how many courses they open based on the interest of learners. There are various types of courses which are usually similar for all language schools, such as basic, intermediate, preparatory, conversation or special. All of these are talked about in greater detail later on in the chapter. Apart from these courses, there is also a course that focuses on having daily lessons and lasts a whole school year. This course is referred to as “after maturita exam” and offers language courses to students who for example did not manage to get into a university but wish to remain students and want to improve their language skill at the same time. The school year, organisation-wise, is similar to the one in normal primary or secondary schools. There are two terms – autumn and spring, and lessons last 45 minutes. The specifics of the individual courses then depend on the school itself but need to be written in their education document (*RVP JŠ*, 2009, p. 4).

Anyone can be admitted to study at a language school by complying with a few requirements, such as the need to submit an application, pay the fee (based on the rules of the school) and meet the established criteria of the school. It is the director who then decides whether the student is admitted or not. The education is finished after the given period has passed and can be completed with an exam (based on the level of the course) and the student is given a certificate. The one year “after maturita exam” courses are finished with a certificate of completion, which prove that the students successfully completed their studies (*RVP JŠ*, 2009, pp. 4 – 5).

² All quotes from “*RVP JŠ* (2009)” were translated by the author.

When it comes to the different courses, this next part is dedicated to a brief description of each. The basic course is concerned with achieving the language level B1 according to CEFR³. The course is divided into three separate years, with each consisting of 140 hours, thus finishing with 420 hours of English and achieving the B1 level. It is however possible to be admitted at any point throughout the three years, depending on the interest, the time options and already existing knowledge of the applicant, and technical and staffing options of the school. After completing the studies, the students receive a certificate corresponding to the B1 level. The intermediate course is fairly similar with the exception of it being aimed at more advanced students, with the entry level already being B1 and aiming to achieve B2. It consists of 280 to 315 hours but can be done in the span of two to three years (that depends on the interest of the learners, and the staffing and technical options of the school) (*RVP JŠ*, 2009, pp. 5, 9).

Another course is the preparatory course for state language exams. The hours are not strictly limited and there are more types of language exams, i.e. basic, general and special. In order to be admitted into the preparatory course for the basic exam, the student should already be at B1 level, the exam is then B2 level. The entry level for the general exam is B2, with the exit level being C1, and for the special exam the entry level is C1 with the need to have passed the general exam, the exit level C2. However, people wishing to only take the exam, can apply without having to complete the course at the language school (*RVP JŠ*, 2009, pp. 5, 10).

Conversation courses are aimed at students who are already familiar with the language to a certain extent, usually level B1 is required. These courses try to achieve an improvement of the already existing knowledge. There can be more such courses if the interest of students is high, usually with more levels available as well. What the individual courses look like is determined by the school (*RVP JŠ*, 2009, pp. 10 – 11).

Last but not least, the special course. The characteristics of the course are decided based on the special requirements of the students. The number of such courses is usually determined by the technical and staffing options of the school, but they usually offer summer, intensive, individual or topic-specific courses. The number of hours as well as the pace of the lessons depend on the learners (*RVP JŠ*, 2009, p. 11).

Another type of courses some language schools offer are in-company courses. In this case, the language school comes to the client, not vice versa, and the course takes place on the

³ See definition of CEFR in the *Appendices* – Appendix 1.

company's premises with usually more employees in attendance. From the company's point of view, the choice of the school is crucial. It is essential to find a school and a teacher that would suit the needs of the company, mainly in terms of training and specialisation of the teacher due to the special characteristics of the course. Even though it is the language school leading the course, it should be the company to dictate the terms and be clear about their needs, so that the school can tailor and adapt to them directly, which the school should be willing to do (*"In-company language courses"*, 2020).

4. Interviews

The following chapter introduces the language schools that were interviewed for the purpose to find out more about how language schools function, moreover how they work with the coursebooks, i.e. the way they choose them, the ones they work with and what their opinion is on self-designed materials.

The language schools interviewed in the thesis were chosen based on their popularity and their acknowledgement among the inhabitants of Brno and Zlín. Therefore, the schools chosen are the ones that are the most frequently advertised and have the most attendees in general. Altogether, six language schools consented to participating in the interview process and the representatives of the schools were then interviewed. Another two language schools are mentioned as they were asked to participate, however they declined the interview. Nevertheless, they provided some insight into their coursebook policy via email and the information might thus be used if needed. Regardless, the six formerly mentioned language schools are the main focus.

The schools were contacted by email and the people in charge were asked whether an interview about their use of coursebooks would be possible. The interview was then done in person. Generally speaking, the directors of studies, as they were the ones most often chosen to represent the school for this purpose, were kind and approachable, willing to answer the questions prepared. It was evident that they knew a lot about the topic, probably due to the fact that they are the ones who are in charge of the coursebooks. The interviews were done in a span of three months – October, November and December 2019.

The questions for the interviews were prepared beforehand and were identical for all the schools. Even though the interviews were planned to be semi-structured, thus the possibility of adding or skipping a question was feasible, this situation did not happen as the author could not think of any additional questions to ask the interviewees. Altogether, the questionnaire was comprised of three main parts:

Part	Questions
1. General information about coursebooks	• What coursebook do you use? • Does it differ according to the course and levels?
2. Coursebook use in the classroom	• What is your policy on using coursebooks? • How and how often do you use the coursebooks in lessons? Does it depend solely on the teacher or have you got a general policy as a school?

	• How do you choose your coursebooks? Based on what aspects?
3. Possibility of a self-designed coursebook	• Have you ever thought about creating your own coursebook? Why/why not?

Table 3: Parts and questions

The total number of questions was six, divided into their respective parts based on the area they covered. The first part was more general as it asked about the specific coursebooks the school used. The second part was aimed at the use of the coursebooks in the lessons and how they were chosen. The final part covered the topic of the schools' policy on self-designed coursebooks. The full interview can be found in the *Appendices* (see Appendix 2) at the end of the thesis.

The interviews were designed to help the author understand what kind of requirements the schools had for their coursebooks and based on what they had chosen the ones they worked with on a daily basis. Additionally, the interviews led to a discussion about self-designed coursebooks and what the attitude of the interviewed directors of studies, representing the opinion of the whole school, was.

4.1. The language schools

As was mentioned above, the language schools interviewed were altogether six. Three of them located in Brno, the other three in Zlín. Due to this aspect, the information provided was more general based on two different regions.

The language schools interviewed:

Brno	Zlín
P.A.R.K School of English	Jazyková škola Lingua
Jazyková škola Hello	Jazyková škola ONLY4
ILC International House Brno	Albi - jazyková škola

Table 4: Chosen language schools

The other two language schools mentioned are Enjoy English and Jazyková agentura Skřivánek, both in Zlín. As the directors of studies of these two schools did not consent to the interview and the information provided was fairly scarce, it is going to be used only in case of need.

In this sub-chapter, the language schools will be introduced and described in more detail to get a better idea about what kind of schools they are.

P.A.R.K School of English

P.A.R.K School of English is a language school that focuses only on teaching the English language. They pride in having only small groups of students, maximum seven to eight in one class. The tutors are both certified teachers and native speakers with the needed qualifications. The individual courses are carefully prepared and thanks to this they are well linked together. This also allows the school to monitor the level of their students when they start their studies as well as when they finish. The language school has been a member of the Association of Language schools since 2003. Not only is the school a preparatory and testing centre for Cambridge exams, they are an authorised platinum centre. The school offers a variety of courses. Some of them include courses on general English, Business English, English conversation courses, courses for after maturita exam and courses for children and teenagers. They also organise conferences and courses for English teachers (“Jazyková škola P.A.R.K.”).

Jazyková škola Hello

Hello language school was established in 1996 and it was aimed firstly only at children. Other courses were added later. Apart from the centrum in Brno, the school has other two centres in Opava and Ostrava with the headquarters located in the latter city. The school is a member of the Association of Language Schools. The school has set important aims for their practice and its three main aims are quality, friendliness and partnership. The tutors are carefully chosen and they are tested before being employed. They have the needed qualifications and certificates as well as experience. The school focuses on language in general and offers courses not only in English but also in German, French, Spanish, Italian, Russian and Chinese. The courses are led either in groups or individually. They also offer courses in Business English, courses for after maturita exam, preparatory courses for Cambridge exams, courses for children, summer or weekend courses, courses for elderly people, etc (“Jazyková škola Hello”).

ILC International House Brno

ILC is the only language school in the Moravian region which is a member of the international network of language schools International House World Organisation (IHWO). This organisation is responsible for the school using a unique communicative educating method and allows to continually increase the level of study as well as the practising lecturers. It has been a member of the Association of Language Schools since 2005. It is also a preparatory centre for Cambridge exams, mainly the general English exams (KET, PET, FCE, CAE, CPE), but business exams and IELTS exams as well. The school consists of about 40 tutors with 15 of them being native speakers. The tutors all have the needed qualifications and certificates.

The courses offered by the school are the following: general English, Business English, courses for children, courses for companies, individual courses, courses for after maturita exam, and preparatory courses of exams, etc (“ILC International House Brno”).

Jazyková škola Lingua

This language school was established 25 years ago and takes pride in having an individualistic attitude towards their customers. It is a member of the Association of Language Schools and is an examination centre for Cambridge exams. The language school is not focused only on English but offers courses in German, Russian, Spanish and Italian as well. They offer various courses – courses for after maturita exam, courses for individuals or for companies, courses for children and elderly people. They also provide services in terms of translation and language interpretations and offer Cambridge exams (“O nás - Jazykové kurzy Lingua Zlín”).

Jazyková škola ONLY4

This language school is unusual in a sense that there are only four students in the class and they mainly practise speaking and communication skills. The school was established in 1997 and this approach of having only four students in the class has been a part of their policy since the beginning. Another specific policy of the school is that it also aims at using as little of the Czech language as possible. The tutors are both native Czech speakers and English speakers with all the required qualification and the needed certificates. To ensure the quality of the education, the tutors are examined and observed regularly. The school offers a number of courses – general English for adults and children, intensive summer courses for children and summer camps for children, summer courses for adults aimed at communication skills, individual courses as well as courses for companies, not to forget preparation courses for Cambridge exams. The school also offers books from their own school library to their customers as well as the general public (“Náš příběh”).

Albi - jazyková škola

The language school is focused mainly on meeting the needs of their customers and they build their lessons around that aspect. As is mentioned on their website, they are not a member of the Association of Language Schools, although they believe in their Ten Commandments. The class usually consists of a small number of students, ranging from four to eight. The tutors are qualified and certified and in the lessons they focus mainly on speaking and communicative skills. Not only does the school offer courses in English, but in other languages as well – German, French, Russian and Spanish. The different types of courses are general English, conversation courses and preparatory courses for Cambridge exams (“O nás / kontakt”).

4.2. Transcripts of the interviews

The following sub-chapter includes the transcription of the individual interviews done in the said language schools. The original sheets that were used during the interviews with handwritten notes can be found in the *Appendices* (see Appendix 2 to 8) at the end of the thesis.

The sub-chapter is divided into three following sections according to the individual questions, within which the answers of the language schools are stated. The transcription is done in an essay-style of writing as it is better suited for the purposes of the thesis. Then the focus is on the content of the message, rather than the actual interview in general.

1. General information about coursebooks

P.A.R.K School of English

When asked about what kind of coursebook the school generally used and whether it differed according to the levels or courses, the answer was that for the main course, being general English, the school used *Face2Face* (Cambridge University Press) for all levels, from A0 to C2. As far as preparatory courses for different exams were concerned, the school used *Straight to First* or *Straight to Advanced* (both Macmillan Education), depending on the level. For the most advanced level, the school worked with *Objective Proficiency* (Cambridge University Press). As a secondary coursebook, to complete the exercises or give the students more practice as was explained, the school had chosen to work with the *Empower* series (Cambridge University Press). The school also used special coursebooks for children and teenagers, such as the *Starters* series (R. Davies, personal communication, October 21, 2019).

Course:	Coursebook(s)
general English	<i>Face2Face</i> (Cambridge University Press)
preparatory courses for exams	<i>Straight to First</i> or <i>Straight to Advanced</i> (both Macmillan Education) <i>Objective Proficiency</i> (Cambridge University Press)
secondary coursebook	<i>Empower</i> (Cambridge University Press)

Table 5: Coursebooks at P.A.R.K School of English

Jazyková škola Hello

The interviewee's answer to what kind of coursebooks they used was that they in majority worked with *English File* (Oxford University Press) for courses concerning general English or *FCE/CAE Result* (Oxford University Press) for preparatory courses concerning the

Cambridge exams. According to the interviewee, the tutors could choose to work with a different coursebook if they wished (M. Svobodová, personal communication, October 29, 2019).

Course	Coursebook(s)
general English	<i>English File</i> (Oxford University Press)
preparatory courses for exams	<i>FCE/CAE Result</i> (Oxford University Press)

Table 6: Coursebooks at Jazyková škola Hello

ILC International House Brno

According to the interviewee, the International House in Brno used a wide variety of coursebooks depending on the type of course. With children and pre-teens they used either *Hot spot* (Macmillan Education) or *Academy stars* (Macmillan Education) and with teenagers they moved on to *Beyond* (Macmillan Education). In courses for adults, the main coursebook they used was the *English File* (Oxford University Press), either the third or fourth edition, and as a supplementary coursebooks they used *Total English* (Pearson Education Limited) or *Speak Out* (Pearson Education Limited). There were also preparatory courses for Cambridge exams, in which the *Ready for Series* (Macmillan Education) was used. The school also offered intensive courses and for this purpose the *Gateway* (Macmillan Education) coursebook was used (D. Cleary, personal communication, November 4, 2019).

Course	Coursebook(s)
children and pre-teens	<i>Hot spot</i> (Macmillan Education), <i>Academy stars</i> (Macmillan Education)
teenagers	<i>Beyond</i> (Macmillan Education)
general English (adults)	<i>English File</i> (Oxford University Press)
supplementary coursebooks	<i>Total English</i> (Pearson Education Limited), <i>Speak Out</i> (Pearson Education Limited)
preparatory courses for exams	<i>Ready for Series</i> (Macmillan Education)
intensive/summer courses	<i>Gateway</i> (Macmillan Education)

Table 7: Coursebooks at ILC International House Brno

Jazyková škola Lingua

The school used a variety of coursebooks depending on the type of course and the needs of the students. For the main courses, daily and evening ones as well as courses for companies,

the school had chosen to work with *English File* (Oxford University Press), *International Express* (Oxford University Press) or *Cutting Edge* (Pearson Longman), as these had been viewed as the standard. However, for preparatory courses for exams, the school used the *Gold* series (Pearson Education). The teachers also had the freedom to use their own supplementary materials (N. Hladká, personal communication, October 25, 2019).

Course	Coursebook(s)
general English	<i>English File</i> (Oxford University Press), <i>International Express</i> (Oxford University Press), <i>Cutting Edge</i> (Pearson Longman)
preparatory courses for exams	<i>Gold</i> (Pearson Education)

Table 8: Coursebooks at Jazyková škola Lingua

Jazyková škola ONLY4

The school used the *Headway* (Oxford University Press) coursebook for majority of their courses, however they used it only up to the intermediate level as after that they shifted the focus to preparing their students for various exams. For the preparatory courses the school worked with *Pet Result* (Oxford University Press) for the youngest students and then with *First Result* (Oxford University Press) as well as *First Masterclass* (Oxford University Press) for the more advanced students. The school also used workbooks but not the ones created for the coursebooks; they had created their own workbooks which they used mainly for practice the students did as their homework. The workbook was focused mainly on translation exercises (R. Mrnušík, personal communication, November 26, 2019).

Course	Coursebook(s)
general English	<i>Headway</i> (Oxford University Press)
preparatory courses for exams	<i>Pet Result</i> (Oxford University Press), <i>First Result</i> (Oxford University Press), <i>First Masterclass</i> (Oxford University Press)

Table 9: Coursebooks at Jazyková škola ONLY4

Albi - jazyková škola

The language school used only *English File* (Oxford University Press) as their coursebook for all levels, elementary to advanced. They also used all of its available editions,

mainly the second and third one, however, they partly used the fourth one as well (M. Jurák, personal communication, December 16, 2019).

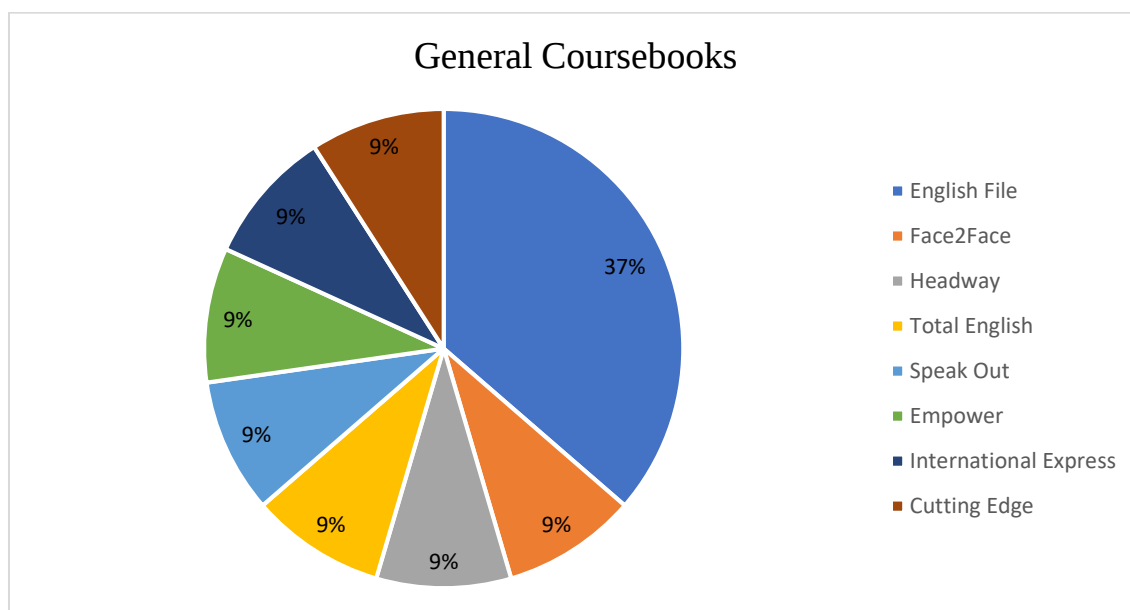


Figure 1: General English coursebooks with supplementary coursebooks included

As the main concern of the thesis are general coursebooks used in general courses, only this type is included in the overview. Therefore, as the table above shows, the most widely used coursebook for general English courses is the *English File* coursebook across the spectrum of the six language schools interviewed. The other coursebooks are usually mentioned as individual examples and do not appear repeatedly with different language schools. Even though the data show that the *English File* is a popular coursebook, the choice of the other coursebooks proves that the language schools choose their coursebooks carefully and with specific aims for their courses in mind as there is a wide variety of the different coursebooks used. Based on the data, the *English File* coursebook was chosen as the one coursebook to be compared to a self-designed coursebook as the representative of the commercially published coursebooks.

2. Coursebook use in the classroom

P.A.R.K School of English

Another series of questions consisted of how the school worked with the coursebook – what the policy of the school was on using the coursebook, how often the coursebook was used in the lessons and whether it depended solely on the teacher or whether there was a group policy and based on what aspects the coursebooks had been chosen. In terms of lesson use, at this school the teachers were allowed to be creative to a certain extent as there was a general syllabus

that needed to be followed. This was especially useful for new teachers and it could also be beneficial depending on the type of group and students. There were materials that the teachers could use in their lessons apart from the coursebook, such as teacher's books or other supplementary materials, which encouraged the teachers to be creative with their lessons. The topic of choosing the coursebook seemed to be the most interesting for the interviewees to answer and in this particular school the answer was the following – they had relied on recommendations and what had been generally popular, well-known but mainly proven and tested. However, the school had wished to break the convention and looked for something other than *English File* (Oxford University Press), as that had been the most used and widely popular coursebook at that time and many students had already worked with it, therefore the school had wanted something else, they had been trying to aim at something different but at the same time still teacher-friendly and with interesting topics. When looking at various coursebooks, the school had focused mainly on the topics and the lay-out or the design of it, taking into consideration how teacher- and user-friendly it could be. Another aspect was how widely used the coursebook had been at that time, as the school wanted something the students had not been already familiar with (R. Davies, personal communication, October 21, 2019).

Jazyková škola Hello

When it came to using the coursebook in the lessons, it entirely depended on the teachers, their personality, their attitude, their creativity and the particular lesson plan. However, generally speaking, the interviewee estimated that the coursebook was used up to 50 percent and the rest was supplemented by other additional materials of the teachers'. When asked about the reason for choosing the *English File* coursebook, the interviewee was unable to give a satisfactory answer as apparently the coursebook had been assigned to them by their main institution in Ostrava. However, according to the interviewee the reason was quite apparent as this specific coursebook was the one that was the most used and the most accessible (M. Svobodová, personal communication, October 29, 2019).

ILC International House Brno

When it came to the school's policy on using the coursebook in the lessons, it was entirely the teacher's decision. Even though it was mainly the teacher's choice, the school provided a rough guide as to what should be covered in one lesson, which translated to approximately one double page in ninety minutes. The guide also included a certain amount of work that should be covered in one semester, therefore the teachers needed to follow a certain syllabus of the material needed to be done in certain time period. Apart from that, the teachers

had a lot of freedom in terms of what they did and what they worked with. The journey to choosing the right coursebook had been rather intriguing at this school as was explained to me. They mainly worked with *English File* (Oxford University Press) as it was “teachable” and not majorly used in primary and secondary schools, according to the interviewee. As this coursebook was their primary material, it was constant in their policy. However, the other coursebooks for different courses tended to change a lot as it also depended on the type of course it was intended for and the people it was aimed at. For example, the *Speak Out* coursebook (Pearson Education Limited) was mainly used during summer courses or for students who got stuck. Other supplementary materials were usually viewed more as a challenge for the students. The interviewee claimed that coursebooks for teenagers were not really well designed, as they tried to maintain interesting topics, so the content was attractive for the students, however the language used in them was below the level of the students. The interviewee's opinion was that these coursebooks tended to treat teenagers like children, which was not convenient. The school also used a mixture of different publishers mainly because they tried to maintain a good relationship with them and tried to get them more involved in the school. An example would be the publishing house of Oxford University Press, which they used mainly for lower-end levels, as well as Longman. On the other hand, *Total English* coursebook (Pearson Education Limited), which is in the Pearson production, was considered as more of a higher-end level and more challenging for the students (D. Cleary, personal communication, November 4, 2019).

Jazyková škola Lingua

When it came to using the coursebook in the lessons, the teachers were encouraged to follow the structure of the coursebook, even though the preparation of the activities was completely up to the teacher. The interviewee estimated that the coursebooks were used in 80 percent in the lessons. It also depended on the type of course and the needs of the students as the school tried to take into consideration the individuality of the students. The coursebooks had been chosen carefully and according to the language level of the students and the whole group. The school specialised in company courses, so many of the coursebooks were chosen based on the needs of the company and their employees studying at the school. Choosing the coursebooks in general had been a lengthy process as the school had wanted the books to be modern with a good vocabulary range. Thus, they had usually focused on publishers such as Oxford University Press and Longman Pearson (N. Hladká, personal communication, October 25, 2019).

Jazyková škola ONLY4

There was no specific policy on what needed to be done in the lessons as the school's policy differed from the usual language schools. The Only4 language school mainly focused on using the language and practising what the students had learnt. Thus the coursebooks were hardly ever used in the lessons, the students mainly worked with them at home, completing the exercises and drilling vocabulary. There was one specific policy and that was that until all the students mastered the topic in the coursebook, the teachers could not move on to the following topic. The lessons were thus mainly focused on practising the target language by using it. The reason for choosing the *Headway* series was unclear to the interviewee as they had started using it at the very beginning of the language school and that had been 21 years ago. The interviewee also mentioned that it was quite problematic to change the coursebook once you had established the courses and lessons around that one, so they would only upgrade the editions and currently, they used the fourth edition of the book (R. Mrnušík, personal communication, November 26, 2019).

Albi - jazyková škola

The policy of the school on using the coursebook was very general. The teachers worked with the coursebook in the lessons but it was not formally binding. The school had a general year plan, which helped them with connecting the courses together. It was also more practical in terms when a new student came or when someone became ill, so that they could continue working from home. Therefore, the policy was more based on practical than methodological background. The teachers were expected to work with the coursebook, however they had the freedom to skip an exercise, etc. Choosing the coursebook had been done collectively with the team of lecturers. When the school first had started, they had wanted to use something different rather than *Headway* which had been very popular at that time as well as very outdated and widely used. They had wanted something similar but different in a sense – with the same grammar, vocabulary, etc, but new to their students (M. Jurák, personal communication, December 16, 2019).

3. Possibility of self-designed coursebook

P.A.R.K School of English

The last series of questions was based around the topic of creating their own self-designed coursebook – whether they had ever thought about that and why or why not. At this school, the interviewee mentioned that they had thought about creating their own coursebook many times and even possibly started creating it but due to time reasons and as the school was

very busy, they had never managed to finish it, but it had been their goal for a long time. The interviewee mainly talked about a coursebook for A0 level students and the fact that there was not a good coursebook for complete beginners and generally a lack of such coursebooks on the market. The teachers were then often left with taking bits and pieces from other sources and working with that in the lessons, which again came hand in hand with their creativity. On the other hand, it required more time and effort. Nevertheless, as was mentioned in the interview, the school did not have any A0 level classes at that time, but if there had been some or many, the school would have reconsidered creating their own coursebook for this level (R. Davies, personal communication, October 21, 2019).

Jazyková škola Hello

The question concerning the self-designed coursebooks was also answered briefly as the information gained was that the school had never thought about creating their own textbook, at least the interviewee was not aware of anyone ever suggesting it but they compensated by having creative teachers who used their individuality and creativity in terms of planning the lessons and in their attitude to the language in general (M. Svobodová, personal communication, October 29, 2019).

ILC International House Brno

The answer for the question whether they had ever thought about designing their own coursebook was very short and to the point – “no”. When asked to elaborate, the interviewee mentioned that he thought the current coursebooks were of a good quality and great for the structure of their courses. According to the interviewee, there was no problem with the well-known coursebooks as they were Euro-centric available in Europe, which was convenient in their setting as the culture oriented topics were aimed at Europeans. Had it been somewhere else, the situation might have been different (D. Cleary, personal communication, November 4, 2019).

Jazyková škola Lingua

When asked about the possibility of creating their own coursebooks, the interviewee mentioned that some of their coursebooks were their own but they were mainly aimed at technical language and technical English. The school organised “DUPP courses” where they focused on creating their materials for technical courses or prepared scripts for teachers focused on methodology in foreign language. Nonetheless, creating their own coursebook for general courses was not possible as it was very time consuming and the school rather focused on

choosing the appropriate coursebook which was well designed and they could rely on it (N. Hladká, personal communication, October 25, 2019).

Jazyková škola ONLY4

Thinking about creating their own coursebook had been on the table and had been thoroughly considered. However, as the whole process was very time and financially consuming they had decided against it for that time being. Another point was that it would have needed to be regularly updated and investing a lot of time and money would have been pointless. Even when creating the workbooks, the time put into it had been excessive. On the other hand, the workbook did not consist of any articles or pictures, it was simply just sentences for translation, which had made it easier. The school's own workbook had been created in a team of the lecturers based on the topics in the coursebook, mainly focusing on the grammar. The students could also find the key for the exercises, so that they could fully work with it at home and the lessons were then focused on practice or explanation of unclear aspects. There was also an audio book of the workbook which had been recorded by native speakers to ensure the correct pronunciation. This also supported the fact that the lessons were mainly speaking-based and correct pronunciation was a key feature of any speaking (R. Mrnušík, personal communication, November 26, 2019).

Albi - jazyková škola

The school had never thought about creating their own coursebook for various reasons, mainly the practical ones. The personal opinion of the interviewee was that he had never had the ambition to write their own coursebook due to the school not being drastically specialised. They only offered general language courses that were also very minimally topic-oriented, in terms of business English, for example. Therefore, writing their own material would have been too time consuming and would have required a lot of effort. The widely-used coursebooks contained everything the school required, they were pre-tested, certified, new, modern and of a great quality (M. Jurák, personal communication, December 16, 2019).

The table below shows whether the school has ever considered creating their own coursebook. Majority of the answers was “no” for various reasons – too time-consuming, too much work, there are already more than sufficient books, etc. The only school that would consider creating their own coursebook was the P.A.R.K School of English but only with a specific goal in mind. The main reason for this answer is the lack of coursebooks for complete

beginners (level A0). However, as they do not have many classes of this level, the whole process would be too time-consuming at the moment.

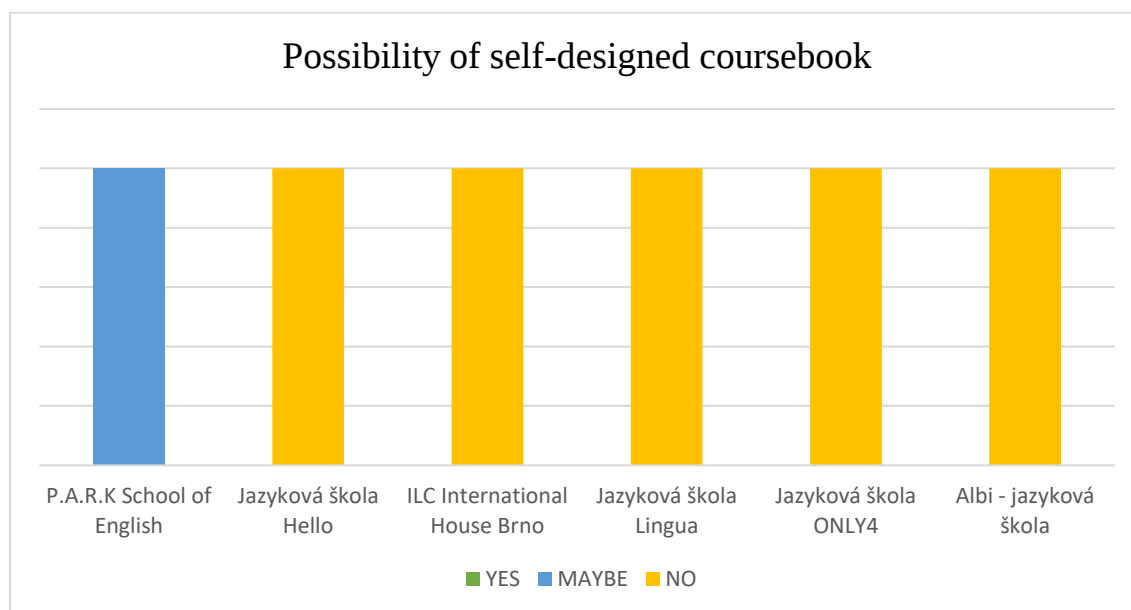


Figure 2: Have you ever considered creating your own coursebook?

5. Questionnaire

Another vital part of the research is the questionnaire conducted with a foreign language school in Australia that uses a self-designed coursebook. The reason being that that was where the idea had come from. Two years ago, while I was attending a course at this language school abroad, I noticed that the school used their own coursebooks and the idea for this thesis formed. However, since the language school is far away, it was not possible to interview any people about the coursebook face to face. Instead, I opted for a written-based format and sent them a questionnaire with six questions via email. Fortunately, it was the principal of the school who had been tasked with filling in the questionnaire and thus the answers are thorough as well as professional. Consequently, the cooperation with the principal was smooth as she always informed me about any possible delays. The creation of the questionnaire and the process of having it filled in happened in autumn 2019, namely during the months of October and November. The six questions and their sub-questions regarded the matter of the process and ideas behind having their self-designed coursebook. This chapter briefly describes the language school as well as deals with the analysis of the questionnaire.

No	Questions and sub-questions
1.	• Why did you decide to create your own textbook? • How long did it take you to create it? • How long have you been using it?
2.	• In what aspects do you find it better than the commercially published textbooks?
3.	• Did you make it with a specific idea/aim in your mind?
4.	• Are you satisfied with the textbook? Do you think you fulfilled your expectations? • Would you improve anything?
5.	• Do you often go through the textbook and upgrade some of its aspects?
6.	• Is designing your own textbook somehow connected with the fact that as a foreign language school most of your students are planning on staying in the country permanently and are looking for a job there? • Did you choose the topics for the textbook with this in mind? • Did you also take into consideration the different ethnicities and cultures when designing your textbook?

Table 10: Questions in questionnaire

5.1. The language school

Kaplan International Languages – Sydney is a language school located in Sydney, Australia. It actually belongs to a broad world-wide organisation called Kaplan International Languages, which hosts a number of language schools in cities all over the world; the UK, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland and the US. The branch has been in existence for 80 years and with over forty thousand students from various countries per year they proud themselves in being recommended by 97% of them. The schools offer various courses, starting with general English and different intensities of studies, Business English, academic or professional English with the possibility of taking exam preparatory courses (TOEFL, IELTS and Cambridge exams) or long-term academic courses, junior courses for children as well as senior courses for the elderly. They also organise summer courses and summer camps for children. English and Work experiences are offered as well, which are courses that combine learning and working abroad, and interestingly, they offer courses for teachers, where the attendants can study to receive their CELTA certificate, or a more specific CLIL methodology course is offered as well. Even though the company is more focused on the English language speaking world, they offer a certain number of other language courses – Spanish, French and German (“About Kaplan International English”).

The school as a branch has identified their own style of teaching, part of which is the self-designed coursebook. The school claims they believe that “immersion backed up by expert teaching is the most effective way to learn a language” (“About K+”). That is why they have created and introduced the K+ system⁴. The coursebook (called the K+ Notes) as well as the whole K+ system has been created with CEFR guidelines and is therefore officially certified. The whole learning system consists not only of the coursebook but there is a K+ Learning Club, which is teacher-led study club where you can practise your English further together with other people. There is also K+ Online where you can see your grades, get feedback or play different games and take part in quizzes. The last but not least part is the K+ Online Extra, which is one's personal site where you adapt the exercises (videos, questions, audio) to your level and needs based on your strengths and weaknesses. The activities there are mainly based around grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary and help you stay connected to English even outside the classroom in a more academic environment. The online sites are designed in a way that students can continue using them for their practice even after they have left the school. The whole system

⁴ K+ system is an online learning system the Kaplan International Languages has introduced to support and enhance the learning experience. It consists of variety of online learning tools such as games, apps, etc. and its components are described more in detail in the text (“Kaplan International Colleges launch...”).

was created by an international team of experts in the field of education to help students improve their language skills not only in the classroom supervised by the teacher but also at home or on the go by themselves allowing them to be fully immersed in the language, as is the goal of the school. At the beginning of your studies at this language school, you are subjected to taking their own level test, called KITE. This test is computer based and personalised with exercises aimed at listening, reading, and grammar. Your level is determined based on this test followed by the school putting you into your level study group and you then proceed with learning together with the whole K+ system (“About K+”).

The specific school in Australia offers general English courses, Business English courses and exam preparatory courses, with the school being a Cambridge testing centre. All the teachers have appropriate education and qualification. Additionally, the school is a member of English Australia, which is an association aimed at quality and experience (“Sydney City”).

5.2. Analysis of the questionnaire

This subchapter deals with the questionnaire analysis where the answers are going to be presented. A question by question system was chosen for the analysis with headlines dividing the individual questions. Even though the answers to the questionnaire already exist in a written form, for the purposes of this thesis, the author decided to rewrite the answers in their own words. The original questionnaire, as well as the filled out questionnaire, can be found at the end of the thesis in the *Appendices* (see Appendix 9 and 10).

1a Why did you decide to create your own textbook?

The answer to this question consisted of two main parts. Firstly, it was the students' expectations of the course. According to the principal answering the questions, students expected to have a quality material they could take with them and study from it even from home. The material should be in colour and ought to reflect the latest teaching methods and technologies. The school had done a survey among their students, the results of which showed that students were not happy with the number of materials provided by the school as they considered them to be lacking. Another major role was played by the curriculum, which the students expected to be consistent. This aspect is connected to the second part of the answer, which stated that the self-designed materials also helped the teachers. As the syllabus was apparently fairly open, any inexperienced teacher might have found it hard to prepare lessons for longer time periods. Thus, the self-designed material supported the teachers as well as the students not only in terms of having a clear structure of the lessons and following the school's syllabus but also ensuring that the quality standard was in check. The self-designed material

also supported both online and offline work, which could be then well-linked together, thus keeping in touch with modern methods and technologies (R. Park, personal communication, October – November 2019).

1b How long did it take you to create it?

The principal did not answer this question as she did not have the answer herself. However, making a personal assumption, I would imagine that it must have taken a very long time, taking into consideration that they created a whole online system and different kinds of support around the coursebook as well.

1c How long have you been using it?

The principal answered that the material had been used for seven years (ibid.).

2 In what aspect do you find it better than the commercially published textbooks?

The answer to this question was a bit surprising as it mainly revolved around the needs of the students. The principal mentioned that whilst looking for a suitable coursebook among the commercially published ones, they had felt like they were all very general as they had been designed for a very broad audience. However, the school had had something more specific for their students in mind as they had wanted to tailor the coursebook directly to the students' needs and expectations (ibid.).

3 Did you make it with a specific idea/aim in your mind?

Again, the answer stated that the idea had been to have something relevant and specific for the students and the specific courses at the school. The progressive aspect was that a lot of teachers from the company's schools from all over the world had been somehow involved in the process, thus getting different opinions and perspectives connected to various experience. Some of them had helped with writing, others with proof reading or piloting. The feedback process had been especially beneficial by being carried out this way. A little side note mentioned that being the owners of their own materials would differentiate the school from the rest of the schools on the market. Another advantage to having their own material was being able to change and improve the material whenever the situation would require it as they were the sole owners of the content. That involved being able to change the online material within a week and the printed material within a year. The principal also added that the publishers would re-print the coursebook every five years, which allowed the school to monitor and follow the students' satisfaction and comments as well as their needs (ibid.).

4a Are you satisfied with the textbook? Do you think you fulfilled your expectations?

To this the principal simply answered that yes, they were satisfied (ibid.).

4b Would you improve anything?

Another very brief answer stated that there were always improvements that could be considered (ibid.).

5 Do you often go through the textbook and upgrade some of its aspects?

The principal's answer was that they would review the content regularly and improve and change when necessary. As was also mentioned above, the principal stated that the publishers re-print every five years with the next re-printing being scheduled for the following year (as the interview was conducted in 2019, the principal means 2020, *author's note*). Otherwise, they would also monitor the students' satisfaction and decide on changes based on this aspect whenever they would consider it necessary (ibid.).

6a Is designing your own textbook somehow connected with the fact that as a foreign language school most of your students are planning on staying in the country permanently and are looking for a job there?

The principal's response was that even though they were not aware of the specific plans their students might have after completing their studies, they knew that the plans differ a lot.

6b Did you choose the topics for the textbook with this in mind?

Based on this finding from the previous question, their courses were not created with a specific intention in mind, like aiming towards a certain type of employment, for example. Instead, the school tried to create courses that would give the students a general knowledge and expertise of English language skills for variety of purposes.

6c Did you also take into consideration the different ethnicities and cultures when designing your textbook?

When it came to the question of ethnicities and cultural background, the principal explained that the school had many international students from various countries studying at the different international Kaplan schools all over the world. Thus, as the coursebook was used in all their schools (in all the Kaplan International Languages schools, *author's note*), the topics had been chosen so that all students could participate in conversations without any prejudice. The topics covered in the materials should therefore be globally acceptable without making a preference to certain countries or regions (ibid.).

To conclude the questionnaire process, the school's main idea for creating and operating with their own coursebook and system of support seems to be directed towards the students' needs and requirements, which is a generous thing to do. However, the question is whether they are able to cover the individual needs of every students if they have to generalise anyway. What they seem to be profiting from is being the owners of the material as that makes the school different on the market and may attract more attention from the public. Truth be told, before I attended the school myself I had not known about the school having their own self-designed materials, so that was not the reason for choosing this particular school for me. Nonetheless, I had heard of the school's excellent reputation and high education standards, so it might have been connected. The process itself of designing the coursebook is still unknown, however, as according to the principal there was a lot of teachers from the different locations involved, I can imagine it must have been a lengthy process. On the other hand, it ensured that more culturally diverse points of view were accounted for and thus the coursebook should be more globally acceptable. Moreover, having the teachers involved was a great decision to make the coursebooks practical and in line with the actual teaching methods currently used. Additionally, being the sole owners of the material gives the school the advantage of changing the content accordingly based on the current needs and requirements. Even though it would still have to be more widely acknowledged and approved, the possibility of improving the material within a short time span is, I believe, greatly appreciated and to their advantage. Another positive aspect is that the school has created a whole online system around the materials, thus ensuring that the students have plenty of material to work with even outside the classroom. Overall, having a self-designed coursebook seems to have two main advantages – having the material tailored to the needs of the students and having the ability to change it anytime necessary. The biggest disadvantage seems to be the challenging process of designing the coursebook or other additional materials connected to it. The question then remains – is it worth it?

EMPIRICAL PART

The research of the thesis can be described as a case study within qualitative research as it focuses on analysing and comparing two coursebooks, which are representatives of their kind – a commercially published coursebook and a self-designed coursebook. The commercially published representative was chosen based on interviews conducted with six language schools in Zlín and Brno. As one of the questions was concerned with what coursebooks the school used in their courses, the most common one was then chosen for the analysis. The self-designed coursebook was chosen as a sole representative of its kind known to me.

In order to completely understand how language schools work, the actual research was preceded by interviews conducted with six directors of studies of various language schools as well as an online questionnaire for the foreign language school, which can be found in the previous part of the thesis.

The actual analysis and comparison were done based on a set of criteria and individual questions, concerning general aspects of coursebooks (such as organisation, visuals, topics or culture), language content (such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, discourse), language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing), and methodology. The coursebooks were analysed based on these criteria and then the data gathered were compared in order for the analysis to provide a wholesome picture of the similarities and differences, possibly advantages and disadvantages of the coursebooks.

The aim of the thesis is to uncover whether self-designed coursebooks offer any benefits compared to the commercially published ones. The research question proposes a more direct issue connected to the comparison of the two coursebooks – What are the similarities or differences of the two coursebooks?

6. The comparison of the chosen coursebooks

This part of the thesis deals with the comparison of the chosen coursebooks. Based on the interviews done at the language schools, the most used coursebook was the *English File* (Oxford University Press). Therefore, this coursebook, as an example of the commercially published ones, was compared to a self-designed coursebook used by the Kaplan International English language school called *K+ notes*.

First, the coursebooks are generally described based on their components and structure. Later, one unit from each coursebook is analysed in detail and compared with each other, mainly based on the types of exercises. The units chosen are of a similar topic.

6.1. General description

English File

For the purposes of the thesis only the Student's book was used. However, the whole set also includes a workbook. As a modernised coursebook it also comes with online support where the learners can practise further. The online support (which can be found at this website: <https://elt.oup.com/student/englishfile/upperint3/?cc=cz&sellLanguage=cs>) consists of exercises aimed at grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and colloquial English. It is available for two editions and all of the levels. There are also some downloadable files, which are mainly audio and video files. A section with additional weblinks is included, where the learners can find links to learn more about the topics discussed in the coursebook. Learners can also map their progress with the “Learning Record” where they can mark what they have completed. And lastly, there is also a “Mini Phrasebook” as well as links to dyslexic-friendly reading texts, which is a nice touch (“Oxford University Press”).

English File also offers its American counterpart aimed at American English called *American English file*. There are two editions available now (“American English File”). The distinction is focused on the two markets – European and American. On the European market, Oxford University Press offers support in the mother tongue, thus the Student's books include Czech word list, for example.

The specific coursebook I worked with was the *English File Upper-intermediate Student's Book*, therefore the level is B2 based on CEFR. The authors are Christina Latham-Koenig and Clive Oxenden, who have participated in writing for all the editions so far. This

coursebook is a third edition, therefore the newest one. The third edition was first published in 2014 but this reprint comes from the year 2019⁵.

Name	English File
Publisher	Oxford University Press
Author	Christina Latham-Koenig and Clive Oxenden
Edition	third edition
Year of publication	originally 2014, re-print 2019
Level	Upper-intermediate, B2

Table 11: General coursebook description 1 (source: Latham-Koenig, C., & Oxenden, C., 2019)

When it comes to the structure of the coursebook, the third edition *English File* Upper-intermediate is divided into ten units. Each unit has two parts aimed at a certain topic, e.g. the first unit's topics are “Questions and answers” and “Do you believe it?”. Each unit focuses on grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. Moreover, each unit deals with all the language skills – reading, listening and speaking. Writing is not included in every unit, nor are the writing exercises included directly in the unit. If yes, they are not elaborate and include basic instructions. However, there is a writing section at the back of the coursebook that deals with writing individually and in greater detail. Additionally, after every odd-numbered unit there is a double page dedicated to “Colloquial English” where the types of exercises are mainly concerned with the language skills as there are videos, and listening and speaking activities. There is also always an exercise focused on a different language aspect, such as idioms, formal language, modifiers, etc. The colloquial double page has an assigned topic as well, with the first topics being “The Interview” and “In the street”. On the other hand, after every even-numbered unit there is a double page of revision (“Revise and check”), which revises both previous units, with the exercises aimed at grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. There are also two exercises which check reading and listening comprehension (Latham-Koenig, C., & Oxenden, C., 2019).

At the end of the coursebook there are whole sections dedicated to additional exercises. There is a “Communication” section that deals with speaking activities for learners. This section is divided based on the individual units and also for A and B students, so that they can work in pairs. Within the units there are links pointing to the relevant communication section. Another

⁵ As of now, there is also a fourth edition on the market. It was introduced in 2019 and other materials are being published in 2020. Even though it officially comes in a Czech edition, the availability on the Czech market right now is scarce and limited (“English File fourth edition”, “Catalogue: English File”).

section is called “Writing”. As the units do not include elaborate writing exercises, there is a section at the back dedicated to different writing styles – such as an informal email, a short story, for and against essay, an article, describing a photo, expressing your opinion and a report. Each has an example and additional exercises to help understand the structures of the individual style. Again, there are links within the units pointing to the relevant pages. Following the writing section, there is also a listening section that contains transcripts of listening exercises. Something that I have always appreciated about the *English File* coursebooks is the “Grammar and Vocabulary banks” at the end. Both accompany the individual units and help deepen the practice and broaden vocabulary range. Within the units there is usually a link that corresponds to the grammar or vocabulary bank. After the “Vocabulary bank” there is a page of “Appendices”, this specific one being aimed at verb patterns – verbs that are followed either by a gerund or infinitive. On the neighbouring page there is a list of “Irregular verbs”, an inherent part of any coursebook. There is also a pronunciation double page (“Sound bank”) focused on vowel and consonant sounds. And lastly, there is an “English-Czech wordlist”. The wordlist not only provides the phonetic transcription, translation and the part of speech, it also gives an example sentence with the word used. Additionally, within some of the units there are also “Glossaries”, which usually accompany reading or listening, with the crucial words explained for better understanding of the text or recording (Latham-Koenig, C., & Oxenden, C., 2019).

Unit	Grammar	Vocabulary	Pronunciation
1	Present continuous	Present continuous	Present continuous
2	Present simple	Present simple	Present simple
3	Present perfect	Present perfect	Present perfect
4	Present perfect continuous	Present perfect continuous	Present perfect continuous
5	Future simple	Future simple	Future simple
6	Future continuous	Future continuous	Future continuous
7	Future perfect	Future perfect	Future perfect
8	Future perfect continuous	Future perfect continuous	Future perfect continuous
9	Conditional simple	Conditional simple	Conditional simple
10	Conditional perfect	Conditional perfect	Conditional perfect
11	Conditional perfect continuous	Conditional perfect continuous	Conditional perfect continuous
12	Conditional perfect continuous	Conditional perfect continuous	Conditional perfect continuous
13	Conditional perfect continuous	Conditional perfect continuous	Conditional perfect continuous
14	Conditional perfect continuous	Conditional perfect continuous	Conditional perfect continuous

Picture 1: Contents (source: Latham-Koenig, C., & Oxenden, C., 2019)

K+ notes

K+ notes is a self-designed coursebook used at Kaplan International English language schools. Even though the language school has its branches all over the world, they use one type of coursebook designed for general purposes of the school. As far as I am aware, the coursebook comes only as a Student's Book, there is no workbook. However, as was mentioned in the previous chapter, the school has created a full K+ system, which includes online support where the learners can practise further. It is described in detail in the previous chapter.

Within the K+ system, the coursebook *K+ notes* makes up the main focus of the lessons. According to their website, the coursebook includes “topics which are dynamic and relevant to a student’s English learning interests and needs” (“Kaplan International Colleges Launch...”). The coursebook focuses on developing language skills through which it also intends to improve grammar. This is considered an inductive approach with the intention to generally improve learners' skills by offering opportunities to practise it in real-life contexts (“Kaplan International Colleges Launch...”).

What is very unusual about the coursebook is that it has been created in sets for the individual levels. After contacting the principal to explain, she clarified that there were two cycles for each level – Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, with each cycle lasting for ten weeks. She further commented that this applied only to the Kaplan International language schools in Australia and New Zealand and the reason being that the schools in these countries had usually longer booking periods from the students (R. Park, personal communication, April 2020). Additionally, within the levels, there are different coursebooks followed by each other in succession – Book 1, Book 2 and Book 3, for example. From what I had the chance to observe, the coursebooks are changed every two weeks. So as a result, in my four weeks spent at the school, I had gathered three different coursebooks. The coursebooks are for the same level, but they follow each other. The different coursebooks are distinguished by colours. The principal further commented on this matter as well, explaining that by distinguishing the coursebooks by two weeks, the students would not get a large amount of material at once (R. Park, personal communication, April 2020). Therefore the reason is mainly practical.

The specific coursebooks I worked with was *K+ notes* Higher Intermediate English Student's Book second edition. As there is no one overall coursebook, but it is divided into more parts, with me in possession of three, the one specified book that was used primarily in this thesis was Book 3. The level of the coursebook is B2, according to CEFR, with the publisher being Kaplan International English, the school itself. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the coursebook was created with the assistance of various teachers. The coursebook lists these

names as the writing team: Claire Hart, Margaret O'Keeffe, Diana Martinez Salatín, David Petrie, Katie Peckitt, Eriko Hehir, and David Mower. The current edition is third, printed in 2015, which is the newest edition there is. However, as the principal mentioned there is re-print planned for this year, 2020, as the publishers re-print every five years.

Name	K+ notes
Publisher	Kaplan International
Author	Claire Hart, et al. (writing team)
Edition	second edition
Year of publication	2015
Level	Higher Intermediate, B2

Table 12: General coursebook description 2 (source: “Kaplan International”, 2015)

When it comes to the structure of the coursebooks, each is comprised of two units. Each unit consists of four lessons. Each lesson are two double-pages. For instance – the first unit is called “Friends for Life” and the four lessons within are called “Caring and Sharing”, “Volunteering”, “Life Lessons” and “Do good friends make good co-founders?” respectively. After every two lessons, there is a page dedicated to a “Real world task”. The two tasks included in the first one are “Finding a Room” and “Successful Academic Life”. These tasks are designed in a way that they mainly focus on developing languages skills, all except for writing, which is included directly within the lessons. After each unit there is a so called “Consolidation”, which consists of a few pages used to practise the aspects discussed in the unit. There is usually a reading exercise, some grammar and vocabulary exercises and also listening or speaking exercises. As a last page of each unit, there is a “Word List” included. The word list contains words mentioned in the unit. There is the word, defined by a part of speech, pronunciation, definition of the word and the word used in an example sentence. At the very end of the book there is a section of “Audioscripts”. There are recordings of listening exercises as well as pronunciation. As a special touch, there is a whole section dedicated to pronunciation. There are four double-pages of pronunciation exercises. Following the pronunciation exercises there is a “Grammar” section which is dedicated to grammar explanations and exercises to practise. The grammar mentioned in this section corresponds to the grammar discussed in the units. However, in the individual units, there is no grammar explained. The units are solely aimed at practice. Following the grammar section, there are answers to the exercises, where the learners can immediately check whether they are correct. At the end of the book there are also some

pages titled as “Extra resources” where ideas for writing, some extra practice or key to some exercises are included. The last two pages provide a “Phonemic Chart” divided into vowels, consonants and diphthongs, and a list of “Irregular verbs” (“Kaplan International”, 2015).

Contents						
Page	Lesson	Grammar	Vocabulary	Speaking	Reading & Listening	Writing
Friends for Life						
64	1	Present Simple	Common verbs and adjectives	Present Simple and Continuous	The English language club	Present Simple and Continuous
68	2	Present Continuous	Common verbs and adjectives	Present Continuous and Future	English language club	Present Continuous and Future
71	3	Present Perfect	Common verbs and adjectives	Present Perfect and Future	English language club	Present Perfect and Future
72	4	Future	Common verbs and adjectives	Future and Future Continuous	English language club	Future and Future Continuous
75	5	Conditional	Common verbs and adjectives	Conditional and Future	English language club	Conditional and Future
76	6	Modal Verbs	Common verbs and adjectives	Modal Verbs and Future	English language club	Modal Verbs and Future
77	7	Passive	Common verbs and adjectives	Passive and Future	English language club	Passive and Future
78	8	Relative Clauses	Common verbs and adjectives	Relative Clauses and Future	English language club	Relative Clauses and Future
79	9	Phrasal Verbs	Common verbs and adjectives	Phrasal Verbs and Future	English language club	Phrasal Verbs and Future
80	10	Idioms	Common verbs and adjectives	Idioms and Future	English language club	Idioms and Future
81	11	Extra resources	Common verbs and adjectives	Extra resources and Future	English language club	Extra resources and Future
82	12	Phonemic Chart	Common verbs and adjectives	Phonemic Chart and Future	English language club	Phonemic Chart and Future
83	13	Irregular Verbs	Common verbs and adjectives	Irregular Verbs and Future	English language club	Irregular Verbs and Future
The World of Work						
84	1	Present Simple	Common verbs and adjectives	Present Simple and Continuous	The English language club	Present Simple and Continuous
88	2	Present Continuous	Common verbs and adjectives	Present Continuous and Future	English language club	Present Continuous and Future
91	3	Present Perfect	Common verbs and adjectives	Present Perfect and Future	English language club	Present Perfect and Future
92	4	Future	Common verbs and adjectives	Future and Future Continuous	English language club	Future and Future Continuous
95	5	Conditional	Common verbs and adjectives	Conditional and Future	English language club	Conditional and Future
96	6	Modal Verbs	Common verbs and adjectives	Modal Verbs and Future	English language club	Modal Verbs and Future
97	7	Passive	Common verbs and adjectives	Passive and Future	English language club	Passive and Future
98	8	Relative Clauses	Common verbs and adjectives	Relative Clauses and Future	English language club	Relative Clauses and Future
99	9	Phrasal Verbs	Common verbs and adjectives	Phrasal Verbs and Future	English language club	Phrasal Verbs and Future
100	10	Idioms	Common verbs and adjectives	Idioms and Future	English language club	Idioms and Future
101	11	Extra resources	Common verbs and adjectives	Extra resources and Future	English language club	Extra resources and Future
102	12	Phonemic Chart	Common verbs and adjectives	Phonemic Chart and Future	English language club	Phonemic Chart and Future
103	13	Irregular Verbs	Common verbs and adjectives	Irregular Verbs and Future	English language club	Irregular Verbs and Future

Picture 2: Contents (source: “Kaplan International”, 2015)

6.2. Choosing the units

By simply looking at the table of contents, the unit names seem clearer in the self-designed coursebook. Comparing just the names, the ones in the *K+ notes* coursebook give a more specific idea of what the topic of the lesson will be. Even though the unit names in *English File* provide some sort of a hint, the topic is not always clear (see *Table 13* below). The table contains an example unit from both coursebooks just for the purposes of illustrating the point:

English File – Unit 2	K+ notes – Unit 1: Friends for Life
A Call the doctor?	1 Caring and Sharing
B Older and wiser?	2 Volunteering
Revise & Check 1&2 Short film <i>The history of surgery</i>	Real World: Finding a Room
	3 Life Lessons
	4 Do good friends make good co-founders?
	Real World: Successful Academic Life

Table 13: Unit names – example (source: Latham-Koenig, C., & Oxenden, C., 2019; “Kaplan International”, 2015)

The unit in the *K+ notes* coursebook seems to be better structured as a unit aimed at a certain topic in its entirety. The reason for this might be the simple issue of formulation, but I noticed this while searching for the two units to compare in greater detail. For easier process of comparison, it was my intention to choose two units with similar topics. While understanding what the topics were about was quite simple in *K+ notes*, the process deemed more complex when searching for the counterpart in *English File*. The unit chosen from *English File* is Unit 3 with its two topics of “A The truth about air travel” and “B Incredibly short stories”, with the following “Colloquial English” section of “Talking about...children's books”. As its counterpart from the self-designed coursebook *K+ notes*, Unit 2 from Book 3 was chosen, called “Being a World Citizen” with its topics (or “lessons” as they are called) of “1 The Best Cities to Move to”, “2 Looking for a Place to Stay”, “3 Culture Shock” and “4 Solving Problems” and the two “Real World” tasks of “Student Discount” and “Inter-cultural Differences”. These two units will be compared in greater detail in the following part of this thesis.

English File – Unit 3	K+ notes – Book 3, Unit 2: Being a World Citizen
A The truth about air travel	1 The Best Cities to Move to
B Incredibly short stories	2 Looking for a Place to Stay
2&3 Colloquial English – Talking about... children's books	Real World: Student Discount
	3 Culture Shock
	4 Solving Problems
	Real World: Inter-cultural Differences

Table 14: Chosen units and their parts for analysis (source: Latham-Koenig, C., & Oxenden, C., 2019; “Kaplan International”, 2015)

6.3. Criteria for analysis

The criteria for analysis were carefully chosen with the help and consultation of various sources. Overall, there are four major categories, which are further divided into a series of sub-categories. These include:

1. General

- a. Organisation
- b. Visuals
- c. Topics/subject content
- d. Culture/social values

2. Language content

- a. General
- b. Grammar
- c. Vocabulary
- d. Phonology
- e. Discourse
- f. Varieties of English

3. Skills

- a. General
- b. Listening

- c. Speaking
- d. Reading
- e. Writing

4. Methodology

These categories represent individual sub-chapters further on in the thesis. For better orientation inside the thesis and better understanding of the individual criteria in relation to the two coursebooks, the analysis was done in a way of stating the topic, e.g. grammar, and then comparing it within the two coursebooks, in the following way:

Grammar
English file
K+ notes

Table 15: Example of thesis structure for analysis

The sources from which the individual criteria were taken all contributed by giving various insights into what is important in a coursebook. The criteria given in the individual sources were compared and put together to create a list of criteria for the purpose of this thesis. The materials were the following:

- Cunningsworth, A. (1995)
- Grant, N. (1987)
- Hanušová, S. (2006)
- Harmer, J. (1991)
- Hatoss, A. (2004)
- Mukundan, J., Hajimohammadi, R., & Nimehchisalem, V. (2011)
- Šamalová, M. (2019). *seminar handout*

The list of criteria:

1. General

a. Organisation

- Q1: How is the content organised (topics, skills, etc.)?
Q2: Are there reference sections for grammar, vocabulary, etc.?
Is some of the material suitable for individual study?
Does it contain key to exercises?
Q3: Is it easy to find your way around the coursebook? Is it attractive?

b. Visuals

- Q4: Are the visuals decorative or are they an integral part of teaching?
Q5: Are the visuals well-produced and attractive?

c. Topics/subject content

- Q6: Are the topics real or imaginary?
Are they interesting?
Are some relevant topics missing?

d. Culture/social values

- Q7: Does it avoid harmful stereotypical views on members of society, races?
Q8: Are women and men portrayed and presented equally?
Q9: Are other groups represented, with reference to ethnic origin, occupation, disability, age, social class?
Q10: Do the characters exist in some kind of social setting – within a social network, and are the relationships portrayed realistically?
Q11: Does it teach culture as well as Culture?
Does it teach surface as well as deep culture?

2. Language content

a. General

- Q12: Is the material adequate in terms of quality and difficulty or usefulness?
Q13: Are the instructions clear?
Q14: Are there enough materials to practise the items?
Q15: Does it achieve a balance between knowledge about the language and practice using it?
Q16: Is the language used realistically?
Is real-life English used?

b. Grammar

Q17: What items are included?

Q18: Is emphasis on language form or use?

How balanced is the treatment of form and use?

Q19: Are the newly introduced items related to and contrasted with items already familiar to the learners?

Q20: Is the grammar contextualised?

Q21: Is there enough practice? How many grammar exercises are there?

c. Vocabulary

Q22: How much vocabulary is taught? What is the range and variety?

Q23: Is vocabulary presented in a structured, purposeful way?

Q24: Does the material enable students to expand their vocabulary independently by helping them to develop their own learning strategies?

Q25: What type of vocabulary-learning activities are used?

Q26: Is the vocabulary suitable?

Is there enough practice?

d. Phonology

Q27: How thoroughly and systematically are each of the following aspects of the phonological system covered – individual sounds, assimilation, word stress, sentence stress, weak forms, intonation?

Q28: Is the phonemic alphabet used?

Are students given any training in learning it?

Q29: Are there pronunciation exercises?

Q30: Are there recordings of pronunciation practice?

e. Discourse

Q31: Does the coursebook deal with the structuring and conventions of language use above sentence level (how to take part in conversations, etc.)?

Q32: Do the examples of written and spoken discourse provide good models for the learners?

f. Varieties of English

Q33: Which geographical variety is taught?

Q34: Is there any reference to other varieties?

3. Skills

a. General

- Q35: Is practice of all four skills included? Is it balanced?
- Q36: Are skills integrated in realistic contexts?
- Q37: Does the coursebook use authentic material at an appropriate level?
- Q38: What kind of comprehension questions are asked?
- Q39: Are accuracy and fluency balanced in speaking and writing?

b. Listening

- Q40: What kind of listening material is contained in the course?
- Q41: What kind of activities are based on the listening passages?
- Q42: Is the listening material set in a meaningful context?
- Q43: Are the tasks authentic and/or close to real-life situations?

c. Speaking

- Q44: How much emphasis is on spoken English?
- Q45: What kind of speaking material is contained in the course?
- Q46: Are there any specific strategies for conversations or other spoken activities?
- Q47: Are activities balanced between individual, pair and group work?

d. Reading

- Q48: How many texts for reading are there?
- Q49: How long are the texts?
- Q50: How authentic are the texts?
- Q51: Does the material help comprehension? (setting the scene, background information, pre-reading questions,...)
- Q52: What kind of comprehension questions are asked?

e. Writing

- Q53: How does the material handle: controlled writing, guided writing, free or semi-free writing?
- Q54: Are the conventions of different kinds of writing taught? Which ones and how?
- Q55: Is there emphasis on the style of written English?
- Q56: Are learners encouraged to review and edit their own written work?
- Q57: Is the writing material suitable and interesting?

4. Methodology

- Q58: How are communicative abilities developed?
- Q59: Does the material include any advice/help to students on study skills and learning strategies?
- Q60: Are students expected to take a certain degree of responsibility for their own learning?
- Q61: Is focus on inductive or deductive learning? Or are they balanced?
- Q62: What is the attitude towards error?
- Q63: Is there a self-evaluation aspect?

I believe that the list of criteria was well-chosen and the data gathered based on it provided an insight into the characteristics of the two compared coursebooks. The data then helped determine whether the self-designed coursebook may have any advantages compared to the commercially published one and thus provided the desired answers.

6.4. Analysis of the coursebooks in comparison

Before the actual analysis, I would like to make a note that the two coursebooks are used in different environments. Even though they are both widely used in language schools, the policy differs, which may slightly influence the structure of the book and how it is worked with inside the classroom.

In a sense, the two coursebooks are similar in the way they both create a syllabus for the school. While *English File* is more liberal, and only a certain guideline is given on how much should be covered by a set date, with *K+ notes* the situation is stricter as the books are changed every two weeks, meaning that one unit in the book should be covered in a week. With *English File*, it is possible to return to certain items, however with *K+ notes*, once the book is gone, it is gone, and it is not worked with anymore in the classroom.

On the other hand, the actual environment the books are used in is widely different and influences the use of the coursebook. *English File* is made with an idea of it being used by a language school within one country, or is often encountered in a similar environment. The language school is attended by learners with the same mother-tongue, who want to learn the English language. It might not even be a language school, as my personal experience with this particular book started in one seminar during grammar school and then again during practical language courses at university. However, the structure fits the idea of a language school. These types of schools have lessons approximately once or twice per week, creating a certain pressure

for the teachers to follow the coursebook in order to fulfil the syllabus. The situation slightly differs with *K+ notes*. The language school the book was designed for is more intensive in a sense that the learners go there every day for approximately four hours, thus spending about twenty hours per week with the book and learning English. Additionally, the school is international, meaning that it houses learners from around the world who are interested in learning English. Even though the teachers need to complete one unit per week, due to the increase in contact hours (per week), they have seemingly more time to work with the content of the coursebook, as it is the main working material of the course, but can contribute with additional materials and activities as well.

For the purposes of the thesis, two specific units were chosen to be analysed in detail. The units were chosen based on their similarity in terms of the topic of the unit, which is connected to travelling in both cases. However, for better understanding of the books, the contents of the whole coursebook were taken into consideration and noted, if the specific unit did not provide satisfactory data. This is however further specified for the individual criteria.

6.4.1. General

As the first criterion consisted of more general questions asked about the coursebooks, the contents of the whole coursebooks were analysed. First, the content of the chosen units was looked upon but then the whole coursebook was compared to see whether the original characteristics would be applicable to the material in general.

Organisation

Q1: How is the content organised?⁶

English File

At the beginning of each unit, there is a little table at the top of the page where grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation are specified for the unit. Inside the unit, the individual sections of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, but of individual language skills as well, are clearly divided by headings. The book is very clearly organised and individual sections can be distinguished at first sight, mainly thanks to colour-coding of the units. The content

⁶ There is a more detailed description of the structure and content in the previous section of the thesis.

of the units is organised vertically into columns, which might be confusing at first, but adds a little distinction among other coursebooks.

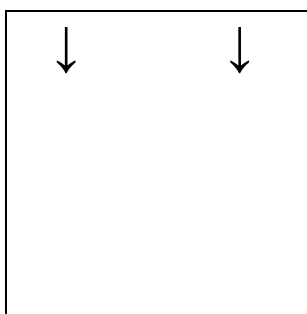


Figure 3: Vertical organisation of *English File*

K+ notes

At the beginning of each unit, there is a little overview at the top of the page which states what the lesson includes in the form of goals. The content is further divided by headings inside the units, e.g. Pre-reading, Reading, Speaking, Language focus, etc.

Overall, the structure of the units might become repetitive and mundane after some time as all the units follow approximately the same layout → speaking – listening or reading – language focus (grammar or vocabulary) – writing or speaking. Otherwise, there is a clear structure and organisation of the individual aspects and of the content. Unlike *English File*, *K+ notes* is organised horizontally.

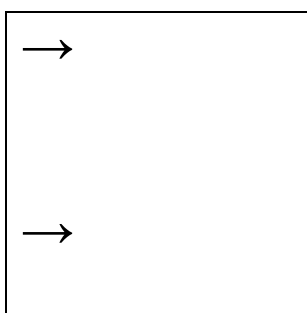


Figure 4: Horizontal organisation in *K+ notes*

- Q2: Are there reference sections for grammar, vocabulary, etc.?
Is some of the material suitable for individual study?
Does it contain key to exercises?

English File

Some of the grammar items are briefly explained and accompanied by a series of exercises for practice directly in the unit. However, that is occasional, as there is only one such case in Unit 3 and that is “so/such...that”. Inside the unit there are links to the “Grammar bank” at the end of the book where the grammar is explained in greater detail, or for the first time, with further exercises to practise. The same goes for vocabulary or pronunciation, which are inside the unit accompanied by a link to the “banks” where further practice or explanations can be found.

The material would seem appropriate for self-study in terms of how the activities are done and structured, however the key to the exercises is not included as it can be only located in the Teacher's Book and it thus is not suitable for self-study.

K+ notes

There are references to grammar or pronunciation. It is usually in the form of a little table at the bottom of the page with a page number where further exercises can be found. Furthermore, inside the unit there are no explanations for grammar, it is just plain practice, and the explanations are located at the end of the coursebook in the grammar section.

It seems more suitable for self-study than *English File*, with the reason being mainly the fact that there is a key provided for the further practice of grammar in the grammar section at the end of the book. In this specific book (Book 3), there is also one key for a pronunciation exercise, which is of a True or False design. However, it is also not fully suitable for self-study.

- Q3: Is it easy to find your way around the coursebook?
Is the layout clear? Is it attractive?

English File

It is fairly easy to find one's way around the coursebook as the table of contents at the beginning is detailed and the individual units are colour-coded, so even when one is going through the coursebook, the structure is noticeable, and the colours inside are bright and

lively, making the content appealing to the eye. Even the links to the individual “banks” inside the units are colour-coded, to align with the actual banks at the end of the coursebook (i.e. vocabulary is green, grammar is blue and pronunciation is pink).

K+ notes

The coursebook is easy to navigate as it has got a clear layout with a detailed table of contents at the beginning. The inside layout is simple and ordinary as there is a normal horizontal one (as opposed to the unusual vertical layout in *English File*).

The colours feel a bit dull as there is an overall grey with shades of green. The colours distinguish the books, i.e. Book 3 is green, so the insides are green, Book 2 is orange and Book 1 is red. The colours, however, do not distinguish the units in any way, so it is probable to take longer to find one's way inside. The colours themselves are not bright but more faded, dim, and they do not captivate the user. They are on the more serious, simplistic, and sophisticated spectrum, compared to the brightness and liveliness of *English File*.

Visuals

Q4: Are the visuals decorative or an integral part of teaching?

English File

It appears to be fifty-fifty. There are visuals which are plainly decorative, usually used to set the mood or to illustrate the point or the topic, but sometimes they are designed in a way to help with understanding of the vocabulary or simply visualising the issue at hand, thus helping with the learning process. There are also some visuals that are used directly in the tasks.

K+ notes

Overall, the visuals seem plainly decorative. Even though there are some that are used directly within the tasks (e.g. match phrases with pictures, describe the photo, etc.), these occur scarcely throughout the chosen unit. Approximately five pictures out of eighteen are used directly for a task. Also, some of the pictures seem a bit extra and out of place, as if they were placed there just to fill an empty space, without any higher purpose (see in the *Appendices*, Appendix 13). All the same, they contribute and illustrate the theme of the lessons within the unit. Compared to the visuals in *English File*, the pictures that are purely decorative are seemingly more noticeable in *K+ notes*.

Q5: Are the visuals well-produced and attractive?

English File

The visuals are well-produced and of a great quality. Sometimes the drawings are humorous, to lighten up the atmosphere of the topics. There are pictures or drawings accompanying the tasks, which sometimes makes it feel like there is a lot happening on the page, and there is less space for writing inside the book, for little notes, etc. However, it also ensures that it is attractive as it is colourful, the pictures are nice, and the font of writing is pleasant. Nevertheless, both the photos and pictures are always well-placed on the page.

K+ notes

They are well-produced and of a good quality. However, sometimes they are very small (Book 3, page 27) or not as attractive (Book 3, page 27, 29, 32, 35, 38). On the other hand, other visuals are pleasing to the eye and useful for the learning (Book 3, page 25, 28, 31). All examples of these pictures can be seen in the *Appendices* (Appendix 11, 12 and 14). Although the placement on the page is quite simple, there seems to be more space around the content, so it is possible to make notes.

Topics/Subject content

Q6: Are the topics real or imaginary?
Are they interesting?
Are some relevant topics missing?

English File

All of the topics are real and what is more, they are interesting and up-to-date. There is a wide variety of topics, such as online world, science, relationships, emotions, mental health, ecology and environment.

The topics that are missing and I find relevant are connected to culture as the cultural topics mentioned are very broad and general, such as weather, clothes, etc. When it comes to nationalities, even though fairly briefly, there are mentions of Russians, Americans, British, Canadian and South African people in some scenarios. However, there are hardly any other nationalities mentioned, let alone their culture. On the other hand, the coursebook does acknowledge cultural variety in the form of asking the learners to comment on what certain aspects look like or are dealt with in their country/region/city (e.g. page 75, 81, 87, and 89). Furthermore, there are some world cities mentioned in the topic of “Megacities”,

which are Tokyo and Mexico City. However, there is no in depth focus on culture. The topic of gender, for example, is mentioned within the topic of relationships, in terms of the different ways men and women argue, which is not very encouraging nor is it sufficient.

K+ notes

Similarly to *English File*, the topics are real and interesting, with a lot of diversity included. Additionally, the topics in *K+ notes* seem to be innovative and practical as well. The topics in Book 3, in which the chosen unit is located, are connected to myths, in terms of health, science, gender or advertising. The second unit is concerned with moving abroad and the issues that come with it, such as looking for a place to stay, dealing with culture shock. Some of the other topics in the other books include friends and relationships, work environment, volunteering, online world, or memories and the past.

The topics are based on real-life situations, they are interesting, innovative and thought-provoking. Sometimes, an already existing topic is done with a different angle in mind or there is a topic that is not that common in other coursebooks, such as “Gender Myths”, which I believe is an important topic to talk about in today's day and age and it is here better dealt with than in *English File*.

As I do not have access to all the books within the cycle, I cannot truly say what topics might be missing, however, what is evident is that more culture-oriented topics could be included, even more so as the coursebooks were designed for an international audience. There are hints at cultural topics, such as moving abroad and dealing with culture shock, inter-cultural differences or discussing arts in the past, but the variety and the coverage could be broader and deeper. Nonetheless, the coursebook encourages the learners to discuss the differences that might surface between their current country of residence and their home country (Book 3, page 31).

Summary

Both coursebooks work with real topics, which are interesting and useful for the future of the learners. However, what could be more covered are culture-related topics. On the other hand, the topics in *K+ notes* seem to be practical above all else. This can be particularly noted in the Unit 2 of Book 3 where the topic of moving abroad is discussed with some the most vital issues, like choosing the right city, looking for a place to stay, or negotiating with landlords. This practicality of the topics is a big advantage of the coursebook.

Culture/Social values

Q7: Does it avoid harmful stereotypical views on members of society or races?

English File

It definitely tries to avoid any harmful stereotypes and it encourages discussion where this could potentially occur, e.g. page 21, where tattoos, coloured or long hair on different genders and ages are to be talked about, or on page 103, which portrays a homeless man returning a lost ring, picturing him as a good person, not someone to be necessarily scared of. On the other hand, there are some examples which seem fully stereotypical, for example on page 36 British people are pictured talking about the weather. Additionally, on pages 46 to 47 where the topic of “Lost in the Jungle” is introduced, there is a picture of two members of a tribe on a canoe, which might also not be completely necessary for the purposes of the article. Furthermore, there are only male scientists in the science topic.

K+ notes

Similarly to *English File*, the books do try to avoid any stereotypes, however they seem to be lacking in terms of cultural diversity, mainly considering that the coursebook is aimed at English speaking countries all over the world and with it the coming wide variety of nationalities. Even though there are other ethnicities mentioned or pictured, it is predominantly white people who can be seen. Even in terms of families or groups of friends, there seem to be mainly white people even though sometimes mixed with other ethnicities. One point where the books go directly against stereotypes is in Book 3 in the lesson on “Gender Myths”, where it discusses stereotypes concerning men and women and why the particular stereotypes are wrong.

Q8: Are women and men portrayed and presented equally?

English File

Yes, women are pictured in important positions, such as a doctor, interviewer, writers, famous women, etc. However, whenever some health issues are mentioned, it is usually women portrayed with these issues, such as cyberchondriac, diets, etc., with an exception of a male insomniac on page 60. When the topic of science is discussed, there are only male scientists represented, not a single woman, plus in the topics of “Important voices”, there is only one woman among three other men. The only time the two genders are somehow

compared and contrasted is on page 65, where the topic of “How men and women argue” is discussed. On page 24 there is a photo of flight attendants and pilots, in which I believe women and men are pictured as both pilots and flight attendants. Therefore, there is definitely a tendency to portray men and women equally, however I believe there could be more done towards the issue of equality.

K+ notes

Yes, it seems like the books do not really take gender into consideration in terms that it does not really matter which one is portrayed. There are photos of groups of friends, which are usually mixed, men and women, as well as women pictured at universities, in offices, interviews, and hospitals. There are no signs of stereotyping or discrimination in a sense that women would be portrayed in strictly stereotypical positions. As an example, in Book 2 on page 16 there is the topic of “Important historical figures” and two out of three of the figures are female, i.e. Joan of Arc and Boudica, with one male, i.e. Robin Hood. On the other hand, in Book 3 on page 31 there is a photo of a group of people shopping and it is the women who are pictured with more shopping bags, which might again be stereotypical.

Q9: Are other groups represented, with reference to ethnic origin, occupation, disability, age, social class?

English File

There is not a lot of cultural or any other diversity portrayed. It is mainly white people who are pictured, there are no people with disabilities and no LGBT couples. The couples pictured are always a man and a woman. Not a lot of diversity in terms of age either, there are mainly young adults or adults (unless they are famous people), but no elderly. There is, however, a great variety in terms of occupation, which are often connected to the topics, e.g. doctors, pilots, artists, flight attendants, writers, actors and actresses, chefs, etc. Even though these are mainly more high-profile jobs, there is still a great variety.

K+ notes

Again, similarly to *English File*, there is not a lot of cultural or any other diversity. There are predominantly white people portrayed with no mixed couples or families and no LGBT couples. When it comes to age, there are mainly young adults and only a handful of elderly people pictured. This can be justified by the age group the books are aimed at, as it is mainly students and therefore not a lot of jobs mentioned and if, they are usually office jobs. There

is a lesson on “Volunteering”, which is a nice touch as it is not really talked about that much and the themes or areas for volunteering mentioned are environment, elderly people, breast cancer and refugees. Additionally, there are no disabled people pictured. However, in Book 1 there is a topic of “Unusual jobs” and in Book 2 there is a topic of “Generation gap”, so it does try to bring up some of the more inclusive topics.

Q10: Do the characters exist in some kind of social setting – within a social network, and are the relationships portrayed realistically?

English File

There are no specific characters that would appear throughout the book, as is sometimes the case with coursebooks for children. However, the characters are often portrayed as individuals or in a social setting depending on the topic, such as interviews, flight crew, etc. Additionally, the relationships mentioned are realistic, for instance job interviews on page 6 or arguing in a relationship on page 64.

K+ notes

Similarly to *English File*, there are no specific characters accompanying the learners throughout the whole book. People pictured in the photos are however usually in some kind of a social setting, such as groups of friends, families, but also roommates, colleagues, couples or people at job interviews, there are also some individuals. Usually the setting depends on the topic being discussed. In Book 3 there is the topic of “Culture Shock” or negotiation between a landlord and a tenant. The books thus try to focus on the normal and more positive aspects as well as the issues people might have in different kinds of social settings.

Summary

Even though the social situations are realistic in both coursebooks, such as job interviews, a man and woman arguing, a generation gap between parents and children, negotiating between a landlord and a tenant, or solving issues over the phone, the pictures accompanying the situations sometimes appear stereotypical in a sense that people are smiling in them, not necessarily during the arguing or negotiating, but in general.

- Q11: Does it teach culture as well as Culture?
Does it teach surface as well as deep culture?

English File

There are no units or topics directly working with culture in any sense. However, there are occasional mentions of parts of everyday life like weather, clothes, how to prepare for an interview, cybercrime, environment, etc., thus discussing culture. The book occasionally mentions something about music, arts, or writers, thus focusing on Culture. It also mainly focuses more on surface culture. Additionally, the book does not teach culture with any specific culture in mind, the content aimed at culture is fairly general, and if, then it is influenced by and leaning towards British culture.

K+ notes

Culture is mentioned in Book 2 in the topic of “The World's Oldest Art” where there are tasks connected to different kinds of art and its styles. On the other hand, culture is dealt with in the form of discussing house sharing, job interviews, travelling, culture shock or health. Therefore there are both forms of surface and deep culture involved, even though surface culture is not dealt with in great detail and deep culture mainly in the form of relationships or culture shock. Generally speaking, the aim of the books is to talk about culture more in a social setting than being focused on one kind of culture or its nation. However, throughout the book, the content seems to be more related to British aspects (for example in the form of currency mentioned), with small mentions of American aspects.

Summary

There are some aspects of the books that are similar, be it in a good or bad way. For instance, there is not a lot of actual culture taught in either of the books, culture in this sense meaning customs, holidays or habits of a nation. Culture in both books is perceived in a more general way, which teaches the learners more about social situations and general vocabulary about weather, health, etc. Even though there is no target culture, the content seems to be generally more relying on British aspects (e.g. currency, people, etc.), with some but scarce exceptions of American culture. Similarly, there is not a lot of diversity and inclusion in the books. Even though both books are designed with a younger audience in mind, there are no signs of any mixed couples, in a racial or gender way, there are hardly any elderly people, no disabled

people, and even in terms of ethnicities it seems to be picturing people more on the white spectrum.

When it comes to the composition of the books, there are differences in the layout, with *English File* being organised vertically, while *K+ notes* being organised horizontally on a page. This aspect of the books is however a matter of subjective preference or what people can get used to. On the other hand, attractiveness seems to more in favour of *English File*, as there are more colours, included even as codes for individual units, and the visuals seem to be more inclusive inside the units. However, some people might prefer the simplicity of *K+ notes*.

The topics in both of the books are realistic while being interesting, modern and thought-provoking at the same time. While *English File* is more focused on simply discussing the topics and exchanging opinions, *K+ notes* made the topics a bit more practical in a sense that in some way the topics are directly practised in a form of role-play (negotiating, problem solving) in terms of speaking or in any appropriate form of writing (writing an advice e-mail to a student about how to deal with culture shock).

In conclusion, in terms of the general aspects of the coursebooks, there are both advantages and disadvantages to both of the coursebooks. In *English File* the attractiveness and more thought-through design are in favour, on the other hand the practicality of the tasks in *K+ notes* is remarkable.

6.4.2. Language content

This criterion is more narrowly focused on the content and aspects of the individual chosen units with only a few mentions of what the rest of the coursebooks consists of.

General

Q12: Is the material adequate in terms of quality and difficulty or usefulness?

English File

Yes, the material used is of great quality. There are authentic articles which are adapted for the appropriate level and the exercises are designed in a thoughtful way. There is great attention to detail as in helping the learners understand what the tasks require them to do, e.g. if they are supposed to work with bold words in a text, the word bold is bold in the instructions, similarly with highlighted or circled words.

In terms of difficulty, the tasks seem to go in depth of the topic as they try to practise the topics from several angles. The overall difficulty seems to match the level B2, in terms

of types of exercises and grammar or vocabulary and the way they are practised. The length of exercises also reflects the level, as they are more complex.

K+ notes

Yes, the material is adequate in terms of the content. It does not focus much on the language content, it much prefers skills and practising them, which is in line with the overall practicality of the coursebook.

The grammar is adequate also in a sense that the exercises are based on the previous reading or listening, thus using it in context. The overall difficulty of exercises is adequate to the level. Sometimes the difficulty of exercises may seem lower due to the phrases being used in the previous texts or recordings, or previous exercises, which is the case in Lesson 2 where first the phrases are to be matched with their meanings and the following exercise requires the learners to complete the same phrases (i.e. gap fill).

Q13: Are the instructions clear?

English File

Yes, the instructions are clear and comprehensible. They are set in a very simple manner, i.e. the sentences are short rather than long, they are to the point and specific. The instructions are often set in more steps as they are broken down into smaller chunks (e.g. 6 a b c d e) and not set at once if the exercise involves more activities.

K+ notes

Yes, they are clear as a simple language is used and the sentences are short. The instructions are to the point and similarly to *English File*, sometimes broken down into more steps. I also noticed some mistakes, which are negligible and mainly typing errors, for example the instructions are referring back to page 13 instead of 33 in Lesson 3.

Q14: Are there enough materials to practise the items?

English File

Yes, there is a variety of activities practising grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation (usually two items of each) as well as focusing on all four skills. As there are hardly any explanations in the unit, there is a lot of space for actually practising the issues, and not only inside the unit but also in the revision pages, and the “banks” at the end of the book.

K+ notes

There is definitely enough to practise the language in terms of working with the topics and using various skills. On the other hand, vocabulary practice seems a bit underestimated as there is no “Vocabulary bank” as there is in *English File*. This unit was designed in a way that it is supposed to give the learners the language needed for using the language, in the form of structured role-plays or given phrases to use.

Q15: Does it achieve a balance between knowledge about the language and practice using it?

English File

Inside of the unit focuses mainly on practice, only once is some grammar explained directly and even then mainly examples are used, not just plain theory. Grammar is explained in more detail at the end of the book in the “Grammar bank”. There is usually half a page of explanations together with examples and the rest of the page is dedicated to practice. Similarly to grammar, vocabulary is practised, not explained in the unit, there is translation included in the wordlist. Pronunciation is solely practised in the unit. Only occasionally are there some explanations included throughout the book, but it is scarce and mainly informative. So yes, it is balanced with greater emphasis on practising the items.

K+ notes

The content is definitely more focused on actually using the language as there are no explanations inside the unit. Some explanations are at the end of book inside the grammar section, with usually a page of theory and examples, and a page of further exercises. There are some pronunciation rules in the pronunciation section at the end of the book, which is usually a whole page, or a bit more, of pronunciation material. Even though the explanations are not extensive, it still might be too theoretical for the learners. Furthermore, they are not simple rules but the information is gapped and the learners need to figure the rule out by filling the gaps. This could be controversial as it might be helpful and the learners may remember the rule better, or it could be too confusing for them as the focus and attention might shift from the actual usage to theory. Overall, the books focus definitely more on practice than on factual knowledge of the language.

Q16: Is the language used realistically? Is real-life English used?

English File

Yes, the language used is realistically with real-life English that the learners are expected to encounter, both in terms of instructions as well as articles, grammar, vocabulary, etc.

K+ notes

Yes, the language is based on real-life situations. The topics also create real-life scenarios the learners then use to practise the language content, which creates the practical aspect of the unit (such as negotiating with a landlord).

Grammar

Q17: What items are included?

English File

In Unit 3, the grammar includes narrative tenses, past perfect continuous, so/such...that, and position of adverbs in a sentence. The grammar in the whole book consists of auxiliary verbs, present perfect, future perfect and future continuous, zero and first conditionals, unreal conditionals, wish structures, gerunds and infinitives, used to, past modals, passive, reporting verbs, articles, qualifiers, and clauses of contrast and purpose. The grammar included seems adequate to the level as there are some more complex and detailed items.

K+ notes

In Unit2, the grammar consists of relative clauses, both defining and non-defining. In the other unit of Book 3, the grammar includes if only and wish as well as second, third and mixed conditionals. In Book 1, there are –ed and –ing adjectives, past modals, articles with abstract nouns, past simple and continuous, and present perfect simple and continuous. In Book 2, the grammar includes past tenses, would and used to, gerunds and to-infinitives, and grammar for future plans, intentions, predictions and arrangements. Obviously, only three books are available, so not every grammar item can be mentioned, but the grammar included here seems to be adequate to the level and it also goes in depth of the issue. It seems to be dedicating more space to certain items and generally, the grammar is more spread out, since not everything is in one book.

- Q18: Is emphasis on language form or use?
How balanced is the treatment of form and use?

English File

The focus is definitely more on use rather than form. Even if there is a bit of theory inside the unit, it is usually in the form of examples or a lot of the time the form of learning is inductive where the learners are using articles or grammar exercises to understand the grammar. For example on page 26 there is the topic of narrative tenses and past perfect continuous with no explanations involved and the learners need to work with the accompanying article. The issue is however explained in detail in the “Grammar bank”. Additionally, even the “Grammar bank” does not overly focus on theory as it is split half and half a page between theory and practice.

K+ notes

Inside of the unit definitely focuses more on use as there is only practice of about a page, which can, similarly to *English File*, be drawn from the preceding activities of reading or listening. In the grammar section at the back, there is usually a page of theory and examples, and a page of further practice. However, overall, there is more focus on use.

- Q19: Are newly introduced items related to and contrasted with items already familiar to the learners?

English File

Usually, the learners should be familiar with some of the items, thus the book focuses on broadening their knowledge. This is the case for past perfect in Unit 3, which is already discussed in the previous Intermediate version of the coursebook. In this version, the past perfect is contrasted with past simple and continuous, and it is set into the topic of narrative tenses, which is new for the learners. It can thus be said that the coursebook builds on already existing knowledge.

K+ notes

Yes, for example in the chosen unit, the first grammar item that is discussed is relative defining clauses which are later contrasted with relative non-defining clauses. There are activities where the learners need to look for differences between the two, comparing them

and practising them together, thus they have to be able to distinguish between them. The book is hence building on already existing knowledge, similarly to *English File*.

Q20: Is the grammar contextualised?

English File

Yes, the grammar discussed in 3A, i.e. narrative tenses, is presented in an article and then used again in 3B for writing a story, which enables the learners to put their knowledge to practice. Grammar from 3B, i.e. position of adverbs, is first presented in an article, from which the learners also need to deduce the use and meaning of adverbs. Additionally, the themes are always used in context of the topic of the lesson.

K+ notes

Yes, the grammar is used in contexts with relevance to the topic of the unit. The grammar practice in the unit follows the listening or reading from where the sentences are taken. Then, the grammar is practised in writing or speaking. The lessons within the unit are usually wholesome in this way while sticking to one topic in all aspects of the lesson.

Q21: Is there enough practice? How many exercises are there?

English File

There is a great number of grammar exercises per unit. In the chosen unit, there are eight pages altogether and from that 2.25 are taken up by grammar, which makes it approximately 28%. Additionally, there are two whole pages of “Grammar bank”, which are connected to this unit, as well as half a page of grammar in the revision double page. The amount of practice is suitable as well as the individual exercises. Grammar is definitely not overwhelming for the learners, as the book focuses generally more on the language skills, but it is not underrated either.

There are also various types of grammar exercises and some of them include gap fill, circling correct forms, finishing sentences, matching examples to definitions, putting the adverbial to the appropriate position in a sentence, putting verbs in brackets into correct forms, underlining the adverb and correcting its position if it is wrong, etc.

K+ notes

In Unit 2, there are sixteen pages altogether and only two out of that are dedicated to grammar, which makes it approximately 12.5%. Additionally, there are further four pages of grammar in the grammar section at the back, two with theory and two with practice. Grammar is also practised in “Consolidation”, in the revision section, which is about half a page. The grammar learnt in the “Language focus” is then also practised by the learners in the following activities, which is either speaking or writing.

The exercises seem to be suitable for the learners in terms of the level and there is also a great variety of them, such as underlining the correct option, gap fill, also asking more theoretical questions (“in which sentence can we omit the relative pronoun and why”, “which relative pronoun can be replaced by who/which”, “which relative pronoun do we use to talk about...”, etc., p. 26), rewrite sentences so that it has the same meaning, combine two sentence using a relative pronoun, rewrite sentences using defining or non-defining clauses, etc.

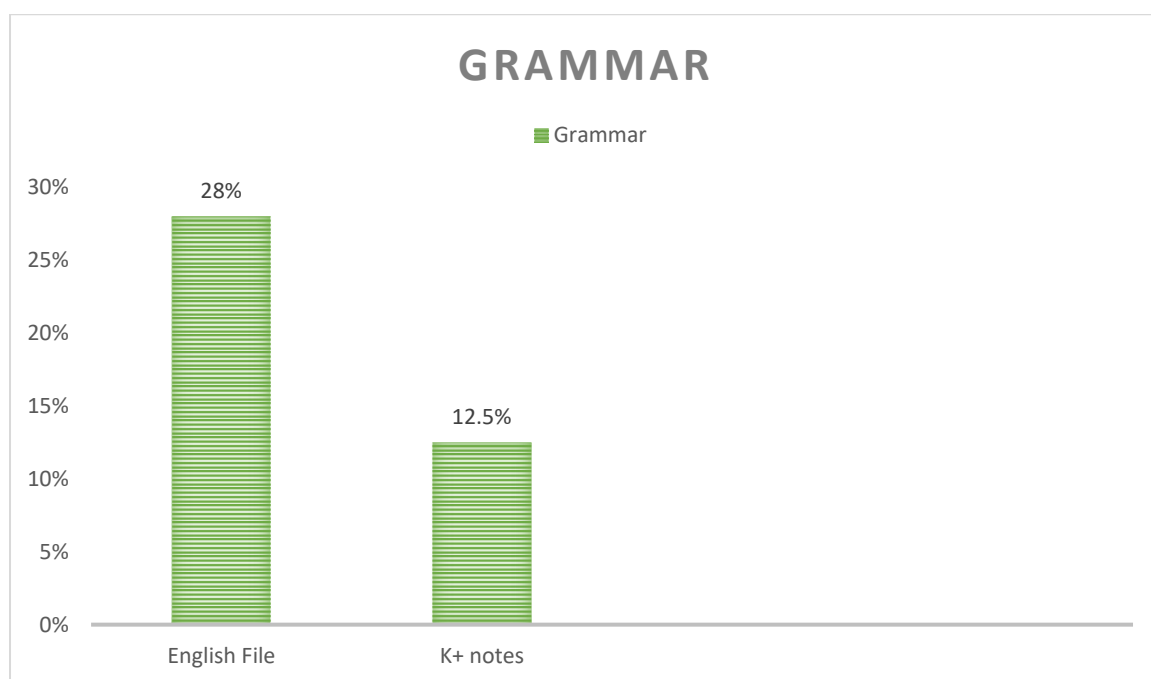


Figure 5: Grammar input

Vocabulary

Q22: How much vocabulary is taught?

What is the range and variety?

English File

There are two types of vocabulary taught in the chosen unit – air travel (3A) and adverbs and adverbial phrases (3B). Within the unit there are two sections directly dedicated to vocabulary, even though one is combined with listening and the other one is fairly short. Altogether, vocabulary takes up about half a page out of eight in the unit, which makes it approximately 6%. Additionally, there are two full pages of further vocabulary practice in “Vocabulary bank” as well as half a page in the revision section.

The other vocabulary in the whole book includes topics of compound adjectives and modifiers, illnesses and injuries, clothes and fashion, the environment and the weather, feelings, music, sleep, the body, crime and punishment, the media, advertising and business, science, collocations, and word building. Usually, the theme of the vocabulary corresponds with the topic of the unit, unless it is a more technical theme and it is also important to mention that new vocabulary can be learnt anywhere, in the articles, listening activities, without it being intended by the book.

K+ notes

Similarly to *English File*, there is a great range and variety of vocabulary and it is also focused on teaching phrases as well as singular words. The type of vocabulary in the chosen unit is the following: negotiating, summarising information and giving advice, and describing damage and defect. In other units and books the vocabulary includes health, expressing agreement and disagreement, advertising, time linkers, verb and noun collocations, art, online activities, personalities and feelings, idiomatic expressions, adverbial phrases, unusual jobs, and certainty, probability and doubt.

In the chosen unit, vocabulary takes up 1.75 out of sixteen pages, which is approximately 11%. There is another 0.25 of a page dedicated to vocabulary in the revision activities. The vocabulary in this unit is more focused on phrases useful for the situations portrayed by the topics. However, in the other units there are vocabulary activities dedicated to learning individual words as vocabulary as well. Vocabulary is usually learnt in an inductive way as the activities are based on the preceding listening or reading passages and only then practised in “Language focus” as individual exercises.

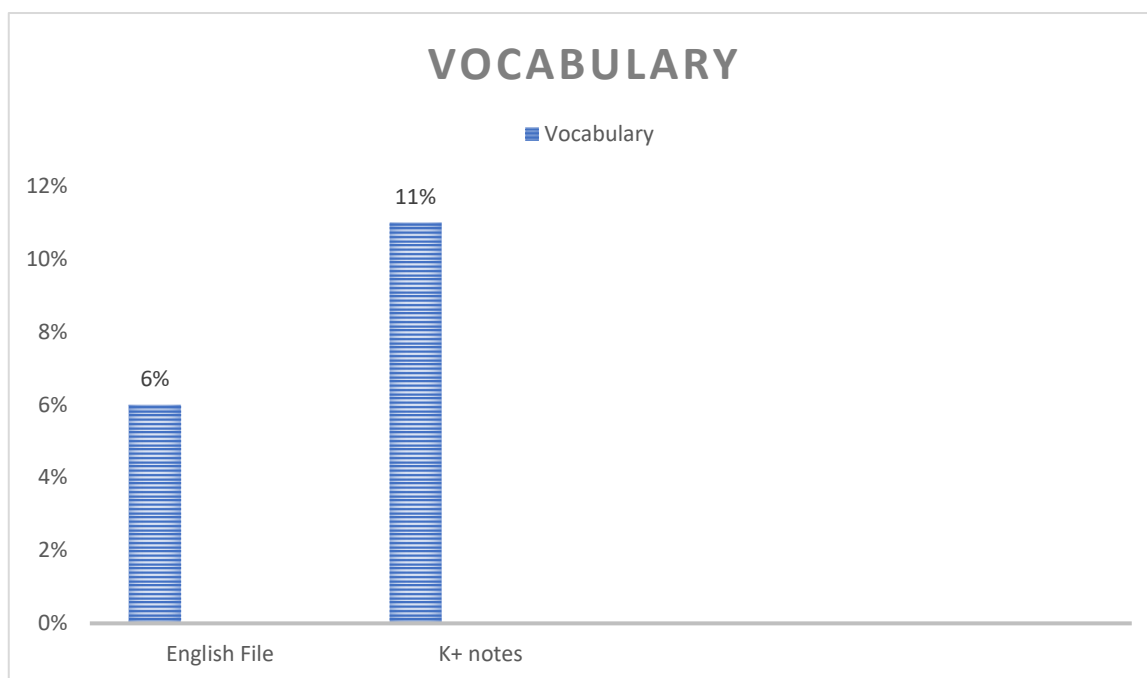


Figure 6: Vocabulary input

Q23: Is vocabulary presented in a structured, purposeful way?

English File

The vocabulary is done in a fun and interesting way with a lot of practice. Even though there is not a lot of vocabulary practised directly in the unit, it is compensated in the “Vocabulary bank” at the end of the coursebook where a lot more space is dedicated to practising the vocabulary.

K+ notes

The vocabulary is usually first presented as a part of a text or recording, which is the first encounter the learners have with the vocabulary in context, therefore it is purposeful as it shows the learners how it is used. Then the meaning of the vocabulary is practised in the “Language focus” and then it is practised again in realistic situations in the form of speaking or writing. Overall, this seems like a meaningful and useful way of presenting and working with new vocabulary, at least compared to *English File*, it definitely seems more structured and purposeful.

Q24: Does the material enable students to expand their own vocabularies independently by helping them to develop their own learning strategies?

English File

There are usually given instructions how to work with the vocabulary and even though the activities are definitely great, the question is how many of them would be appropriate for self-study. Some of the activities involve using synonyms, comparing different forms of the word (word building), matching the word with its definition or gap fill. The learners can certainly adapt some of the activities and use them for their own independent learning, like using synonyms, looking up definitions and using the word in a sentence. They can also focus on learning how to work with texts while learning new vocabulary from it.

K+ notes

Similarly to *English File*, the book works with the vocabulary in a pretty set way and the learners may only be left with certain ideas how they could work with other new vocabulary when learning on their own. Some of the types of activities again involve gap fill or matching the word to its definition. It can be said that the activities involved may function as some kind of suggestions to the learners how they can work with new vocabulary.

Q25: What type of vocabulary-learning activities are used?

English File

The unit works with synonyms in terms of matching them, matching information to pictures or definition to the word, comparing different forms of the word (e.g. hard and hardly), gap fill (e.g. choose from the given words; usually in the form of a full text, not just separate sentences), and phrasal verbs. Some other types of activities from the whole book include recognising and distinguishing synonyms and explaining the differences, guessing from context, completing phrases, circling correct form of the word from a pair, creating a correct form from a given word, and cloze test. There is definitely a great variety of activities, which ensures that the vocabulary is practised from different angles and in different ways, and it is thus not repetitive and boring for the learners.

K+ notes

There seems to be less variety in terms of the types of activities as the most common one appearing is gap fill and matching the word with its meaning/definition. One more type of exercise from Unit 2 is matching a beginning of a sentence to its end. However, some of the other exercises from the other books include completing sentences, choosing correct word from two options, using synonyms or word building.

Q26: Is the vocabulary suitable?
 Is there enough practice?

English File

Yes, the vocabulary is suitable as it accompanies the topics and complements the learning process, thus ensuring the learners can talk about the topics with rich vocabulary. It is definitely level appropriate in terms of difficulty and how the vocabulary is practised. It also builds and enlarges the vocabulary topics already known to the learner, such as in Unit 2 with the topic of illnesses and injuries as it goes into more detail and introduces more complex vocabulary. There is enough practice, without a doubt, as there are exercises aimed at vocabulary practice inside the units, in the revision and also in the “Vocabulary bank”. However, it is definitely not overwhelming for the learners.

K+ notes

The vocabulary is suitable for the level as there are definitely new expressions and it sometimes works with the words in a more advanced and theoretical way, for example in Book 3 Unit 1 on page 6 the task is to distinguish whether the word is an adverb or adjective. On the other hand, some of the exercises in the “Language focus” may be too simple, like for example Book 3 Unit 2 on page 29 where the learners are supposed to complete the phrases with the phrases being in full form in the previous exercise. However, vocabulary is definitely practised in a structured and useful way as the phrases are later put to practice during speaking and writing, which is an example of the chosen unit as it is more focused on whole phrases. On the contrary, sometimes the vocabulary is not practised further by the language skills if it is singular words, and thus evokes passive vocabulary. There is also revision in the “Consolidation” pages where vocabulary is revised.

Phonology

Q27: How thoroughly and systematically are each of the following aspects of the phonological system covered – individual sounds, assimilation, word stress, sentence stress, weak forms, intonation?

English File

In the unit, the phonological aspects covered are regular and irregular past forms and their pronunciation, sentence rhythm, word stress, and intonation. In the rest of the book the aspects covered include some of the individual sounds (/s/, /dʒ/, /tʃ/ and /k/), vowel sounds, sentence stress and intonation, intonation and sentence rhythm, sentence stress and sentence rhythm, sentence stress and linking, weak forms of *have*, silent letters, changing stress (nouns versus verbs), and pausing and sentence stress. The aspects not covered based on the criteria are some other individual sounds and assimilation. Otherwise, the aspects are covered in great detail, often in combination with other aspects, for instance sentence rhythm is done individually as well as in combination with intonation or sentence stress, etc.

K+ notes

Pronunciation is not directly included in the unit, instead it has its own separate section at the end of the coursebook. However, inside the unit there are links referring to the appropriate pronunciation lesson. In the table of content, pronunciation is included as if a part of the unit but in reality it is separated in its individual section. The aspects included in the unit's pronunciation are linking /j/ and /w/ and assimilation, and in the other unit in the same book there is pronunciation of “-ough”, and word stress in nouns and adjective adverbs. In the other books, there is elision of /t/, weak forms in function words, individual sounds /m/, /n/ and /ŋ/, contracted forms, -ed endings, pronunciation of *have*, schwa, stressed and unstressed syllables, and weak forms of *was* and *were*. Therefore, the aspects not mentioned are sentence stress and intonation, however not all the books were available for analysis. Compared to *English File*, the aspects here seem to be focused more on detailed practice, which is also thorough and extensive.

Q28: Is the phonemic alphabet used? Are the learners given any training in learning it?

English File

The alphabet is included in the “Sound bank” at the end of the book. However, it is more detailed and elaborate than a simple alphabet. It is a double page divided into vowel and consonant sounds. Vowel sounds are colour-coded based on whether it is a short or long sound or a diphthong. There are examples of usual spelling as well as unusual spellings for the pronunciation (e.g. for /ɪ/ usual examples include *fit*, *spill*, *linen* or *pick*, and unusual ones *pretty*, *guilty* or *decided*) and it has an overall pink colour for individual sounds. Consonant sounds are also colour-coded based on whether they are voiced or unvoiced and there are also examples for usual as well as unusual spellings. The overall colour for all individual sounds is pink. Pink colour is also used for pronunciation in general. The whole double page of “Sound bank” is pink as well as the links included inside the units referring to the “Sound bank”. The learners are not given any training how to use the alphabet by the book, though.

K+ notes

The phonemic chart is included in every book, however it is just placed there with no higher purpose. It is fairly simple and takes up just one page. It is divided into vowels, diphthongs and consonants, these are also colour-coded. Each individual sound also includes an example word. Again, the learners are not given any training how to use it, nor is it referenced anywhere in the book.

Q29: Are there pronunciation exercises?

English File

Yes, quite a few. In the unit, there is about 0.75 a page dedicated to pronunciation out of the overall eight, which makes it approximately 9% of the unit. Additionally, there is about 0.25 a page dedicated to pronunciation in the revision exercises. And even though, there are no exercises, there is the “Sound bank” at the end of the coursebook, which is referenced inside the unit, usually when concerned with individual sounds.

K+ notes

Since the pronunciation is not a direct part of the unit, it is not included in the statistics but it is still mentioned in this text. For the chosen unit, the pronunciation lesson covers about 2.25 pages. Usually, for each lesson (there are four in the unit but only two of them are concerned with any pronunciation) there is about a page dedicated to practice of the pronunciation aspect and there is usually some theory involved as well.

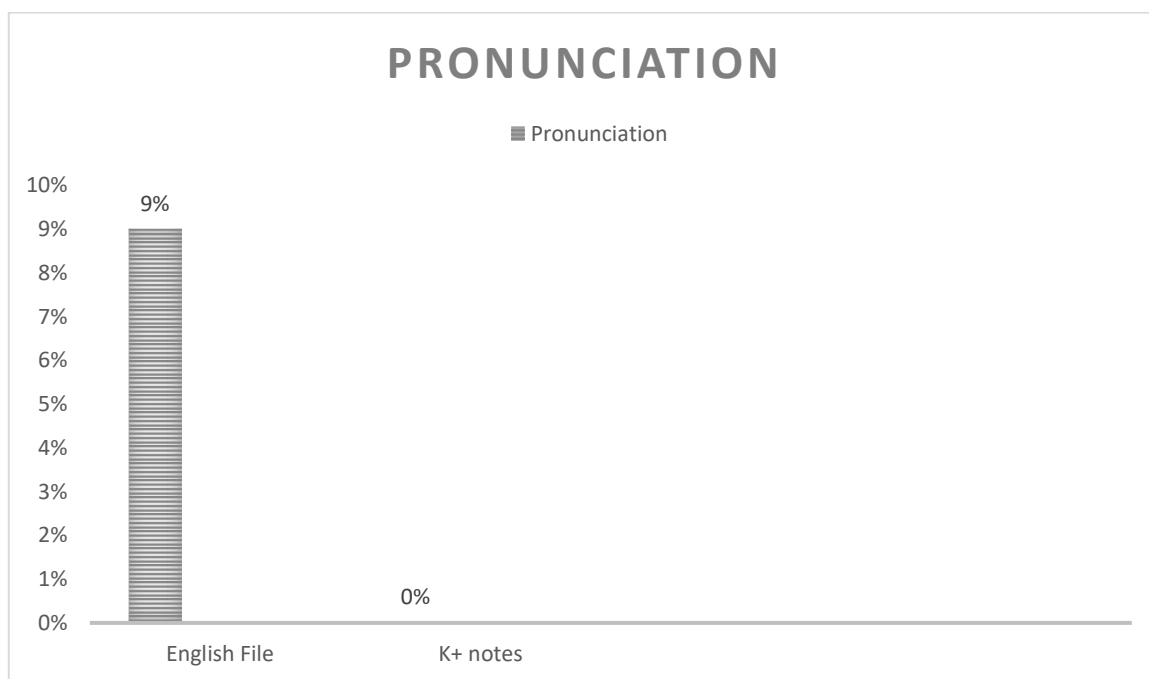


Figure 7: Pronunciation input

Q30: Are there recordings of pronunciation practice?

English File

Yes, most often pronunciation is accompanied by recordings. In the unit, every pronunciation section includes a recording, which makes it two altogether. The recordings are used either as a key for some of the exercises, e.g. match the word to the individual sound of the irregular past form, then check while listening, or as a listening to learn about the specific item, such as sentence rhythm, where the learners need to note where the sentence rhythm takes place inside the given text. Some recordings function as a guide as the learners need to repeat after it.

K+ notes

Yes, recordings are included in every pronunciation lesson. There are usually two recordings per lesson, but can be up to four, depending on the lesson and the specific item. Unusually, in Book 1, a listening activity from the unit is used again as a recording in the pronunciation lesson.

Discourse

Q31: Does the coursebook deal with the structuring and conventions of language use above sentence level – how to take part in conversations, etc.?

English File

Inside the units, there are usually examples of discourse, mainly texts, e.g. in the chosen unit there are short stories. In terms of spoken discourse, there are mainly individual tasks. However, at the end of the coursebook, there are pages dealing with both communication and writing in greater detail. On pages 104 to 112 there is “Communication” where usually role plays for student A and B are located, and on pages 113 to 119 there is “Writing” which deals with different genres of writing. In both of them, there are mainly further tasks for practice or tips on what to include or talk about for the particular type of discourse. Inside the units, there are links for these guides. The exercises there are often accompanied by texts or further practice of for example grammar, if it is in line with the topic (in 10B there is further practice of filling in articles while working on it in pairs, student A x B).

These extra pages do not give any specific or clear step-by-step instructions or explanations on how to write the genres or speak in specific scenarios. Instead, they try to include tasks which might help with understanding of the issues, for instance in 3B there is useful language and additional examples for short stories. Or in other types, there are activities to correct mistakes in the example texts, for instance. With writing, there is always a “plan” section included, which gives more tips on what to include in the actual writing.

K+ notes

It definitely teaches some aspects of discourse but mainly through practice, there is no section dedicated to theory of discourse. In Book 3 there is negotiating being dealt with, which is done in terms of speaking. The unit gives a general outline of a conversation which the learners then practise in pairs while supplying their own ideas for content, but the structure is given. There are also examples included, as negotiating is first presented as a

listening exercise, which gives the learners some idea of how to do it and more support. Another speaking exercise is based on solving problems and is dealt with similarly. With writing, there is the genre of an article and an email used for giving advice in the chosen unit. For the article, there are steps included for planning how to write an article, plus there is also an example of an article included. For the email, it more focuses on phrases for giving advice rather than the structure of an email. Other types of activities in the book include doing a presentation, which does not give any clear structure, and writing an article again, where the learners are given a paragraph with gapped information and they need to fill it in in order to learn about the conventions of writing an article.

Q32: Do the examples of written or spoken discourse provide good models for the learners?

English File

Yes, the examples are good, especially since they are connected to further practice and extra tasks. However, I also believe it is important to be careful not to combine the aspects too much, for example, in writing a short story, there are exercises focusing on adverbs and adverbial phrases, where the learners are supposed to fill in the gaps (into an example text) and complete useful phrases in a “useful language” section. It might be a lot for the learners to focus on and the focus might actually be split among writing, grammar and vocabulary included.

The examples are usually interesting and funny, sometimes real events (landing on the Hudson River while speaking about flight stories in “Communication”) or sometimes imaginary.

K+ notes

The examples provided are often connected to the tips given, so it helps with the writing or speaking but then the results might be fairly similar. The examples are good, however they are not authentic, which is a pity but everything was made specifically for the books. Unfortunately, I did not have access to the recordings, so I could not analyse those, however there are audioscripts and there are the writings. For example, in the unit, there is the topic of negotiating and the listening is concerned with a conversation between a landlord and a tenant. The tenant seems to be asking too many reassuring questions, which might feel a bit unnatural. On the other hand, it might be more based on a real-life situation, if the person

relies on the outcome of the conversation and it is really important. What is more interesting, the tenant seems to be Polish, at least based on the name, however I cannot be sure since I do not have the recordings. If it is indeed a Polish tenant speaking with a foreign accent, then the experience of hearing a foreign English speaker is great for the learners, as it is hardly ever included. Often, these texts or recordings are connected to further language practice in “Language focus” where the phrases from the texts or listening activities are dealt with.

Varieties of English

Q33: Which geographical variety is used?

English File

As the book is marketed for European customers, the predominant English variety used is British. The reason for this is also the fact that the publisher is British and the book series has also its own separate American version for that market.

K+ notes

I cannot be completely sure as the book is used internationally by the school in other English speaking countries but judging by the school having its headquarters in the UK and the books themselves being printed there, I would say that generally and in majority, the books use British English. Also, it is not specified otherwise in the books and looking at the spelling or type of vocabulary, it also seems to be predominantly British.

Considering that a team of teachers from different countries contributed to creating the books as well as the books being used internationally, one would expect more variety. However, it might be the case of the teachers in the individual countries who then add the more geographical and regional variety specific to the area. Nevertheless, this is just pure guessing, but also I do not recall hearing any specific Australian variations in the classroom while being there.

Q34: Is there any reference to other varieties?

English File

There are brief mentions of other nationalities in terms of culture, usually in terms of reading texts, these are mainly American and Canadian but also South African. What is a nice touch, however it is not a major part of the coursebook, is that at the beginning of each

new unit, there is a quote by a famous person and their nationality is also stated. Even though they are mainly from the UK and the US, it is still a nice detail. Some of these nationalities are portrayed within their accents in some of the listening exercises, again these are mainly American, but also Scottish, South African or Dutch accents. This is stated due to the activities specifying that people of different nationalities are used for the listening exercises, unfortunately I cannot tell how much the accents are reflected in the actual recordings. The variety in terms of accents is not great and the level of foreign accents, of non-English speakers, is basically non-existent. Additionally, there are no mentions of regional or social variety either. The only more extensive work with other English variety is in Unit 3 where there are American short stories with American glossary.

K+ notes

Similarly to *English File*, the variety used predominantly is British. There are some other smaller mentions of other varieties, but these are mainly culture-related, e.g. in Book 3 an email about living in the US or in Book 1 there is an online forum where people from all over the world contribute their advice and opinions, with their location stated. Also, majority of the articles have to do with British setting. The only possible use of other variety would be in Book 3 in the lesson with negotiating when the tenant's name implies a different nationality (Pawel Tatka), however due to the non-possession of the recordings, I cannot be sure.

Summary

Both of the coursebooks present an adequate level of language content in terms of its difficulty and the depth in which the individual items are dealt with. Consequently, they both achieve a competent level of balance between knowledge about the language items and their practice of use. The learners are not overwhelmed by theory in either of the coursebooks, even though some theory is rightly included. The overall focus is however on practising the items and using them. Additionally, throughout both of the coursebooks, be it in theory, in example sentences or in the exercises, the language used is realistic and not difficult to comprehend by the learners.

The three major parts of language content are grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. All three of these are in minority in the books, as they are more aimed at practising the individual skills or the language content within the skills. Keeping these in minority ensures the exercises are more practical and attractive for the learners. In *English File* as well as *K+ notes*, there are additional grammar and phonology sections at the end of the coursebooks, which provide the learners with further practice as well as theory and explanations for the individual items

discussed. While *English File* offers pronunciation exercises even inside the units and basically just the phonemic chart at the end of the book, *K+ notes* devoted a whole section at the end of the book to pronunciation with having no such exercises inside the units. Even though this might be controversial for some in terms of the possibility of skipping or overlooking pronunciation altogether, having it all in one place might be suitable for others. Nevertheless, there is an extra material for vocabulary practice inside *English File*, while there is none in *K+ notes*. On the other hand, *K+ notes* offers great vocabulary practice inside the units through, for instance, role-plays, thus sticking with the overall practicality of the coursebook. However, the risk with this is that the vocabulary practised is only the one mentioned directly in the units (used in listening/reading, practised as a language item, then practised within language skills) and does not develop any further, thus keeping the practice seemingly repetitive and limited. Plus, this structure usually applies only to the units where whole phrases are learnt (for example the chosen unit), not individual vocabulary.

In terms of practising the language content, both coursebooks provide great variety of exercises. The exercises are designed in a way that the learners practise the language items at hand while using different methods. Usually, the learning is inductive, as not a lot is explained directly inside the units, and reading texts are used most commonly for presenting new grammar or vocabulary.

When it comes to how discourse is dealt with, there is hardly any theory. Discourse is either presented through examples or there are guidelines helping the learners create the appropriate genres. In *K+ notes*, there is a great use of role-plays, which use given structures to help the learners. However, this might feel too limited.

Considering the global use of English, there is not a lot of English variety in either of the coursebooks. Knowing that *English File* is designed for European market, it can be understood why the predominant English variety is British. However, having more variety would be definitely more beneficial for the learners. The same can be said about *K+ notes*. Seeing as the book is designed for schools all over the world, the variety is strongly limited to the British variety. Even in terms of regional or social variety, the books do not have a lot to offer, while completely omitting any foreign accents of other learners of the English language.

6.4.3. Language skills

Similarly to Language content, the analysis of language skills is more dependent on the individual chosen units with only a few mentions of what the rest of the coursebooks consists of and how that compares.

General

Q35: Is practice of all four skills included? Is it balanced?

English File

In the unit, there are all four skills covered – reading is there twice, one writing, three listening sections and three speaking sections. Sometimes more skills are combined within one activity, e.g. reading and listening, or listening and vocabulary. Also, this distinction is taken from the given headings/sections devoted to the skills, however there are other texts, for example, which are however connected to grammar and do not contain any comprehension exercises. Altogether, in this example unit, language skills take up four and a half pages out of the total eight, which is approximately 56%.

Skills are also partly included in the “Revise and check” section of the book, usually reading and listening, as well as “Colloquial English”, usually listening and speaking. To a certain extent, skills are also incorporated in “Communication” and “Writing”, in this sense speaking and writing.

In some other units, writing is not included. Additionally, some units include a recording of a song for listening, however there are no further exercises connected to it, so it is strictly used as a treat for the learners.

K+ notes

All four skills are included in the unit and it is balanced as the layout remains the same for all the individual lessons, with slight alternations, as was mentioned previously – speaking as a lead-in activity, pre-reading or pre-listening with following reading or listening, language focus (i.e. grammar or vocabulary) and writing or speaking. In the unit, speaking is dealt with six times in various forms, and reading, listening and writing all twice. Altogether, language skills take up 10.25 pages out of sixteen, which makes it approximately 64%. Additionally, reading, listening and speaking are also practised in “Consolidation”, where they take up about two out of three pages. Furthermore, there are two pages of “Real World” tasks, which are project-like pages and usually consist of some

speaking, in the form of discussion, presentation, searching for information or sometimes also reading and listening, depending on the type of task.

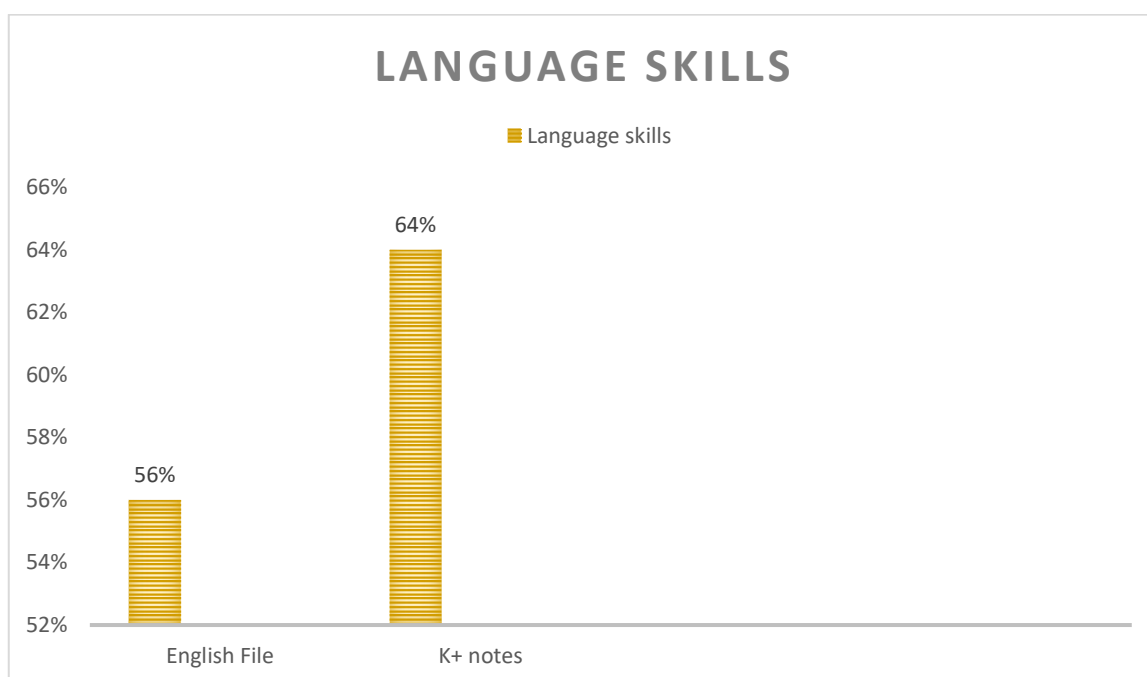


Figure 8: Language skills

Q36: Are skills integrated in realistic contexts?

English File

Yes, since the topics are realistic, even the skills are integrated in realistic contexts. In the unit the topics are the following – in 3A, there is an article about air travel, speaking exercises consisting of personal questions related to air travel, and two listening activities concerned with in-flight announcements by a flight attendant and a dialogue between a pilot and air-traffic controller. In 3B, there is a writing activity concerned with a short story, speaking activities related to reading habits of the learners and a reading and listening activity involving American short stories. Overall, the skills are always connected to the topics of the unit, which are not only realistic but often challenging.

K+ notes

Yes, the content is very realistic, more importantly practical, so the skills try to follow the structure, especially with writing and speaking where the learners are asked to produce something they could easily encounter in real life. In the unit, writings are concerned with

writing a promotional article about moving abroad and writing a reply email about culture shock in the US. Speaking deals with negotiation and solving problems. Reading texts are usually articles, in the unit dealing with some of the best cities in the world and culture shock, while listening activities focus on a dialogue between a landlord and a tenant (negotiating) and a phone conversation between a customer and a company (solving problems). But the skills are always set in a realistic situation complementing the topic.

Q37: Does the coursebook use authentic material at an appropriate level?

English File

Yes, the coursebook uses authentic material when it comes to reading. Usually, the source of the article is stated together with the fact that it has been adapted to the level. Most common sources include some newspapers, e.g. *The Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, etc., or a book as is the case in 3A – *Air Babylon*. On the other hand, the same cannot be said about listening activities. Even though they often portray realistic situations, such as in-flight announcements, radio programmes, etc., they do not appear to be authentic. The basis for this claim is the “Acknowledgements” section on the last page of the book where the recordings are not mentioned among the thank-yous to the people who allowed adaptation of their material and its usage in the coursebook. However, some of the interviews are possibly authentic, as the “Acknowledgements” mention thanking people for agreeing to being interviewed. This is the case for example in the “Colloquial English” section for Units 2 and 3, where Julia Eccleshare, a British journalist and writer, was interviewed. The interview is therefore authentic, however staged.

K+ notes

The level is appropriate, however none of the material is authentic, or at least there are no indications of it being otherwise. Not even the “Acknowledgements” at the back mention any adaptations, therefore everything in the book was designed specially for the purposes of the coursebook and the school.

Q38: What kind of comprehension questions are asked?

English File

There is a great variety of comprehension questions. Some of them include guessing answers to questions and then comparing them based on a reading text, True or False statements, matching vocabulary to pictures based on a listening activity, discussing possible answers with a partner first then comparing them to the real answers based on the listening, listening for further details, etc. There are also open questions included, these are more elaborate and go more in depth. They also require the learners to think and focus more. Some of the open questions include “What happened the previous week?, Why is she surprised?, Where are they?, What did the instructor teach them?, or What effect did watching Superman had on Susan?” (p. 30, 31). Other comprehension questions in the whole book include matching statements (who said what), gap fill or simply taking notes.

K+ notes

The types of questions are very similar to those in *English File*; this is not very surprising as there are limited sorts of exercises and questions that can be used. The types used in *K+ notes* include matching statements to correct paragraphs, choosing a correct option, ticking which statements are mentioned, open questions, reading and making notes (“What are five stages of culture shock?”, p. 32), matching headings to paragraphs, listening and completing the form, choosing the best summary of a listening, etc. Other exercises from the other books include True or False statements, matching (who said what), gap fill, putting statements in order, or completing a table.

Q39: Are accuracy and fluency balanced in speaking and writing?

English File

When it comes to speaking, the activities seem to be mainly focused on fluency and simply getting the learners to talk to each other. There are often questions to guide them or sometimes there are some useful phrases they can use and these help them be accurate but the activities themselves do not push them to be accurate in a strict kind of sense. Within one of the topics in the unit, there is an activity of telling flight stories. Even though the general idea implies that the activity focuses on free production of language, the activity follows the topics of narrative tenses in grammar, plus there are specific questions given,

thus controlling the production to a certain extent. On the other hand, since it is a pair work, the activity works with fluency as well as the learners need to be prepared to react to what the other person says, thus dealing with a certain unpredictability. On the whole, the activities deal with real communication with common topics and sensible questions, hence more focus seems to be put on fluency.

With writing, the situation seems to be slightly different, as writing relies on accuracy more than speaking. Writing activities are usually preceded by examples and follow explicit grammar, such as adverbs and adverbial phrases, which implies accuracy. In most of the writing activities, there are possible titles, therefore topics of the writing, given, thus controlling the production to some extent. However, what the learners do produce depends solely on them, so it also encourages free production of the language (i.e. fluency). There are also some fun ways of designing the learners' writing. For instance, in the unit, the learners are encouraged to write a draft and then swap it with their partner, thus focusing on peer-review, or brainstorming ideas for writing with a partner. In another example, in Unit 2, where the learners are asked to write an informal email to a friend about not being well, the writing encourages to use the vocabulary practised in the unit but otherwise gives the freedom to write about anything. Additionally, the “Writing” section at the back dedicated to this genre focuses on giving the learners an example, plus giving them some useful phrases for an informal email in the “Useful language” table, thus also intensifying accuracy.

Overall, it seems like in both speaking and writing aspects of both fluency and accuracy are used. It can therefore be said that they are balanced, with the coursebook leaning slightly more towards fluency. Even though it gives guidelines and useful expression, the overall impression is that the book aims to get the learners to use the language.

K+ notes

Compared to *English File*, *K+ notes* seems to be much more focused on accuracy. For instance, in some of the speaking exercises the learners are given a full structure of the dialogue (Book 3, page 30 and page 38, where role-plays for negotiating and solving problems are located). These activities are also not only included to practise the skill, but to practise the phrases, vocabulary or grammar learnt previously. In this sense, the activity is more focused on doing it in the correct way, thus implying accuracy. Slightly different situation seems to be with writing as the learners are given more freedom. The book still

gives some guidelines and encourages to use the phrases learnt previously, but there is no overall structure given.

Overall, it can be said that accuracy and fluency are balanced in a way that even though speaking exercises seem to be quite structured, there are also other speaking exercises which are purely aimed at discussing something in pairs or groups. Some general tips are given to writing but apart from assigning the topic and learning about the style in a general sense, the learners are given a lot of freedom in what to produce.

Listening

Q40: What kind of listening material is contained in the course?

English File

In the unit, the listening material includes announcements, recordings of pronunciation, recordings of texts, dialogues, and monologues. In the whole book, there are some other types, such as radio programmes, interviews, videos, stories, and conversations between people. The variety of listening materials is therefore great, moreover the situations portrayed by them are realistic, something the learners are likely to encounter in real life.

K+ notes

In the unit, there is a podcast about accommodation, conversation between a landlord and a tenant, and conversation between a customer and a company on the phone. Other listening material includes radio programmes, lectures, monologues, interviews, and presentations. Similarly to *English File*, the variety is great and the types are realistic.

Q41: What kind of activities are based on the listening passages?

English File

The amount of activities dedicated to listening corresponds to about a page and a half out of the total of eight, which is approximately 19%. The types of activities include matching activities to pictures based on listening, matching vocabulary to their definitions, listening for specific information (listen and see if you were correct in guessing answers to questions), and listen and answer the questions. There are also some listening activities connected to pronunciation, such as notice how the sound is used, mark the use of the item, and listen and repeat. Other activities included in the whole book consist of checking information, gap fill, True or False statements, listening to get the general idea or also

listening for specific information. Occasionally, there are songs to be listened to, however these are not to be worked with, they are fillers for fun and relaxation. There are also some exercises that function as introductory to the overall activity and thus generate interest of the learners, however they are not specifically stated as pre-listening tasks. Such exercises include for example trying to guess answers to the questions stated and then listening and checking if the guessed answers were correct.

K+ notes

The figure below shows that listening takes up about 1.5 of pages out of sixteen, which is approximately 9%. The activities include ticking which statements are mentioned, answering open questions and completing a form. Some of the other activities in the books include gap fill, putting things into correct order of mention, matching statements, True or False statements, etc. There are also some pre-listening tasks which are clearly labelled due to headings. Usually, there are questions the learners are asked to discuss with a partner concerning the topic (e.g. “What should students consider when renting accommodation?”, p. 28, or describe pictures and answer the questions). These activities are also more or less introductory to the topic as they set the scene, generate interest and help shift the focus of the learners to what is coming next.

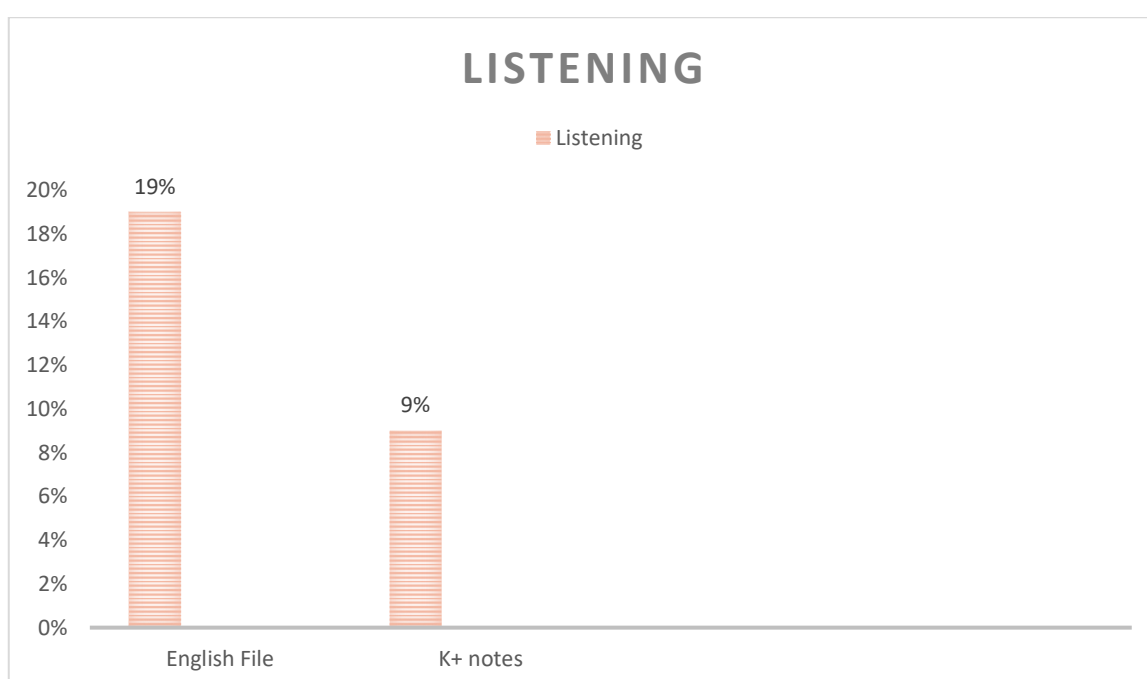


Figure 9: Listening

Additionally, the figure below shows the number of words each listening in the unit contains in both coursebooks in order to better understand the length of the activity. Unfortunately, I was unable to retrieve the actual recordings and their length in minutes and seconds due to their unavailability to the general public. However, I believe that the measurements in the number of words is sufficient enough to present the length of the activity. It is also important to point out that the third listening in *English File* is done together with reading, therefore the number may seem high but considering that it is divided in between two skills, it lowers such impression. It is evident that there is more listening material in *English File* in Unit 3 than there is in *K+ notes* in Unit 2 but apart from not having the third listening, the first two recordings have comparable number of words. The final numbers, when the individual ones are added up, are that in *English File* U3 the listening material contains 1860 words, while the one in *K+ notes* U2 contains 1174 words.

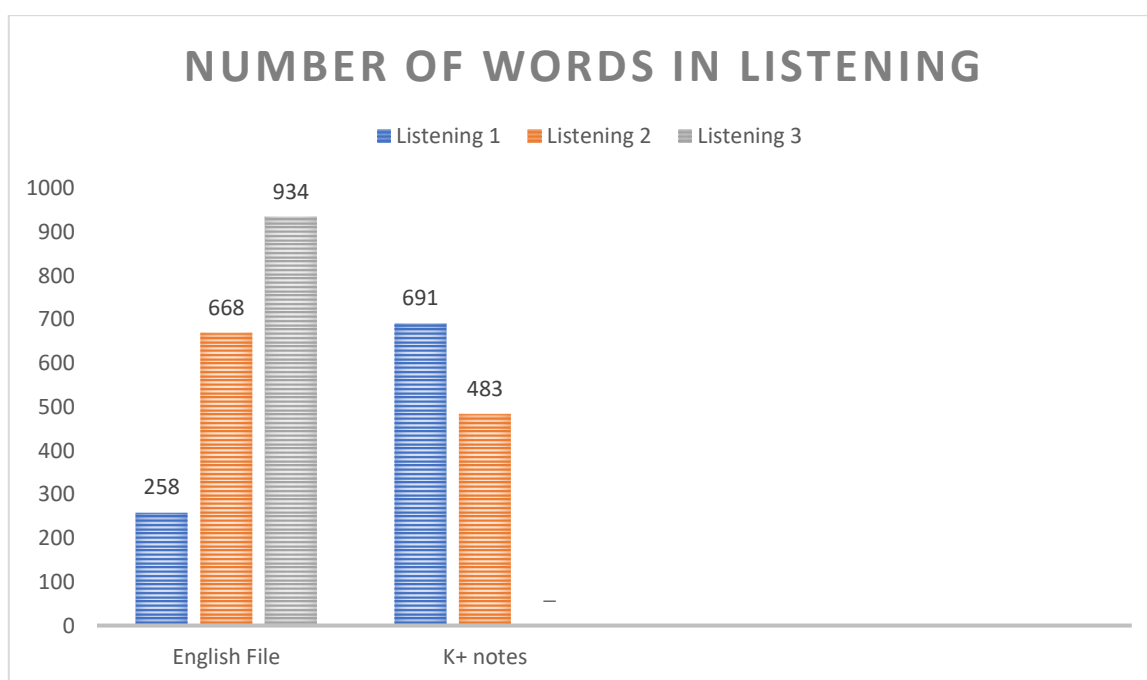


Figure 10: Number of words in the listening material

Q42: Is the listening material set in a meaningful context?

English File

The listening content is connected to the topic of the unit, it is not randomly chosen. The listening material itself is meaningful as the situations in them can be encountered in real

life. In the unit, which is concerned with the topic of air travel, listening is vital when it comes to listening to announcements, etc., so rightfully the unit includes these types of materials.

K+ notes

Yes, the listening material is connected to the topic of individual lessons, and it is therefore set in a context, which usually consists of some type of social situation, which gives the learners the opportunity to gain useful language (e.g. negotiation between a landlord and a tenant, and a phone call between a customer and a company).

Q43: Are the tasks authentic and close to real-life situations?

English File

The listening material is definitely connected to real-life situations, however only seldom are the recordings authentic. As was mentioned in one of the sections above, based on the “Acknowledgements”, the recordings are not authentic. Although some of the interviews in the coursebook are real interviews with real people, they were conducted specially for the purposes of the book. The reason for not using authentic listening material might be that it is much harder to adapt to the needed and required level.

K+ notes

Similarly to *English File*, the material is not authentic. It was designed for the purposes of the coursebook, or at least there are no indications of it being otherwise. However, the situations the listening material portrays are definitely realistic. The unit focuses on practicality of the tasks, so even the listening material consists of practical scenarios, such as negotiating between a landlord and a tenant, a phone call between an unhappy customer and a company.

Speaking

Q44: How much emphasis is on spoken English?

English File

Speaking takes up about 1.25 pages out of eight in the unit, which makes it approximately 16%. It can therefore be said that there is a great emphasis on speaking. The unit and its activities lead the learners to actively discuss what is being taught, not only in terms of general speaking exercises but also partly in reading, grammar, etc. There is also

the “Communication” section where further speaking activities can be found. These activities are usually concerned with pair work – student A versus student B. Links to the appropriate “Communication” section are included inside the unit.

K+ notes

Speaking is included on three and a half pages out of sixteen in the unit, thus adding up to 22%. Consequently, it can be said that the emphasis on speaking is great. There is always a speaking exercise at the beginning of each lesson, functioning as a lead-in activity, an introduction to the lesson and setting the topic and theme. Then there are two whole pages dedicated to speaking in the whole unit. Apart from having the individual sections in the unit dedicated directly to speaking, discussions are encouraged also within other sections, such as grammar or vocabulary, where the learners are asked to work in pairs and discuss something, similarly in pre-listening or pre-reading activities. In the “Real World” tasks there are also activities focusing on speaking or discussing something, as the project-like style of these tasks rely on presentations where the learners need to work in groups.

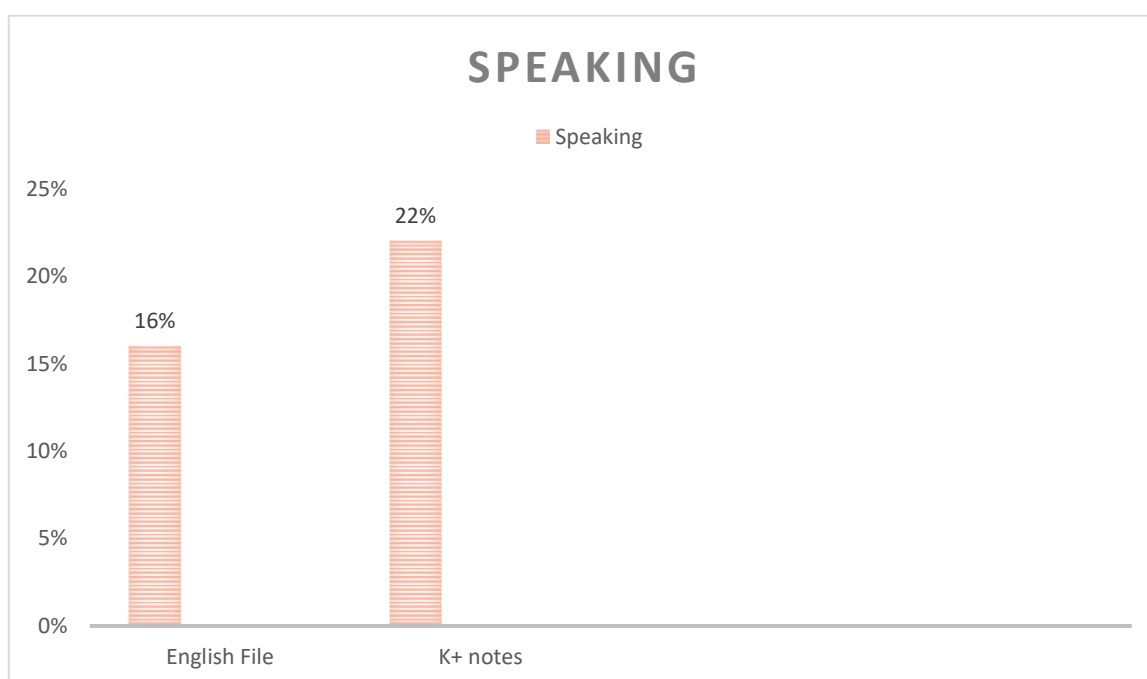


Figure 11: Speaking

Q45: What kind of speaking material is contained in the course?

English File

The speaking material consists mainly of questions to be discussed, either in pairs or there are also monologues the learners are to prepare (e.g. tell an anecdote). The topics of speaking are connected to the topic of the unit, such as air travel and the learners discuss their flight experiences. However, throughout the book, there are also role-plays, or brainstorming in pairs (this is sometimes connected to writing as the learners are asked to brainstorm ideas together and then start writing). Sometimes even the speaking activities are accompanied by a picture or a text, which the learners are supposed to use, such as “comment on the text”, “imagine you are in a similar situation”, “talk about the text in your own words”, etc. Also, throughout the book speaking is used as a lead-in exercise, which prepares the learners for the topic.

K+ notes

The chosen unit is more structured when it comes to speaking as it offers a lot of role-plays (e.g. negotiating, solving problems) and dialogues concerned with the phrases previously learnt. These are usually big parts of the lesson. There are also smaller speaking parts of the individual lesson, which consist of introductory speaking activity or discussing some questions connected to the topic. Furthermore, there are tasks concerned with simply answering questions, and discussing a certain topic with another learner.

Q46: Are there any specific strategies for conversations or other spoken activities?

English File

There are hardly any strategies mentioned, however there are a few, for example in the unit, there is a guide on how to tell anecdotes (i.e. setting the scene – main events – the ending), or in the rest of the book there is a table with useful language on saying what you think as well as agreeing and disagreeing, and also a guide on how to describe photos. Apart from these, the speaking activities are mainly designed in a way the learners are to answer questions relating to the topic, usually relying on personal experience, in pairs or smaller groups.

K+ notes

The chosen unit tries to push the learners to work a lot in role-plays, thus creating a specific social situation (e.g. negotiating, solving problems, but also interviews or debates in other units). For these, there is a whole structure given on how to do it. Additionally, it also gives them the vocabulary or grammar needed which were practised in the previous “Language focus” section. It thus teaches the learners about appropriate strategies, as it gives the structure. However, to some this might feel too structured and robot-like.

Q47: Are activities balanced between individual, pair and group work?

English File

It can be safely said that pair work is used in majority as there are many activities designed in a way to be discussed with a partner or to answer questions with a partner. Group and individual work are therefore used in minority.

K+ notes

Similarly to *English File*, mainly pair or group work is used. With speaking at least two people are always involved but group work is usually specified, e.g. for discussions or the “Real World” tasks.

Reading

Q48: How many reading texts are there?

English File

In the unit, there is about a page and half dedicated to reading, which is approximately 19%. However, one of the reading passages is combined with listening. There are three texts devoted just to reading (one together with listening), there are also two texts for grammar practice and a very short text for vocabulary practice. In the whole book, there is always at least one reading section per sub-unit. However, sometimes the reading is accompanied by another skill or language item (reading and vocabulary, or reading and listening). Additionally, reading appears also in the “Revise and check” section.

K+ notes

Reading takes up about 3.25 pages out of sixteen in the unit, which is approximately 20%. There are two reading texts in the unit where the texts usually take up one whole page. Then, there is another additional reading in “Consolidation”, which is usually a short text.

Accompanying the unit in the “Real World task” is another really short reading. Reading is included in every second lesson, alternated with listening.

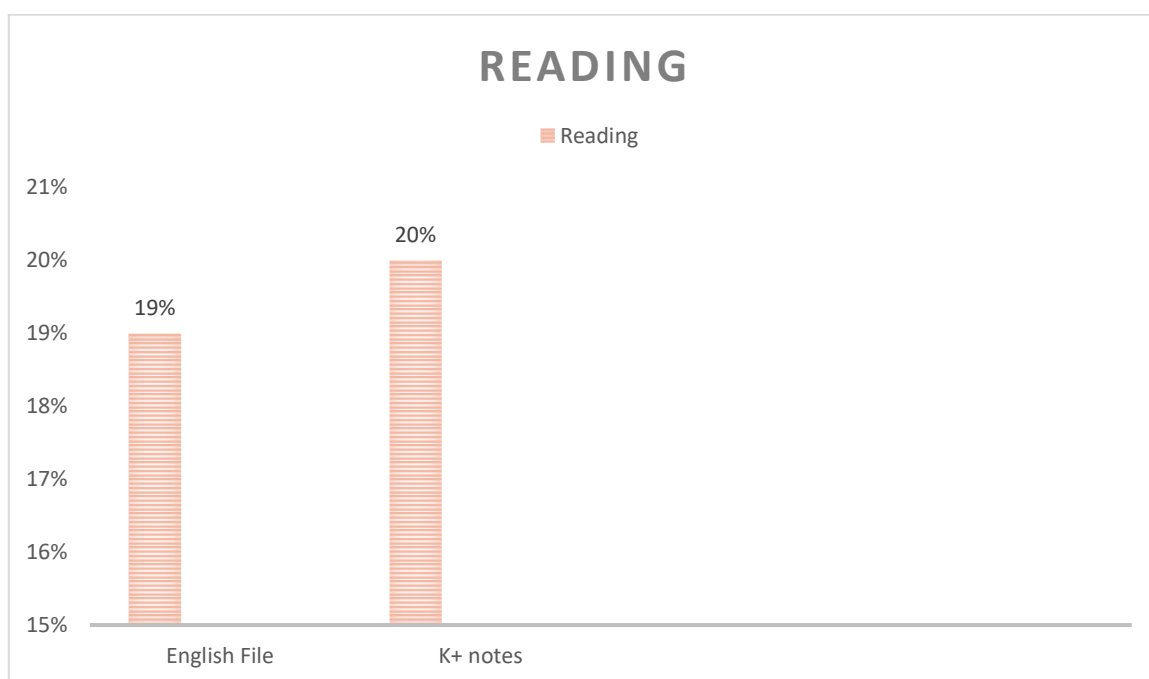


Figure 12: Reading

Q49: How long are the texts?

English File

In the unit, the reading texts are about half a page long (without exercises), which can also be said for the rest of the coursebook. The length is appropriate to the level, as it is not too long, so that the learners would lose interest and attention, and it is not too much trouble if they have to go through it more times, in order to find certain answers, for example.

K+ notes

The main texts within the lessons are usually a page long, which is longer than *English File*. They might seem too long, if the need would arise to go through it more times.

For closer analysis, the number of words for each individual reading in the units were counted, which is shown in the figure below. The reading materials are not vastly different in length, even though the ones in *K+ notes* are slightly longer. Added up, the reading material in *English File* Unit 3 is 1095 words, and in *K+ notes* Unit 2 there are 1290 words.

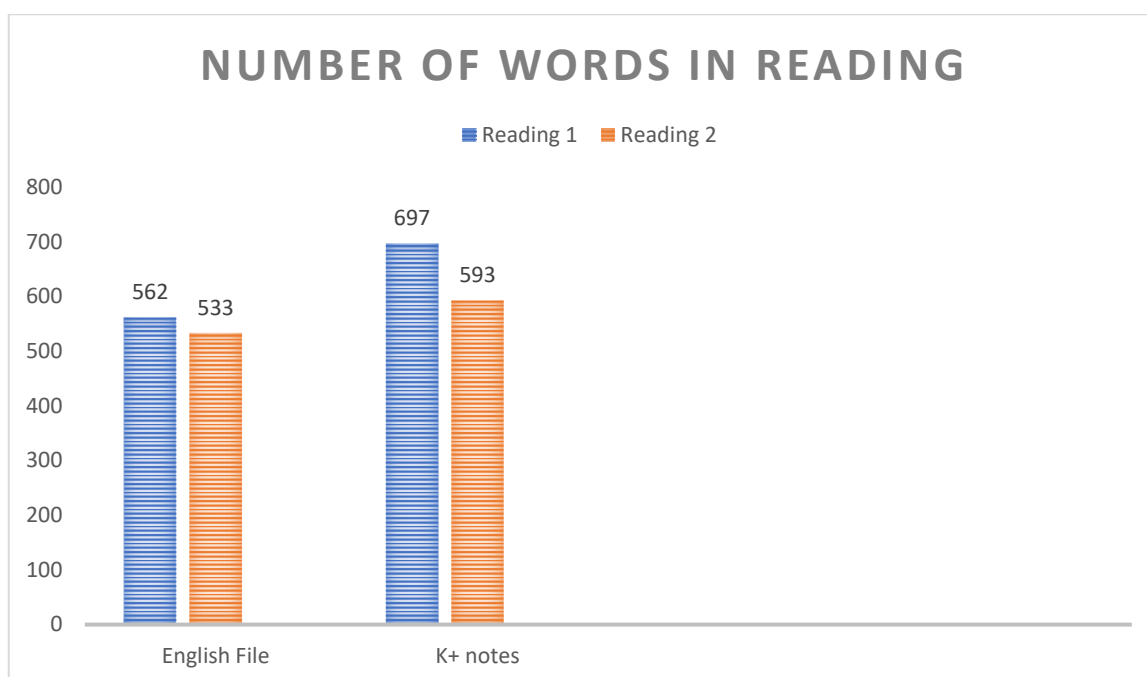


Figure 13: Number of words in the reading materials

Q50: How authentic are the texts?

English File

The texts in the unit are authentic and they are usually adapted to the level from various sources, one is a book called *Air Babylon* and the other reading is from a Graded Reader. There is another text used for a grammar exercise, which was adapted from a newspaper, i.e. *Daily Telegraph*. The source is always stated below the text, plus it is mentioned in the “Acknowledgements”. Only a minimum of texts do not acknowledge being adapted, and it can be therefore assumed that these are not authentic.

K+ notes

The texts do not seem authentic at all, or at least they do not bear any indication of it being otherwise. I believe this is a disadvantage of the coursebook, as having authentic material is crucial for the learners. However, at least the information inside some of the texts seems realistic (for topics like culture shock or cities around the world).

Q51: Does the material help comprehension? (e.g. setting the scene, background information, pre-reading questions, etc.)

English File

There are usually some pre-reading activities, such as looking at the title or picture accompanying the text and asking one or two questions about it. There are two good examples from the unit. The first one includes another short text which includes questions (the true answers are contained in the main text) and the learners are asked to try and guess the answers first. Only then they read the text and compare their answers with the real ones. The second example is before reading a short story; there is a whole speaking section dedicated to working in pairs and asking questions about reading habits. Both these activities are introductory and lead-in exercises, which set the scene for the reading activity. Additionally, there are also finishing exercises where the learners are asked to summarise the activity, for example “Did you find any of the information interesting?”. Therefore, it is safe to say that the coursebook tries to help with comprehension by including these pre- and post-reading activities.

K+ notes

Yes, apart from having the pre-reading exercises, there is also an overall opening speaking exercise which aims at brainstorming and discussing ideas about the overall topic of the lesson. Also, the first activity within the reading exercise is always concerned with reading the text quickly and comparing the ideas with the ones from the pre-reading exercise. Only then do the other tasks focus on working with the text in more detail. I believe this is a great strategy for working with a text – first skim through and later read in a more detailed way. The activities accompanying the reading seem very comprehension-oriented.

Q52: What kind of comprehension questions are asked?

English File

There are various questions. One of the major readings in the unit is done together with listening but the interesting thing about it is that it is divided into four parts and sectioned into more easily comprehensible chunks. The questions accompanying this activity are open questions looking for specific information but in a more complex way, such as asking more questions starting with “how” or “why”. The other text is accompanied by answering True

or False statements. In the whole book, there are other activities including matching who said what, matching statements to paragraphs, filling in paragraphs or headings, or multiple-choice questions. There is also one activity which includes explaining why the article mentions a specific thing. Even though some of the questions might seem simple, the answers are not always directly stated inside the text, meaning that the learners need to be more attentive while reading.

K+ notes

The comprehension questions are often not just questions but activities, such as matching statements, choosing the correct word, or matching headings. If questions are asked, they usually search for specific information and also require longer answers as they are often “why” questions. In another book, the learners are then asked to discuss the reading in pairs which requires them to have an opinion and think more deeply about the topic, or sometimes personal experience can be used as well.

Writing

Q53: How does the material handle: controlled writing, guided writing, and free or semi-free writing?

English File

The activities concerned with writing seem to be mainly of guided writing with a certain degree of control, as there are examples of the genres, useful language with appropriate phrases, but none of it is forced and there are not full structures to go by. In the unit, as well as elsewhere in the coursebook, the writing activities often offer heading ideas the learners are supposed to choose from. They can then brainstorm further, though, thus sharing ideas for the different headings. In this sense, the writing is also guided with some degree of freedom. The “Writing” section at the back also offers some criteria to follow for the specific genre but they are broad, such as “write in four paragraphs, use formal language, etc.”. Additionally, the sections remind the learners to check their writing for any possible mistakes (e.g. grammar, spelling, vocabulary).

K+ notes

It seems like in majority the writing activities are of guided writing. Similarly to *English File*, the coursebook offers some guidelines and useful language, or helps with the structure. In the unit, the genres include writing an article about moving abroad, where the learners

are given certain guidelines on what should be included in terms of paragraphs, title, and summary, and the second writing is about writing an email with giving advice about culture shock, which is not as focused on the actual structure of the genre but more on the content in terms of how to give advice (e.g. useful phrases and vocabulary). Even though there are these guidelines for the learners, they are also given quite a lot of freedom in terms of what to actually write about. Unlike *English File*, where there is a whole “Writing” section at the back of the coursebook, there is no such thing in *K+ notes*, mainly because it is in separate books, but having a whole section dedicated to writing with the tips and examples is definitely useful.

Q54: Are the conventions of different kinds of writing taught? Which ones and how?

English File

The individual styles are not much taught in theory but the learners are given examples of the genres and some suggestions in the form of useful language. However, there are no theoretical descriptions of the styles. The only aspects mentioned might be some specific guidelines in the “Plan” part of the “Writing” section. Nevertheless, even these include more step-by-step guidelines for the specific piece rather than more general one for the genre. These guidelines usually focus on individual paragraphs, in a sense that it mentions how many there should be and their content, for example: introduction – main paragraphs – conclusion, keeping it simple and brief but giving a general outline.

K+ notes

Similarly to *English File*, there is little to no theory on the individual genres. The most the coursebook does is that there is one paragraph of theory, which is gapped, and the learners are asked to fill in the gaps with words from a box above the paragraph, which can be found in Book 3 Unit 1. In another book, there is an exercise of matching sentences to their appropriate paragraphs, thus helping with the approximate content. There are different ways of teaching about the structure of the genres but they were designed in a fun way. Nonetheless, most often only guidelines for the structure are given or useful language.

Q55: Is there emphasis on the style of written English?

English File

The style is usually included in the guidelines. It states whether the text should be formal, informal or neutral, and what should be contained. Moreover, the “useful language” table includes some expressions and phrases appropriate for the style, therefore giving a general idea what the written language should look like.

K+ notes

The instructions do not necessarily mention the form of written English, nor whether the text should be formal, informal or neutral. It does, however, work a lot with the appropriate language in terms of phrases and expressions. These can be found mainly in the previous parts of the lesson where they are practised and put into use in the writing section. For instance, in the unit, the genre is writing an email for the topic of giving advice, with the previous parts being concerned with the appropriate phrases and expressions in the “Language focus” as well as the reading section. However, nothing concerning the type of language is mentioned in the instructions for the writing.

Q56: Are learners encouraged to review and edit their own written work?

English File

Yes, the learners are encouraged to review their own work as well as a work of their peer (peer review). In the “Writing” section the learners are always reminded to check the text for any possible mistakes concerning grammar, vocabulary, punctuation and spelling. In the unit, there is also one activity which requires the learners to write a draft and then swap it with a partner in peer review, which I find is a great activity for the learners in terms of seeing other pieces of work as well as having to check the language.

K+ notes

Yes, the learners are reminded to check their work but not every time, which on the other hand shifts the responsibility onto them. In Book 3 Unit 1, there is one exercise that suggests to “proofread” the text for grammar and spelling mistakes. In Book 1 Unit 1, there is one reminder, which encourages to check the text for grammar and spelling mistakes, and one peer review activity, which also encourages the peer to add useful comments.

Q57: Is the writing material suitable and interesting for the learners?

English File

Yes, it is both suitable and interesting as the book offers a great variety of genres and topics, for example an informal letter, short story, for and against essay, an article, describing a photo, a report, and expressing your opinion.

Altogether, writing in the unit takes up only about a quarter of a page out of eight, which is approximately 3%. The reason for this is that is purely the instructions for that piece. However, there is a whole “Writing” section at the back where each genre gets a whole page with more explanations and examples. Also, not every unit includes writing, but the length of the writing differs as they might be smaller or bigger pieces.

K+ notes

Yes, the writing activities are both suitable and interesting, moreover they are also useful and thought-provoking. The topics of the writings give the learners the chance to practise what the book teaches them in terms of topics, grammar and vocabulary, plus they can draw from their personal experience and knowledge, for example in the unit they are asked to write an email to give advice about culture shock.

Altogether, writing takes up two pages out of sixteen, which is approximately 12.5%. Writing always consists of a whole page but it is only included in every second lesson out of four in a unit and alternated with speaking.

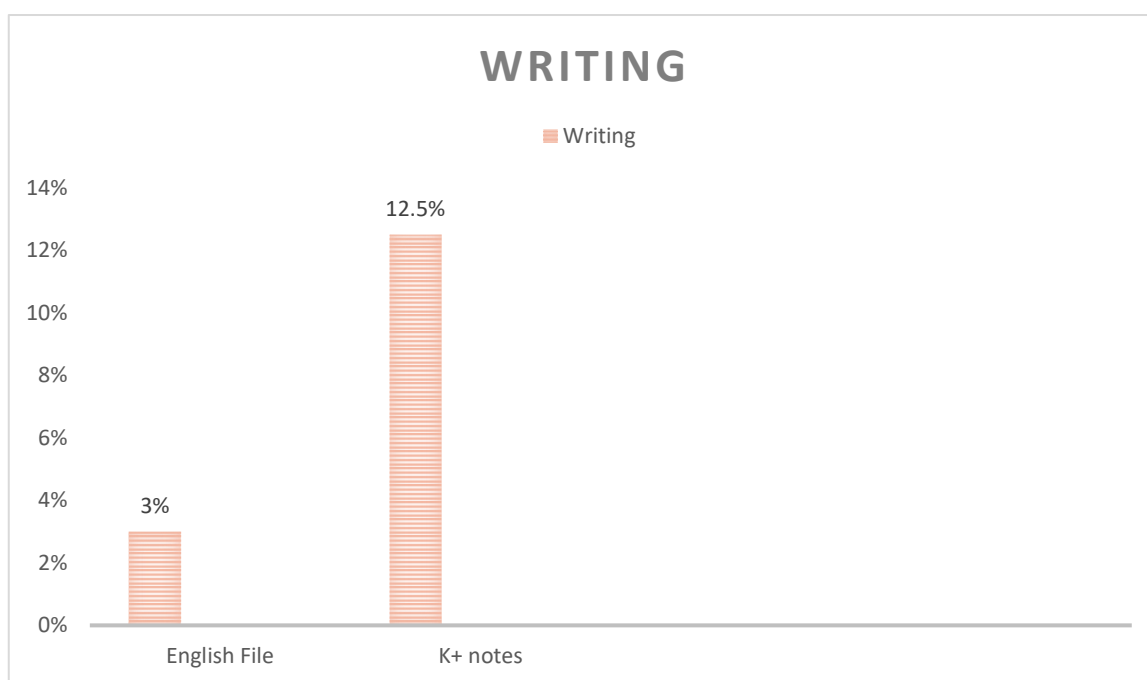


Figure 14: Writing

Summary

It is important to note that all four skills are covered and appropriately balanced in both of the coursebooks. In *English File*, the reading material is authentic, as the text states the source and that it has been adapted. The situation differs with the listening material as it is harder to uncover, however there do not seem to be authentic recordings. Some of them were made specially for the purposes of the coursebook, which can be mainly noted in terms of some interviews. In *K+ notes*, there is nothing that would point to the materials being authentic. However, in both cases, the material is realistic and depicts real-life situations.

Both of the coursebooks have balanced presence of accuracy and fluency in the activities, even though it can be said that more focus is put on fluency, as both of the books try to create situations and scenarios where the learners can use the language in practice. In terms of speaking, *K+ notes* seems to be more focused on accuracy in a way that it uses structured role-plays. On the other hand, *English File* seems to be more focused on accuracy in terms of writing, as it gives more detailed instructions, mainly for the form of language, i.e. formal, informal, or neutral.

Even though authenticity of the material has been discussed, in terms summarising listening and speaking, it can be again stated that listening material is not authentic, with the exception of some of the interviews in *English File* being conducted with real people but for the purposes of the coursebook. In terms of reading, the material in *English File* is authentic, as the sources

and the fact that it has been adapted have been stated. However, the same cannot be said for *K+ notes*. Nonetheless, in both coursebooks there are texts (not reading activities) used for presenting and introducing new language items (grammar and vocabulary), in an inductive way.

In terms of speaking and writing, both are dealt with in a useful manner. With speaking, both coursebooks work, to a certain extent, with individual, pair and group work. Additionally, in both coursebooks there is a great variety of tasks. Slight advantage has *K+ notes* for introducing and practising very practical topics in a practical way, e.g. role-plays for negotiating and solving problems. With writing, both coursebooks introduce various genres and great variety of tasks. Additionally, both encourage reviewing the written texts by the learners, or occasionally peer review.

Summary of language content and language skills in figures

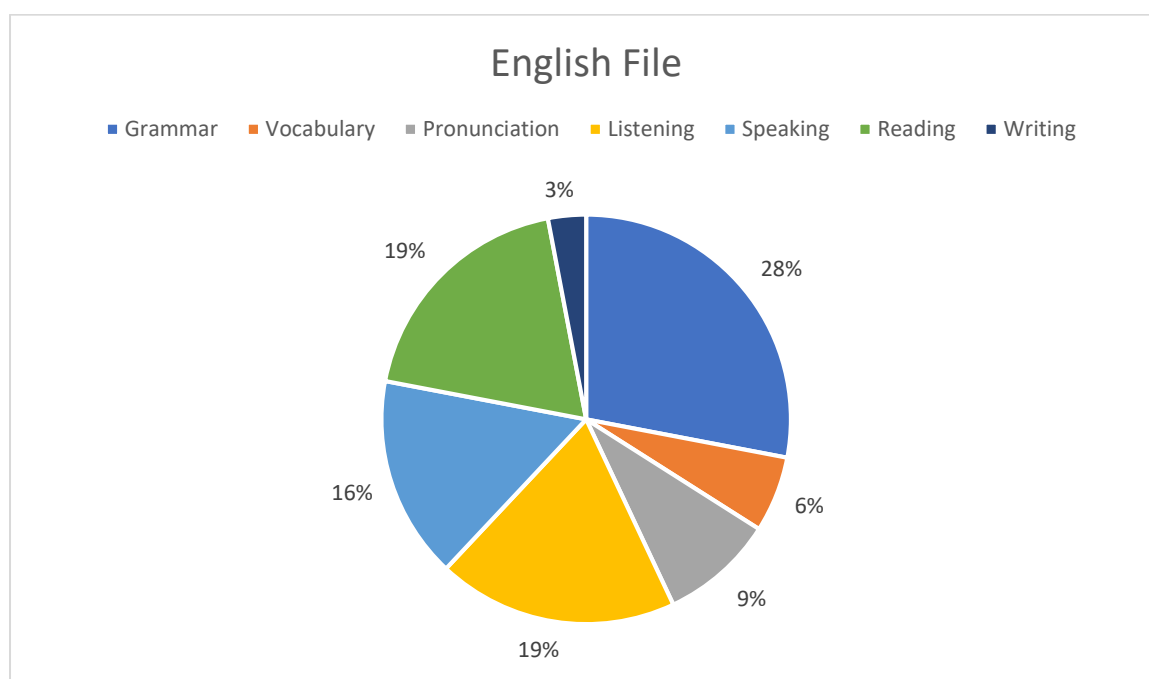


Figure 15: *English File*, individual sections

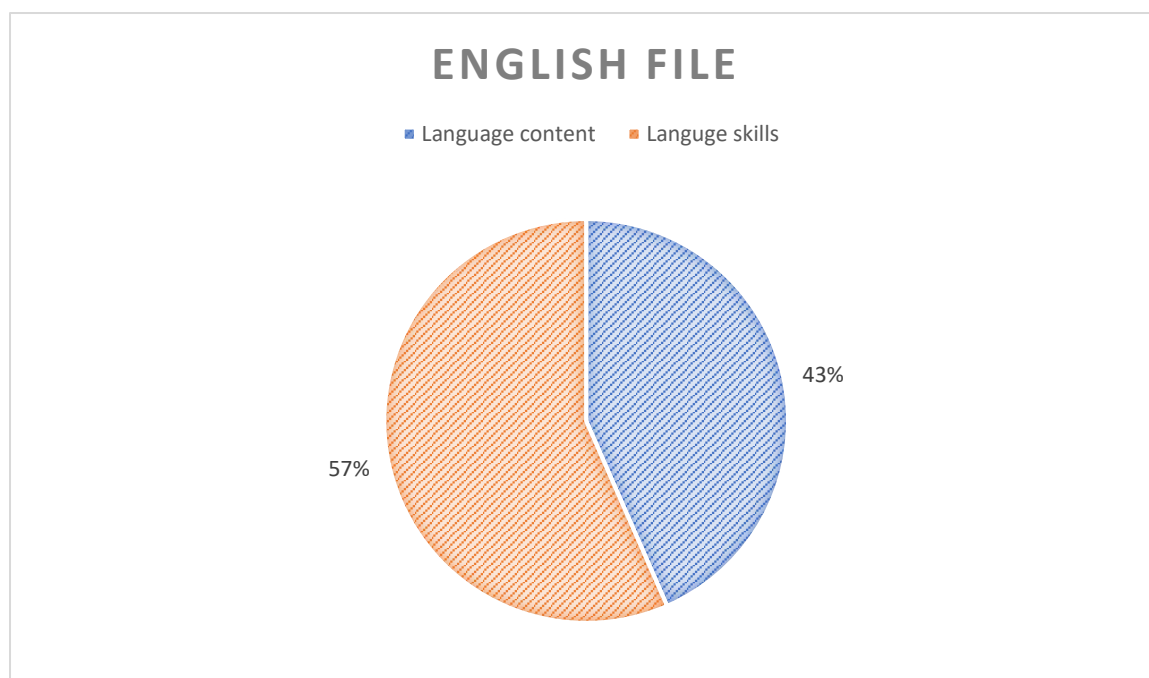


Figure 16: *English File*, general

In the two figures above, one can see the percentages the individual sections, in terms of language content and language skills, take up in *English File*. The data were taken from the Unit 3 only, thus explaining why the percentage for writing is so low compared to other sections but it consisted of just the instructions.

It can be said that the individual sections are balanced, both in content and skills. Grammar taking up this high percentage can be explained by a text accompanying one grammar item. Otherwise, the percentages are balanced. Furthermore, the positive aspect is that language skills are in majority compared to the languages content. This can be better seen in *Figure 16*.

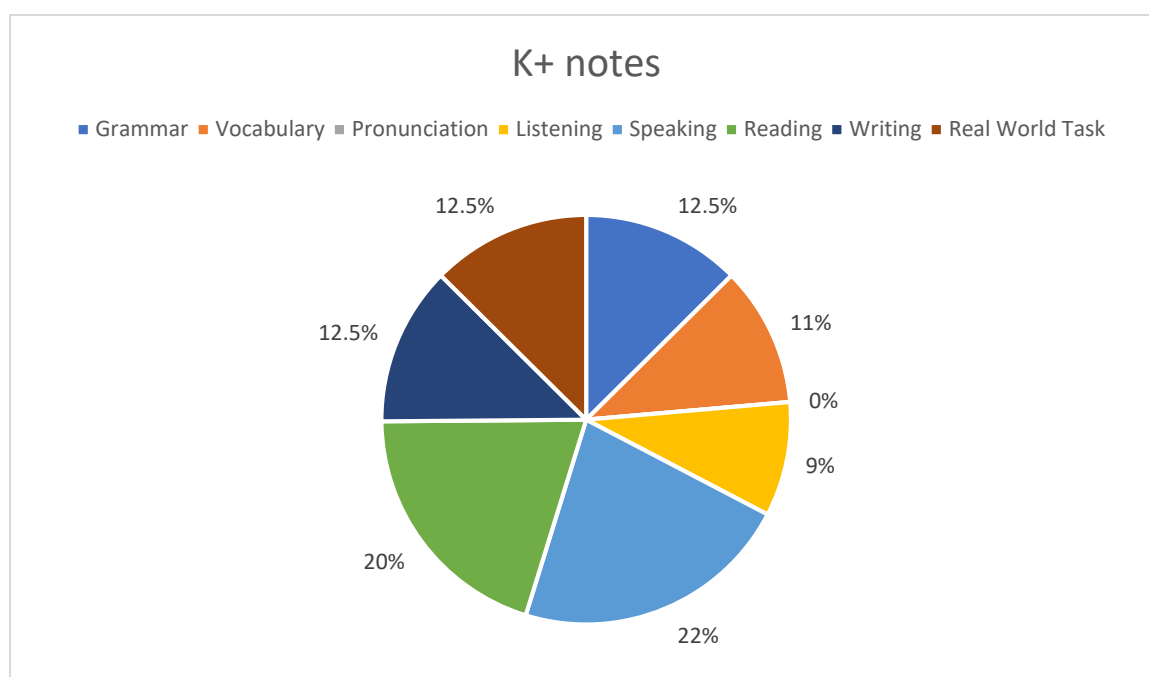


Figure 17: K+ notes, individual sections

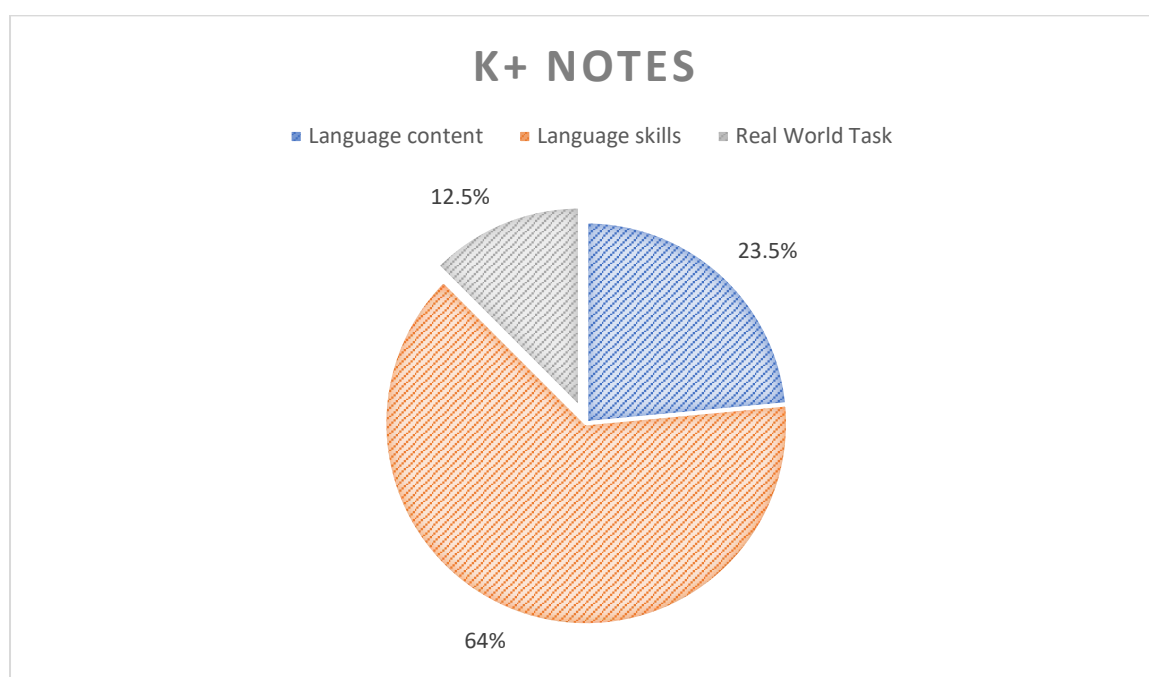


Figure 18: K+ notes, general

In the two figures above, one can see the individual percentages for language content and language skills in the *K+ notes* coursebook. Similarly to *English File*, the sections seem to be balanced among themselves. The reason for not including pronunciation is the fact that it is not directly covered in the unit. There is a separate pronunciation section at the back of the book

but since it is not directly mentioned inside the unit, it does not feel as a part of it, even though it is connected to it.

The second figure (*Figure 18*) shows how balanced are content and skills in general. Alike *English File*, more focus is given to language skills, which is a positive aspect of the coursebook. The “Real World task” is partly included because it is directly contained in the unit, however it does not fit either content or skill.

6.4.4. Methodology

Since the following criterion applies rather to the whole coursebooks rather than the individual units, the analysis was done in a way when first the chosen unit was taken into consideration and then compared to the rest of the coursebook. The data therefore represent what the coursebooks consist of in a general sense.

Q58: How are communicative abilities developed?

English File

There is a lot of communicative activities that focus on actually speaking. Speaking is usually done in pairs, occasionally in groups. The learners not only discuss more ordinary topics, which they can have some experience with, for instance flying, but also more complex ones, such as science or online world, for which they need to have some degree of knowledge and some opinions. The strategies are developed by helping the learners through practising a lot, plus giving them “useful language” phrases. Overall, speaking does not appear solely in the speaking sections of the coursebook, but there are things to be discussed in listening, reading and also writing (for example brainstorming) sections; as well as having a whole “Communication” section at the back, so there is a lot of opportunities for the learners to communicate.

K+ notes

Similarly to *English File*, developing speaking abilities is done through focusing on speaking. Unlike *English File*, where there is a lot of open space for discussion with the help of questions, *K+ notes*, at least in the chosen unit, heavily focuses more on controlled speaking with given structure of role-plays. There are also more communicative exercises where the learners simply communicate or answer given questions, but there are a lot more structured speaking activities as well.

Q59: Does the material include any advice/help to students on study skills and learning strategies?

English File

The coursebook usually gives precise instructions on what the learners should do. Thus helping a lot with planning writing and practising dialogues. With listening and reading, by following the instructions the learners should complete the exercises successfully. Similarly with grammar and vocabulary, where the activities are mainly inductive, thus teaching the learners how to work with a text or listening for learning new grammar and vocabulary (e.g. “look for grammar patterns”, “look for synonyms”, or “look for definitions”). Overall, very subtly, the coursebook guides the learners how to work with the language.

K+ notes

The coursebook gives precise instructions for the learners to follow. It gives guidance in terms of writing activities, as well as structure for some of the speaking activities. There is also good structure for working with new language items, in a sense that there is exposure first, where the learners meet the item in context, then they practise and learn it, and lastly they practise it again in context. Similarly to working with listening or reading activities, as there is first a speaking activity related to the topic, introducing it, then pre-reading or pre-listening activities, and then activities connected to the listening or reading material. So similarly to *English File*, it subtly guides the learners through the learning process.

Q60: Are students expected to take a certain degree of responsibility for their own learning?

English File

It is usually most reflected in writing where the learners are reminded to check the text for possible mistakes. It thus teaches them the importance of editing a text as well as some kind of self-reflection and self-evaluation. Additionally, sometimes the coursebook gives them the opportunity to be responsible for someone else as well in the form of peer review, as is the case in the chosen unit in terms of swapping drafts, or correcting the peer's grammar in a grammar exercise.

K+ notes

Similarly to *English File*, the learners are encouraged to check their writings for possible mistakes but not every time writing is mentioned; this gives them more space to realise themselves and implement the process of editing, instead of being reminded every time. Additionally, in the “Real World task”, as it is a project-like lesson, the learners are pushed to be much more independent in terms of doing their research, preparing presentations, and working in groups in general. Furthermore, as the school designed a whole online platform to support the learning process of their learners, it is up to the students to practise the language further.

Q61: Is focus on inductive or deductive learning? Or are they balanced?

English File

It seems that inductive method is used more throughout the book, mainly with texts. These texts are used in grammar sections, for example in the unit there is a text for learning about the position of adverbs and adverbial phrases, which is also used in vocabulary for learning about their meaning. There are, however, parts that use deductive learning in a sense that new grammar is explained first and presented with examples. There are explanations to all of the grammar items in the “Grammar bank” but hardly ever a part of the unit.

K+ notes

Similarly to *English File*, learning seems more inductive due to the use of recordings and texts for working with new grammar or vocabulary items. The techniques are very specific in this coursebook. The new language items are first introduced inside a reading or listening material, however nothing is done with them then, only later can the learners go back and see how it functions and works in context. Then, they are practised as the specific item in the “Language focus” in terms of structure and use, and lastly, they are put into practice in writing or speaking. There are no language explanations in the unit whatsoever, everything is presented in the “Grammar” section at the back.

Q62: What is the attitude towards error?

English File

The material does not seem to express any direct attitude towards error, nor does it work with it in any broader sense. It encourages the learners to check their writing for mistakes, but does not specify in what way or what to do with it once identified. There is however one exercise that works with errors – it is an example email for writing and the learners are supposed to find the mistakes and correct them. It also somehow works with peer review, such as in the chosen unit when partners swap drafts of their writings, and then again in a grammar activity (gap fill) where one learner listens to the other reading his or her completed sentences. Their task is to indicate if they hear a mistake and let the learner try again and correct themselves, and vice versa. There are not so many cases in the coursebook that would work with errors but from what I could see, the attitude seems fairly liberal.

K+ notes

I have not noticed any attitude towards errors, mainly because the coursebook does not seem to work with errors in any way, apart from self-checking or peer reviewing writing.

Q63: Is there a self-evaluation aspect?

English File

As was already mentioned before, the coursebook reminds the learners to check their written texts for mistakes and sometimes peer review is involved. There is the “Revise and check” double page after every even-numbered unit, which would be the perfect opportunity for self-evaluation of what the learners have learnt but there is no key available directly for the learners. Apart from these, there is nothing that would point to or encourage self-evaluation, not even in a sense of evaluating oneself at the beginning and the end of the coursebook in terms of progress.

K+ notes

There is sometimes the reminder in writing to check the texts for mistakes and to proofread. There is also the “Grammar” section with the key provided, which the learners can use to correct themselves or the “Consolidation”, which would be an ideal place for seeing what the learners have learnt, but the key is not provided for this section. Similarly to *English File*, there is no overall self-evaluation based on progression, however that is the

school's responsibility as the learners are tested before they are divided into the individual levels, and there is also a test available when leaving the school, however that is voluntary.

Summary

One positive aspect of both of the coursebooks is that inductive manner is used for most of the new language items. Even though there are explanations of grammar issues, they are at the back and do not appear inside the units, with some exceptions in *English File*. However, the explanations inside the unit consist mainly of examples and appear only occasionally. Using an inductive manner of learning new things is definitely more motivating and entertaining for the learners.

To a certain degree the learners are expected to take some responsibility for their own learning, mainly in terms of proofreading and editing writing. In both coursebooks the learners are encouraged to check their texts, or occasionally peer review is suggested. However, these do not happen often in any other places throughout the coursebooks. Additionally, the *K+ notes* offers an online support following the coursebook, which the learners are encouraged to use outside the classroom for further learning, but it is up to them how and if they use it.

6.5. Summary

Advantages and disadvantages of the self-designed coursebook (<i>K+ notes</i>)	
Advantages	Disadvantages
• Practicality of topics of tasks • Use of unusual topics (e.g. Moving abroad, Volunteering, etc.) • Overall focus on skills	• No authentic material • Repetition of structure • Underestimated vocabulary • Not attractive visuals

Table 16: Advantages and disadvantages of the self-designed coursebook

The table above shows the overview of the advantages and disadvantages the self-designed coursebook offers based on the data gathered through the analysis. It cannot be said that one coursebook would be necessarily better than the other one as they both have their own advantages and disadvantages. The types of exercises contained in them were fairly similar, for example, or both of them focused more on language skills rather than language content, with *K+ notes* having a bigger percentage for skills than *English File*. The overall focus of the thesis

was to determine whether the self-designed coursebook contained any advantages compared to the commercially published coursebook. It can thus be answered that the two major advantages were dedicating a lot of space and effort to practical topics and tasks, for instance moving abroad, dealing with a landlord if there is any problem, or filing a complaint to a company through role-plays as well as providing the useful phrases and expressions. The practicality and usefulness were evident even in the procedure of the tasks, i.e. exposure to new language items within reading or listening first, then learning the items, and lastly practising the item in context (more typical for whole phrases and expressions). Another noticeable and worth mentioning aspect was the fact that some of the topics were quite untraditional, such as the moving abroad, culture shock, volunteering, or gender myths. It gives the learners the opportunity to practise these realistic topics in a practical manner, hence the role-plays.

On the other hand, there seemed to be many more disadvantages. The most prominent one was the lack of any authentic material. Encountering authentic material is crucial for the learning process, especially at this level, and the learners can greatly benefit from it. Not providing the learners with any authentic material is a big disadvantage. Another one was the repetition of structure of the individual lessons as only the skills were alternated, starting with either reading or listening, and ending with writing or speaking, as well as focusing either on vocabulary or grammar in the “Language focus”. Even though having some kind of structure can be valuable, having too much can become repetitive and mundane not only for the learners but the teacher as well. It also seemed that unless the vocabulary consisted of whole phrases, there was no other space (apart from the “Language focus”) where it was practised. The phrases and useful expressions were usually practised in the speaking or writing, as was the case of the chosen unit, however that was not evident in other units with individual words. It therefore seemed that practice of vocabulary was underestimated, at least compared to *English File*, which at least devoted some more space to vocabulary through the “Vocabulary bank”. The last of the disadvantages was the attractiveness of the coursebook. The self-designed one opted for more tamed colours, which seemed dull compared to the bright ones in *English File*, as well as the visuals, mainly pictures, were more favourable in *English File*, as they seemed more a part of the content.

Conclusion

The thesis deals with coursebooks used in language schools and primarily focuses on self-designed materials. It maps whether they pose any benefits compared to commercially published coursebooks. The idea seemed intriguing in the light of controversy that is around coursebooks and whether to use them or not. Self-designed coursebooks would solve some of the issues some people have with the commercial ones, such as lack of creativity, feeling like it is someone else's material, fitting it to the needs of the learners, etc. On the other hand, it is also a more time-consuming process, which is also more demanding money-wise.

The theoretical part is divided into five chapters. In these, the different teaching materials in a general sense are introduced, they also focus more narrowly on textbooks, language schools are discussed in a general sense, as well as the last two chapters being dedicated to specific language schools and the interviews or questionnaires done with them. The empirical part is comprised of one chapter which contains the actual research. The research was conducted by analysing and comparing two chosen coursebooks – a commercially published one chosen based on the interviews, and one self-designed coursebook used in a foreign language school. The analysis was done based on a set list of criteria and individual questions concerning general aspects (organisation, visuals, topics and culture), language content, language skills and methodology.

The research itself was concerned with what similarities and differences the two coursebooks have. It has to be admitted that there are more aspects similar, rather than majorly different within the coursebooks. Both coursebooks, even though in a negative way, are not portraying very inclusive pictures or characters (elderly people, people of colour, LGBT community, mixed couples – in a racial or gender way, etc.). In both of them, the topics used are of great quality and relevance to today's world, however the topics in *K+ notes* are more practical (in the chosen unit the topic of negotiating is discussed and the learners need to try a role-play of negotiating with a landlord about a given problem). Both coursebooks have a grammar section at the end where the learners can find explanations and examples for the grammar issues as well as further practice, with inductive way used inside the units. Language skills are more prominent in both coursebooks, rather than language content, therefore more focus is given to practising and using the language, which is definitely a huge benefit.

On the other hand, the two coursebooks are designed with a different layout, *English File* with a vertical (probably more unusual), while *K+ notes* with a traditional horizontal one. Additionally, the structure in *K+ notes* is very repetitive which might become mundane.

Vocabulary is more dealt with in *English File*, with included “Vocabulary bank” at the end of the book with further practice. On the other hand, vocabulary in *K+ notes* is more realistically practised, for example in the role-play in the negotiation unit, but this usually concerns expressions and phrases more. *K+ notes* decided to include pronunciation as a whole section at the back of the book, while *English File* included little bits of pronunciation in every unit with only a detailed phonemic chart at the back. What is hugely different is the use of authentic material, which is used mainly in *English File* within reading sections, but no authenticity can be found in *K+ notes*.

As the table in summary of the empirical part (*Table 16*) suggests, there are both advantages and disadvantages to the self-designed coursebook. It cannot be said in a straightforward way which coursebook would be better as they each have their specifics. Among the advantages of the self-designed coursebook belong the practical and very realistic topics, which are also often practised in a very realistic way (e.g. negotiation and role-play), and the overall focus on language skills. Nevertheless, the disadvantages of no authentic material, repetition of structure and not attractive visuals seem to be counterproductive.

Furthermore, there are also benefits and limitations of self-designed coursebooks which are not directly connected to the language. The biggest benefit is the ability to differ from the rest of the various language schools, thus stand out and attract more customers. Additionally, the ability to tailor the content to what the learners in general expect is also a huge plus. On the other hand, the process of creating the material is long and time-consuming as well as demanding money-wise. Additionally, the material needs to be looked at periodically to ensure that it is still relevant, and if needed it has to be changed and altered.

I benefited majorly from writing the thesis as I learnt a lot about the process of selection and evaluation of coursebooks, which is a skill every teacher will need at some point during their carrier. I believe and hope that the thesis will be beneficial to others as well, mainly for those thinking about creating their own coursebook or trying to select an appropriate one for their course. Even though coursebooks should not be the only and primary material used in language classrooms, I believe they are still a valuable part of teaching, and should be used as a starting point for lesson planning and a guide for the teachers as well as the learners.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – CEFR

Appendix 2 – Interview

Appendix 3 – P.A.R.K. School of English

Appendix 4 – Jazyková škola Hello

Appendix 5 – ILC International House Brno

Appendix 6 – Jazyková škola Lingua

Appendix 7 – Jazyková škola ONLY4

Appendix 8 – Albi – jazyková škola

Appendix 9 – Questionnaire

Appendix 10 – Filled out questionnaire

Appendix 11 – Eye-pleasing pictures, K+notes

Appendix 12 – A small picture, K+ notes

Appendix 13 – Out of place pictures, K+ notes

Appendix 14 – Not attractive pictures, K+ notes

Appendix 1 – CEFR

The CEFR, or in full The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, was published in 2001 and describes the language abilities of learners in terms of speaking, reading, listening and writing. There are six reference levels:

Basic user	A1 Breakthrough
	A2 Waystage
Independent user	B1 Threshold
	B2 Vantage
Proficient user	C1 Effective Operation Proficiency
	C2 Mastery

Table 17: CEFR reference levels (source: “Cambridge”, p. 4)

It also provides a description of what the individual levels mean, usually in the form of CAN DO statements. The scale also functions as a means to map the progress of the learners. The CEFR was revolutionary not only because of its invention, but it accompanied the change in language teaching as well, as it moved away from grammar-translation method and more focused on communicative approach. Something like the CEFR was needed also for international co-operation among language and educational institutions in various countries, but mainly in Europe. The source claims that it is not an “international standard or seal of approval”, however many “test providers, textbook writers and curriculum designers” affiliate their written pieces with the framework (“Cambridge”, pp. 4 – 5).

DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE

Možné výhody využívání vlastních učebnic anglického jazyka v jazykových školách

ROZHOVOR

Jazyková škola: _____

Město: _____

1. Jakou učebnici ve svých hodinách využíváte?

Liší se pro jednotlivé kurzy nebo úrovně?

2. Jaká je vaše politika využívání učebnic a přístup k nim?

Jak a jak často je používáte v hodinách? Záleží to čistě na osobnosti učitele nebo máte jako škola jednotnou politiku?

Podle čeho/jak učebnice vybíráte?

3. *(Pokud nemají vlastní)* Přemýšleli jste někdy nad vytvořením vlastní učebnice?

Proč ano?

Proč ne?

Appendix 3 – P.A.R.K. School of English

DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE

Možné výhody využívání vlastních učebnic anglického jazyka v jazykových školách

ROZHOVOR

Jazyková škola: P.A.R.K. School of English

Město: Brno

- What textbooks do you use?*
1. Jakou učebnici ve svých hodinách využíváte?
Does it differ according to the courses or levels?
Liší se pro jednotlivé kurzy nebo úrovně?

Main course Face 2 Face AO-C2
exam: Straight to Test / Advanced / Objective Proficiency
secondary: Empower
kids & teens: Starters

- What is your policy on using textbooks?*
2. Jaká je vaše politika využívání učebnic a přístup k nim?
How and how often do you use them in lessons? Does it depend totally on the teacher or do you have a single policy as a school?
Jak a jak často je používáte v hodinách? Záleží to čistě na osobnosti učitele nebo máte jako škola jednotnou politiku?
How do you choose your textbooks? Based on what?
Podle čeho/jak učebnice vybíráte?

English file - most popular - something different but teacher friendly
- interesting topics
teachers books, supplementary materials - creativity - creative
teachers, allow creativity
freedom & syllabus - new teachers, depending on the group
- recommendations, topics not widely used, layout - design,
teacher friendly

- Have you ever thought about creating your own textbook?*
3. (Pokud nemají vlastní) Přemýšleli jste někdy nad vytvořením vlastní učebnice?
Why yes?
Proč ano?
Why no?
Proč ne?

started - time - busy school
- many times - in conversations - no coursebook, teacher-books
- not a good AO coursebook
- OA student - basis for creating A1 for C levels
- creativity - taking bits and pieces and working with that
- no AO classes now - if many - would create
- a target for a long time

Appendix 4 – Jazyková škola Hello

DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE

Možné výhody využívání vlastních učebnic anglického jazyka v jazykových školách

ROZHOVOR

Jazyková škola: JS Hello

Město: Brno

1. Jakou učebnici ve svých hodinách využíváte?

Liší se pro jednotlivé kurzy nebo úrovně?

- English File - nebo FCE / CAE Result
- možnost jiné učebnice, pokud učitel

2. Jaká je vaše politika využívání učebnic a přístup k nim?

Jak a jak často je používáte v hodinách? Záleží to čistě na osobnosti učitele nebo máte jako škola jednotnou politiku?

Podle čeho/jak učebnice vybíráte?

- nedávají na učitelů - 50% využívají, 50% svoje materi.
- přizváno z pokročilý z osnovy - nejpraktičtější
- nejúčinnější

3. (Pokud nemají vlastní) Přemýšleli jste někdy nad vytvořením vlastní učebnice?

Proč ano?

Proč ne?

- kreativní učitel v přístupu
- ale uvažovali - učitel s tím nepřijel zatím

Appendix 5 – ILC International House Brno

DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE

Možné výhody využívání vlastních učebnic anglického jazyka v jazykových školách

ROZHOVOR

Jazyková škola: ILC Brno

Město: Brno

what textbooks do you use?

1. Jakou učebnici ve svých hodinách využíváte?

Does it differ according to the courses and levels?

Liší se pro jednotlivé kurzy nebo úrovně?

-> pre-teens - lot spot
-> teenagers - beyond

adults - main English File 3rd / 4th
Total English (Pearson)
erasus - Ready Speak

- intensive - Gateway

what is your policy on using textbooks?

2. Jaká je vaše politika využívání učebnic a přístup k nim?

How and how often do you use them in lessons? Does it depend solely on

the teacher or do you have a single policy as a school?

Jak a jak často je používáte v hodinách? Záleží to čistě na osobnosti učitele nebo

máte jako škola jednotnou politiku?

How do you choose your textbook? Based on what?

Podle čeho/jak učebnice vybíráte?

- up to the teacher - need to cover certain material
in certain time period - sometimes
-> teachers choice - diff guide - double page / 90 minutes
- have a lot of freedom

* English File - teachers not used in schools
others change quite a lot - different - speak out > summer
Have you ever thought about creating your own textbook?

3. (Pokud nemají vlastní) Přemýšleli jste někdy nad vytvořením vlastní učebnice?

Proč ano?

Proč ne?

- no - the quality of already published
textbook - good enough
- for structure of the course

* Supplementary = challenge

teens - usually rubbish - content > teens - not a good language
- treat them like children

- mix of publishers - good relationship - involved more at school
OUP - lower end level / Longman | Total E. - higher end level
=> challenge -

3. Euro-centric books here - no problem - available
| * different situation in the US say Philippines
| → culture good oriented on Europeans

Appendix 6 – Jazyková škola Lingua

DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE

Možné výhody využívání vlastních učebnic anglického jazyka v jazykových školách

ROZHOVOR

Jazyková škola: JŠ Lingua

Město: Zlín

1. Jakou učebnici ve svých hodinách využíváte?

Liší se pro jednotlivé kurzy nebo úrovně?

- různé druhy - vlastní pro různé /učeby/ firmy - English File, International Expo, Standard, Cutting Edge, Gold - obecně
- podle kurzu
- podle záliby firmy
- vlastní materiálu

2. Jaká je vaše politika využívání učebnic a přístup k nim?

Jak a jak často je používáte v hodinách? Záleží to čistě na osobnosti učitele nebo máte jako škola jednotnou politiku?

Podle čeho/jak učebnice vybíráte?

- struktura učebnice - příprava - podle rektora - z 80% skup.
- podle kurzu - individuálně
- podle požadavků - jazyk. audit => úroveň skupiny
- požadavky i firmy
- pracovní angličtina - pokrytí
- moderní, dobrá slovní zásoba, 2 výrobci - Oxford, Longman, Pearson

3. (Pokud nemají vlastní) Přemýšleli jste někdy nad vytvořením vlastní učebnice?

Proč ano?

Proč ne?

- někteří vlastní jsou - spíše firmy - technická angličtina
- DUPP kurzy - příprava materiálů - technické obory
- skripty pro učitele - metodika - skripty v CJ
- málokdy vlastní učebnice
- není vhodné vytvářet - málo času - by šel dohromady
- čas se dá spíš

Appendix 7 – Jazyková škola ONLY4

DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE

Možné výhody využívání vlastních učebnic anglického jazyka v jazykových školách

ROZHOVOR

Jazyková škola: JŠ Only4

Město: Zlín

1. Jakou učebnici ve svých hodinách využíváte?

Liší se pro jednotlivé kurzy nebo úrovně?

- Headway - k edici / po Intermediate
Pet Result
Cambridge First Result
Cambridge First Master Class

- pracovní sešit jako
vlastní materiál k uč.

- podle přípravy ke
zkoušce

2. Jaká je vaše politika využívání učebnic a přístup k nim?

Jak a jak často je používáte v hodinách? Záleží to čistě na osobnosti učitele nebo máte jako škola jednotnou politiku?

Podle čeho/jak učebnice vybíráte?

- není dané, po kudy - dle zájmu na opakování -> aktivní
použití toho, co je v učebnici, jinak se nejeví dle

- Headway - nejvhodnější, je to uč - také každý učebnic
má své pouze různé edice -> není podle čeho vybíráte

- víceméně v učebnicích na doma - ve v hodinách

3. (Pokud nemají vlastní) Přemýšleli jste někdy nad vytvořením vlastní učebnice?

Proč ano?

Proč ne?

- ano, ale hodně finančně náročné

- je potřeba update - nemá význam
investovat čas a finance

- i prac. sešity - časové náročné - "nudné" - není mnoho
výhod, jenom velký náklad

- vytváření v týmu - lektorů - na základě
učetnic - podle gramatické vytvářely
"nudební práce"
- součástí je elie
- hlavní důvod práce - v hodinách se hlavní
mluví
- + namísto audio - vodící mluvčí - správnou
výslovnost

Appendix 8 – Albi – jazyková škola

DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE

Možné výhody využívání vlastních učebnic anglického jazyka v jazykových školách

ROZHOVOR

Jazyková škola: Albi JS
Město: Zlín

1. Jakou učebnici ve svých hodinách využíváte?

Líší se pro jednotlivé kurzy nebo úrovně?

- English File - všechny úrovně - elementary to advanced
- všechny edice od 2. do 3., 4. pouze čtenářské

2. Jaká je vaše politika využívání učebnic a přístup k nim?

Jak a jak často je používáte v hodinách? Záleží to čistě na osobnosti učitele nebo máte jako škola jednotnou politiku?

Podle čeho/jak učebnice vybíráte?

- obsah - v kurzech podle učebnic - ale není formální
- stránka - různé stanovený plán na rok - pro navázání na další kurzy když přijde učitel nový, když je učitel novou
- ↳ spíše praktické než metodologické
- obsahové učebnice pracovní - možnost vynechat cizí
- ⇒ výběr učebnic - edukativní úroveň - odlišná od standardu (v té době zastaralá) - nahrazení něčeho rozšířeného ⇒ obklopení, ale u nás - zejména gramatika, lexika, atd.

3. (Pokud nemají vlastní) Přemýšleli jste někdy nad vytvořením vlastní učebnice?

Proč ano?

Proč ne?

- ne ⇒ praktické hledisko taková situace neexistuje
- osobní přístup/názor ⇒ není nutné napsat vlastní, měla být ale tak specifická/specializovaná - obecná vyuka i minimum tematicky zaměřené (business)
- ⇒ zbytečná práce - čas ušít
- v učebnici vše obsaženo - pre-test, cvičení, nové moderní, evaluation
- možnost cizí

Appendix 9 – Questionnaire

DIPLOMA THESIS

Possible advantages of using self-designed textbooks of the English language in
language schools

QUESTIONNAIRE

Language school: Kaplan International English

1. **Why did you decide to create your own textbook?**
How long did it take you to create it?
How long have you been using it?

2. **In what aspects do you find it better than the commercially published textbooks?**

3. **Did you make it with a specific idea/aim in your mind?**

4. **Are you satisfied with the textbook? Do you think you fulfilled your expectations?**
Would you improve anything?

5. **Do you often go through the textbook and upgrade some of its aspects?**

6. **Is designing your own textbook somehow connected with the fact that as a foreign language school most of your students are planning on staying in the country permanently and are looking for a job there?**
Did you choose the topics for the textbook with this in mind?
Did you also take into consideration the different ethnicities and cultures when designing your textbook?

Appendix 10 – Filled out questionnaire

DIPLOMA THESIS

Possible advantages of using self-designed textbooks of the English language in language schools

QUESTIONNAIRE

Language school: Kaplan International Languages

1. Why did you decide to create your own textbook?

. The main reason for deciding to change syllabus and write materials was to respond to student expectations – our students expect to have a book to take away and study from (in colour!), they expect to have consistency in their curriculum and the latest in teaching methods and technologies. Our student surveys show that one of the things student are least happy with are lack of materials. The syllabus is very open and for an inexperienced teacher it can be challenging to plan long-term classes. We need to provide a robust structure to support our teachers and ensure that no matter what level of experience they have the materials to allow them to plan good consistent lessons and courses.

By developing our own material we can ensure that these reflect the Kaplan syllabus and Kaplan quality standards, that there are clear links between online and offline work and that they are as modern as possible.

How long did it take you to create it? I don't have this information.

How long have you been using it?

We have been using the materials for 7 years now.

2. In what aspects do you find it better than the commercially published textbooks?

When exploring the possibility of generally available text books – it soon became clear that as these are all written to encompass as far-reaching an audience as possible – there is nothing that is a good 'fit' for our students. We know our market, we know our students and we know their needs and expectations.

3. Did you make it with a specific idea/aim in your mind?

We wanted to create a text book more relevant to our students and their course. We also wanted to give teachers the opportunity to get involved and write, proof, and become readers – so far seven teachers from seven different schools have been involved with the writing and many others have helped with piloting and feedback. Having our own materials will immediately differentiate us from the rest of the market.

Most importantly for us – ownership of the materials means ownership of the content and ability to amend it as required – and we can respond to these requirements almost immediately. Online materials can be changed within a week and printed within a year.

(currently publishers re-print every 5 years – we are going to re-print in a year) this means we can monitor carefully and respond to student needs.

4. Are you satisfied with the textbook? Do you think you fulfilled your expectations?

Yes

Would you improve anything?

There are always improvements that can be considered.

5. Do you often go through the textbook and upgrade some of its aspects?

We review the content regularly and amend when necessary.

6. Is designing your own textbook somehow connected with the fact that as a foreign language school most of your students are planning on staying in the country permanently and are looking for a job there?

Did you choose the topics for the textbook with this in mind?

Did you also take into consideration the different ethnicities and cultures when designing your textbook?

We are not aware of all of our students' intentions post study but we do know that our students have a variety of plans after completion of their English course so we do not tailor a course that is geared towards a certain employment or migration outcome. Rather, we try to ensure that the course is suitable for the purposes of our student market to aid in acquiring solid English language skills.

Topics were carefully chosen to ensure that all students are able to hold a discussion without any prejudice as we have students from all over the world with different cultural and educational backgrounds studying in different destinations. Our course books are used in all of KI Language schools in the UK, US, Ireland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand and topics were selected to ensure that they are relevant globally not specific to one region or a country.

Appendix 11 – Eye-pleasing pictures, K+notes

And the world's best city is...

Looking for a change of scenery, somewhere you can start afresh and turn over a new leaf? Here's the lowdown on the world's best places to move to, according to a recent quality of life survey.



A HELSINKI



Helsinki is the capital of Finland and its largest city, with a population of 620,000. It is Finland's major political, educational, financial and cultural centre as well as one of northern Europe's major cities. Dubbed 'The White City of the North', Helsinki is known for its architecture, and the white neo-classical cathedral is considered to be the symbol of the city. It wasn't until the 21st century that the construction of skyscrapers was allowed in Helsinki, so you'll find plenty of green spaces to relax in.

Helsinki is a cosmopolitan city that is home to over 140 nationalities. The city is also well represented when it comes to higher education, with eight universities and four polytechnics. 45% of its population hold an academic degree. In addition, it should also be easy to find someone to have a conversation with, as around 70% of the population are competent English speakers. Unemployment is below the European Union average as well, and there are many more jobs available in Helsinki than there are residents of the city.

When it comes to getting around the city, you'll find a wide range of options that you can make use of, from buses and trams to local trains. For those who fancy a quick trip abroad, there are also ferries to various international destinations, such as Tallinn in Estonia.

Have your say:
There's also the Helsinki Festival which takes place every year in August. It's really good fun with lots of different events and performances.
Mike, England

B MELBOURNE



Melbourne is the second largest city in Australia and the most populous city in the state of Victoria, with a population of 4.35 million. Melbourne is a leading global financial centre, but also one of the most expensive cities to live in worldwide. US \$235,000 is the average price that people pay for a house in Melbourne. However, the city is rated highly in the areas of education, research and development, tourism, sports, healthcare and entertainment, so the residents feel that the higher quality of life and the wider range of job opportunities that the city offers justify the higher cost of living.

Nine universities have their campuses in Melbourne and the city was ranked the world's fourth-top university city.

The city is easy to get around due to its extensive public transport network that consists of buses, local trains and trams. In fact, its tram network is the world's largest! Melbourne is also home to The National Gallery of Victoria, the oldest public art museum in Australia.

Have your say:
Melbourne has some world-class restaurants serving international cuisine. My favourite place to eat is Vue du Monde.
Jeannie, New Zealand

C TOKYO



Tokyo is the capital of Japan and the seat of the Japanese government. It's also Japan's most populous city, and the place where you'll find the Imperial Palace, home to the emperor and his family. Tokyo's intoxicating blend of traditional Japanese culture and the ultra-modern is what most people find so fascinating about this city.

Tokyo is a sprawling metropolis which covers an incredible 2,188 km². In order to deal with the environmental problems that can arise in a city with a population of 13 million, in 2006 Tokyo started a project called the ten-year Project for Green Tokyo, whose goal is to increase the number of trees from 480,000 to 1 million and add an additional 1,000 hectares of green space.

Tokyo is a major international financial centre and a number of leading multinational corporations have their headquarters in the city. The cost of living is amongst the highest in the world, if not the highest, but the average annual income that a Tokyo resident receives is also comparatively high: the equivalent of US \$45,000. The city is also known for being extremely safe – only 15% of its residents have reported being a victim of crime.

Have your say:
Visiting the famous Tsukiji fish market in Tokyo early in the morning is an experience you'll never forget.
Jo, Portugal

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25

Picture 3: K+ notes, an eye-pleasing picture 1, page 25 (source: "Kaplan International", 2015)

LESSON 2 Looking for a Place to Stay

- ▶ Talk about different types of student accommodation
- ▶ Listen to a podcast about finding student accommodation abroad
- ▶ Listen to a conversation between a landlord and a student tenant
- ▶ Revise language for negotiating
- ▶ Practise negotiating

Speaking

1 Match the pictures with the types of accommodation from the box.

homestay hall of residence flat-share hostel

A  **B**  **C**  **D** 

2 Work with another student. What are the advantages of each type of accommodation above?

Picture 4: K+ notes, an eye-pleasing picture 2, page 28 (source: "Kaplan International", 2015)

Appendix 12 – A small picture, K+ notes

Target group	Important issues
1) Young people who want to improve their English. 	
2) Families who want to give their children a better education. 	
3) Business people who want to gain international experience to help them in their careers. 	
4) Older people who want to retire abroad. 	

b) What issues would be important for each target group to consider if they decided to move abroad? Discuss with another student.

c) Choose any city in the world that you think would be a good place for them to move to.

2 Plan your article.

- Choose 3-4 issues that would be important for your target group and plan your paragraphs around them.
- Think of a good, eye-catching title.
- Select interesting and appropriate information about the city in your introduction.
- Remember to sum up your article in the last paragraph.

3 Write your article.

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Picture 5: K+ notes, a small picture, page 27 (source: "Kaplan International", 2015)

Appendix 13 – Out of place pictures, K+ notes

Writing

1 Work with another student. Imagine that you work for a company called *Move Abroad* which helps people move to a foreign country. You are going to write a promotional article for the company website to attract new customers.

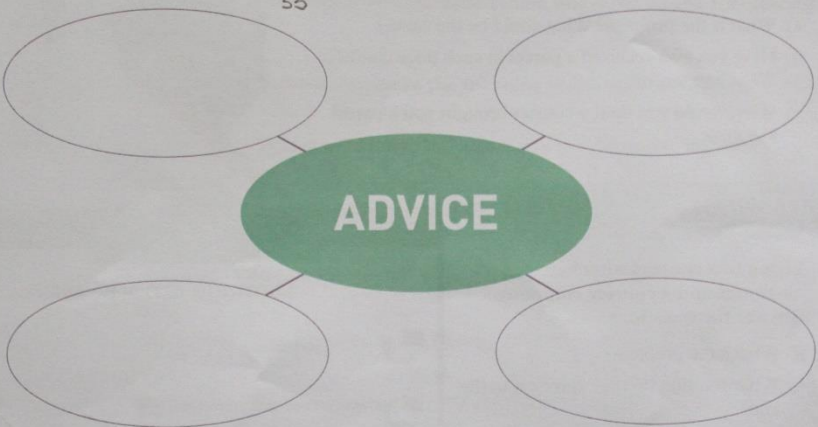
a) Look at the titles of the promotional articles below. Which group of people do you think they are aimed at? Match the title and target group.



Picture 6: K+ notes, an out of place picture 1, page 27 (source: “Kaplan International”, 2015)

b) Work with another student. Think about the advice that you could give to Zoe. Use the ideas from the text on page 33 or from your own experience. Make notes below.

33



3 Write an email to Zoe offering your advice.



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Picture 7: K+ notes, an out of place picture 2, page 35 (source: “Kaplan International”, 2015)

Appendix 14 – Not attractive pictures, K+ notes

3 Listen to a conversation between a landlord and a tenant. Answer the questions.

- a) What is the tenant's problem?
- b) What does he want the landlord to do?
- c) What does the landlord say that he will do?
- d) Why does the tenant not accept the landlord's offer at first?
- e) What does the tenant suggest should happen if the problem is not resolved?



12

Picture 8: K+ notes, not an attractive picture 1, page 29 (source: "Kaplan International", 2015)

LESSON 3 Culture Shock

- ▶ Discuss the idea of culture shock
- ▶ Read an article about culture shock
- ▶ Learn and practise phrases for summarising information and giving advice
- ▶ Write an email giving advice to a person suffering from culture shock

Speaking

1 Work in a group. Discuss these questions.

- a) What is culture shock?
- b) Have you ever experienced it? If so, what was it like?



Picture 9: K+ notes, not an attractive picture 2, page 32 (source: "Kaplan International", 2015)

Planning

- 1 You are going to take part in a role-play. Read the information about the two roles below.

Student A	Student B
You're a customer service representative who works for an estate agent. Student B rents their flat from you.	You're an international student who is renting a flat from Student A's estate agent. A water pipe in your flat has been leaking for the last week. You're calling the agency to ask them to fix it.

- 2 Work with another student. Look at the scenario for the conversation below and do tasks a-c.

- Make notes on phrases that could be useful for both roles.
- Student A: think about what you're able to offer Student B.
- Student B: think about what you would like to get from Student A.



Student A

- 1 Answer the phone, identify yourself and ask Student B how you can help them.

Student B

- 2 Explain the problem.

Picture 10: K+ notes, not an attractive picture 3, page 38 (source: "Kaplan International", 2015)