



ENGLISH PRACTICE MATERIAL

TEACHER'S MANUAL: WRITING

B1·B2



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General Comments

English Practice Material – vhs is a four-part series: Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking. The four parts can either be used individually or together in any combination. The units titles are the same in all four books. This series can accompany any textbook that is being used in an English course. The units can be flexibly combined. This has the advantage that teachers can put together activities according to their needs, i.e. activities for a particular skill, a particular CEFR descriptor or a particular emotion. Of course, the material can also use be used as primary learning material, e.g. Speaking is ideal for a conversation course.

The aim of this book is to get students writing. Each unit offers opportunities for various small writing activities and prepares the students for a main speaking task at the end of the unit by providing relevant writing activities and reading exercises. The weaker the students, the more time should be spent on preparation.

Topic Traditional British recipes / Imperatives

Aim Writing a recipe

Warm Up

The unit starts by talking about smells. You could bring some strong smelling food to the lesson. Maybe get the students to guess what you have brought with you by identifying the smell. Perhaps you can give an example of a strange dish that you or a friend has eaten while travelling abroad to get the students talking.

Activity 1

You can find pictures of these dishes on the Internet to show your students, or even bring along some additional examples to talk about. Extra information. There are two varieties for dish A: shepherd's pie is made with minced lamb and cottage pie with minced beef.

Activity 2

Cream Tea

You could bring some scones to the lesson and ask students to bring jam and whipped cream. (Whipped cream is a good alternative to clotted cream.) Mention that there are many different scone recipes and that you can also make savoury scones.

Your students will be curious about clotted cream. It can be ordered online so is obtainable outside Great Britain and there is plenty of information about it online, for example:

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clotted_cream

Here is an excerpt:

clotted cream (sometimes called scalded, clouted, Devonshire or Cornish cream) is a thick cream made by indirectly heating full-cream cow's milk using steam or a water bath and then leaving it in shallow pans to cool slowly. During this time, the cream content rises to the surface and forms 'clots' or 'clouts'.

Although its origin is uncertain, the cream's production is commonly associated with dairy farms in South West England and in particular the counties of Cornwall and Devon. In 1998 the term Cornish clotted cream became a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) by European Union directive, as long as the milk is produced in Cornwall and the minimum fat content is 55%.

Activity 3

These are British flapjacks. The American version is different. There are many recipes with slight variations on the Internet. The amount of syrup can be increased depending on how gooey you want them to be! Again you could make some before the lesson and bring them along for the students to try.

Please note: it is very important that the flapjacks are cut into pieces 10 minutes after taking them out of the oven. It will not be possible to cut them when they are cold!!

Additional Activity

Refer to the sticky note. Write all the cooking and baking verbs from the two recipes on the board and add more if the students need additional verbs for their recipes. To practise the verbs, form small groups and get the students to take it in turns to pick a verb and mime an action for the others to guess. Example: mix, brush, etc.

Activity 3

Making a class cookery book is worth the effort. Get the students to help collect and organize the recipes.

Topic What is a friend?

Aim Writing informal emails

Warm Up

Start the ball rolling by sharing a few examples of how you define friendship.

Ideas could be: A friend is someone who

- makes you smile
- encourages you
- knows all about you and still likes you
- accepts you just the way you are
- gives you freedom to be yourself
- will catch you when you fall
- will help you when you need help
- thinks you are great
- colours your world
- says nice things about you
- will help you with your homework.

Activity 1

Ask students if they write emails to friends and what the emails are usually about. After reading the emails, Activity 1c suggests that the students continue the email exchange. This can, of course, be continued for a couple more emails by adding some additional ideas, for example: some change to the plan is necessary (different time) or another activity is added, like going to the cinema.

Activity 2

Encourage the students to make their own list with these expressions. Further ideas and variations can be added. Suggest students select a few favourite expressions and highlight them and then use them in the next activity.

Activity 3

Ask the students how they begin and end their emails and refer to the sticky note.

The students should include as much information as possible in their email about the people who will be at the dinner and express their opinion as to why Donna will find them interesting.

Explain that the difference between B1 and B2 is that more details are expected at B2 level.

Optional activity

When introducing people, it is common to tell each person something about the other. For example:
"John, I'd like you to meet my friend Ben. We often go to the cinema together. And Ben, please meet John. He's just got back from the Cannes Film Festival."

Working in small groups, students could take it in turns to introduce two people to each other and share details that get the two people talking – they should try to continue the conversation for a minute or two.

Topic Apologizing in an informal and formal way

Aim Writing a short informal and/or formal letter

Warm Up

Nearly all the examples could also be relevant in the business world and so there is scope for discussion here. Encourage the students to discuss their opinions on this.

Activity 1

Explain that making mind maps are a helpful way to extend vocabulary knowledge. You could also hang up some of the mind maps around the classroom and then get the students to walk around and see if they know all the words.

Activity 2

Draw the student's attention to the sticky note and remind them of the different meanings for the word "mean".

Activity 3

Email 1 is informal and email 2 is formal.

Analyse the two emails with your class and point out the differences in the formal and informal language. For Activity 3b, the text can be completed in different ways. Encourage the students to think of several options. Ask them if they have ever received an apology in writing.

Activity 4

Before getting your students to write the letter for Activity 4, talk about the two situations and collect ideas as to what they could write. Ask the students if they have ever been in one of these situations. Encourage them to experiment with new vocabulary in the letter, but they should only use words and phrases that they really understand!

Topic Moving house / Future Continuous and Future Perfect

Aim Writing a diary entry or blog using the grammar from the unit

Warm Up

Ask students if they have ever moved house, and if they can remember a) looking for the new place and b) their feelings of expectation in the weeks/days beforehand.

Additional Activity

You can find photos and descriptions of houses and apartments / flats on real estate / property websites and the property section in the newspaper. These can be used to help generate more vocabulary.

Divide pictures or texts among the class, with each pair receiving different images or texts. Working together, they have to identify other property-related vocabulary and make a list. Elicit vocabulary from students to create a master list on the board. This vocabulary can be used to expand the Warm Up when students talk about their dream home.

Activity 1

Whether the adjectives are positive or negative depends on various factors and personal taste so some adjectives are open to interpretation.

The photos from the warm up can be used again once students have completed Activity 1. Here they can compare the houses or apartments in the photos they have, using the vocabulary to describe the properties and say which they like most or least, and why.

Activity 2

After explaining the grammar on the yellow "sticky note", give students time to do parts a) and b), either as individual work or in pairs. Then check the answers in class and discuss why each example is either future perfect or future continuous. Mention that these tenses are not used that often but it is good to know how they work and to be able to recognise them.

Activity 3

This activity consolidates the grammar that has been introduced. Proceed as for Activity 2.

Activity 4

In class, ask students what has to be done before moving house. Tell them to imagine themselves in this situation and talk about the events mentioned on the calendar. Ask them if they follow anyone's blog and what is typical about a blog. When they write their own blog, encourage students to add their own individual ideas.

Extra Grammar Practice

Future continuous and future perfect game - Predict the changes

Ask for four or five volunteers. (The number depends on the size of your class.) These students come up to the front of the room and stand before the class. The class have one minute to notice what the students are wearing. The students will then go out of the classroom and each one will change two or three things (give examples beforehand).

While they are outside making small changes, the rest of the group must predict what changes will have been made when they come back. Write predictions on a sheet of paper or on the board. When the students come back in, the rest of the class check to see which predictions were correct. What changes have been made?

Examples - Steve will have taken off his jacket. Sarah will not be wearing her watch. Tina will have tied up her hair. Jonas and Mike will have exchanged shoelaces.

Extra grammar activity

Think of your life in 20 years' time. How will things have changed? What will you be doing? What do you think you will have achieved by then? Write on the board:

In 20 years' time I will be ...

In 20 years' time I will have ...

Topic Phobias and scary experiences

Aim Writing a text about something scary

Warm up

Definition of Phobia from OUP Advanced Learner's Dictionary:

1. A strong unreasonable fear of something.
2. A strong unreasonable fear or hatred of a particular thing.

A phobia that students may know is claustrophobia – a fear of being in confined spaces – which you could use as an example at the beginning.

You could mention that people who have a fear of germs are often compulsive hand washers.

On the Internet there are lists of many other phobias. As an additional activity, the students could search for other phobias for others to guess or you could prepare additional cards naming phobias for the students to guess.

Activity 1

Refer the students to the sticky note and explain that using linking words and phrases is important to make a text sound good.

After reading through the text, point out to the students that we talk about being afraid / frightened /scared of something and having a phobia of something.

Activity 2

After the exercise, you could ask students to write their own sentence(s) using linking words/phrases from Activity 1 and Activity 2.

Activity 3

Pre-teach: butcher, axe

Check that people know that "Sleepy Hollow" is a horror film. Maybe a student can give a short account of what happens in the film.

After reading the text, you could ask the students how realistic they think this story is and how old the writer was when this happened.

Activity 4

Ideas could be childhood experiences like being afraid of the dark, the monster under your bed, getting lost, losing your parents in a shop, etc.

Getting students to swap texts with each other gives them a chance to learn from each other.

Topic Surprise parties

Aim Writing short messages

Warm up

Re-activate relevant vocabulary: throw a party, celebrate, celebration, candy, treat, birthday cake, blow out the candles, gift wrap, ribbon, balloons, streamers, goodie bag, etc.

Some students in your class may not celebrate their birthday. Encourage them to talk about other memorable (surprise) parties instead.

Activity 1

After the students have completed this activity, compare the answers in class. You might want to draw the students' attention to the word "suspicion" and explain related words and phrases: to suspect, suspicious, (un-)suspecting, to raise (or stir) suspicion.

Activity 2

Consider brainstorming some ideas in class before the students start writing:

- Talk about what Jake may be like and list ideas for suitable birthday presents on the board.
- Remind the students of phrases that they can use to make suggestions (e.g. Why don't we ...? How about ...?)
- Talk about what can go wrong when planning a surprise party and what you can do to keep your plans secret. Collect useful expressions on the board.

Activity 3

The aim of this activity is to familiarize the students with short, informal messages. The task is set up as a puzzle that is intended to provide a fun, playful approach to the topic. You might want to point out to your students that this activity does not represent an authentic situation. Normally, the participants of a group chat know to whom they are writing and why.

Activity 4

This activity works particularly well if the students in your group are comfortable with each other and have some of imagination. To help them get started, consider brainstorming some general ideas in addition to the examples mentioned in the book. Ideally, the students should come up with something truly unique (e.g. an unusual skill or an unknown talent).

Make sure that the student who is going to be the organizer understands what he or she is expected to do. If you have a large group, pick two organizers who work together as a team.

Topic Asking others for advice / Spelling & punctuation

Aim Giving advice to someone in writing

Warm up

The Reading unit on Uncertainty deals with the question of **how** to make decisions so you could concentrate here more on the **when** and **why** it's hard to make decisions.

Activity 1

Explain that everyone has problems spelling certain words and that there are also ways to help yourself remember. Even though computers have spell checkers, it's important to be able to recognise the correct spelling as the computer may offer you the wrong choice, for example: which/witch or their/they're/there.

In pairs, the students have a bigger chance of being able to correct the misspelling. Once they have tried to correct them without a dictionary, they can then consult a dictionary to see how well they have done. Alternatively, you can go through the words with the whole class.

Here is a good source for teaching spelling. There are helpful ways of how to remember to spell the words. <http://grammar.yourdictionary.com/spelling-and-word-lists/misspelled.html>

You could also use this website or pass it on to your students.

www.oxforddictionaries.com/spelling-challenge/
The words are dictated for you to write and the level of difficulty can be selected.

Activity 2

Before starting this activity, revise rules for commas and capital letters if you feel this is necessary.

Other points to consider for Activity 2b:

What do you do with the dog when you go on holiday? How far do you want to walk with your dog every day? Should your dog be a guard dog or a family dog?

Activity 3

Before starting this activity, refer to the sticky note and practise the apostrophe rules.

Additional Activity

Get your students to write Internet Forum questions about imaginary problems. Collect them in a hat. Pull them out and read aloud for the class to suggest answers or get students to write answers.

Topic Jobs; asking direct and indirect questions

Aim Writing letters or emails asking for more information

Warm Up

Further questions: Ask the students which skills they need for their jobs. Are there any new skills that they would like to learn?

Activity 1

You can easily create a similar activity with different examples. Write one half of the description on one card and the other half on another card (e.g. Card 1: "logical" | Card 2: "thinking"). You can find additional examples of job skills on the Internet: <http://jobsearch.about.com/od/skills/fl/general-skills.htm>. Ask the students to work in pairs or small groups and find the matching cards.

Activity 2

The job descriptions in the advertisements are fairly general. The students should think about what pieces of information they would need if they wanted to apply for one of the jobs and write down key words first. Then, in Part b, they are expected to turn the key words into questions.

If necessary, review making questions and/or practise formulating questions in different ways.

Activity 3

Ask the students if they know any other useful phrases for letters asking for more information and create a separate list on the board.

Activity 4

If the students have difficulty forming indirect questions in Activity 4a, give some additional examples before moving on to Activity 4b.

Activity 5

Point out to the students that they can use the questions from Activity 2b in their letter. They may also be able to use some of the phrases from Activity 1.

For further practice:

Ask the students to look for additional advertisements for temporary jobs in English-speaking countries on the Internet and bring them to class. Put them all on a large piece of paper (or on the board) and discuss them: What job skills are mentioned in the ads? Do the ads give you a clear idea of what the jobs will be like? If not, what information is missing? Which of the jobs would interest you? Why?

Ask the students to write a job advertisement (e.g. for a dog walker, a gardener, a housecleaner, a babysitter, etc.).

Topic Disappointment with products (and services)

Aim Writing a letter of complaint

Warm Up

Possible ways of dealing with the situation are: write a letter of complaint, call the Customer Service Centre, send the item back and ask for a replacement or a refund.

Activity 1

Pre-teach the words "salutation" and "closing" and point out that there are several other expressions that have the same meaning: "greeting" instead of "salutation"; "close", "closing salutation" or "complimentary closing" instead of "closing".

Activity 2

Many students believe that there is a "right way" and a "wrong way" of writing semi-formal letters and feel overwhelmed by the number of rules they have heard about.

Explain to them that there are some differences in layout and letter writing conventions between British English and American English and according to personal preferences. In most cases, however, a variety of formats are acceptable as long as they are being used consistently, e.g. if you decide to write the date in the format dd/mm/yy, you should always write it like that.

Use the quiz as a point of departure to review the most common letter writing conventions:

Date:

The date is usually written in one of two ways: 19 March 2015 (begin with the day; no comma) or March 19, 2015 (begin with the month; comma).

Salutation:

If you are writing to a person whose name and gender you do not know, use "Dear Sir or Madam".

If you know the person's name, use the title (Mr or Ms) and the surname (e.g. Dear Mr Jones). If you are writing to a woman, it is common to use Ms, which is for both married and single women (e.g. Dear Ms Taylor). It is possible to use Mr. or Mr – with or without a full stop.

Some people use a comma after the salutation (Dear Mr. Jones,) while others prefer a colon (Dear Mr. Jones:) The latest development is not to use any punctuation (Dear Mr Jones).

Informal greetings such as "Hi," "Hello," or "Hey there" are fine for personal letters to friends and family but should not be used in official letters.

Closing:

A complimentary closing is a short, polite phrase at the end of your letter. Complimentary closings that sound friendly and professional include "Yours faithfully," "Yours sincerely," "Sincerely" or "Kind regards".

The complimentary closing is usually followed by a comma. Do not use a comma if you have used no punctuation after your salutation.

In the British format, if you do not address someone specifically by name, the complimentary closing is usually "Yours faithfully". If you use the person's name, the complimentary closing is "Yours sincerely" or "Sincerely":

Dear Sir or Madam Yours faithfully
Dear Mr Jones Yours sincerely
Dear Ms Taylor..... Sincerely

Activity 3

Consider bringing a few damaged items to class and ask the students to describe the type of damage as precisely as they can (e.g. a coffee mug with the handle broken off, a torn or stained piece of clothing, etc.)

Activity 4

Remind the students that complaint letters should always be polite and not aggressive or insulting.

Topic Examples of people helping each other

Aim Writing a story about helping someone

Warm Up

Maybe you have a story of how you washed up dishes or helped in the kitchen and had a great conversation with others.

Activity 1

The lollipop man or lady is a typical British job title. You might want to download a picture so that the students can see where the name comes from – the stop sign that looks like a lollipop.

1b: Encourage the students to write definitions that cannot be guessed immediately. You could also make a competition out of this activity by dividing the students into groups and letting them collect points.

Team providing the definition: One point for each false guess by the other teams.

Team guessing the definition: One point for a correct guess.

Activity 2

This is a difficult exercise and some students will not be able to guess all the words. Give the students time to try on their own and then do it with the whole class.

Discussion: Try and get the students to comment on the text and give their own experiences.

You can add the following ideas:

Do we always expect something when we help someone?

Why do we help people?

Activity 3

There are many fairy tales based on this kind of topic where a young person helps an old woman or gives everything away and is then unexpectedly rewarded. Example: The Star Money (Die Stern-taler) is a German fairy tale collected by the Brothers Grimm. Perhaps the students can give other examples.

Activity 4

Before asking the students to write their stories you could talk about the pictures. They are just intended to inspire and can lead in any direction.

Additional discussion activity

As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands, one for helping yourself, the other for helping others. Audrey Hepburn

Discuss this statement.

Topic Thank you notes

Aim Writing a formal or informal email to say thank you

Warm Up

a) Possible examples: when someone helps you and you want to say thank you, or you find the solution to a problem, or a neighbour looks after your house while you are away.

b) Before class, check that you can come up with at least three things for the letter that you are going to choose.

Make sure the students know that they should use the structure **to be grateful to someone** or **to be grateful for something**.

You could get the groups to read the best sentences to the class and the class then decides which is the most original idea. You can also get the students to ask each other questions about the sentences that they have written.

Activity 1

After reading the notes, talk about how realistic these three different situations are. They may say for number 2 that the mother wouldn't leave before the babysitter was there and so wouldn't need to write a note but maybe time was short and there was no time for the mother to talk to the babysitter.

Compare the different expressions used to say thank you.

Activity 2

You could give all your students a small sheet of paper or even a large Post-it® so that they really only write a note.

Additional idea

Before the students start writing, tell them that when they have finished writing their note, they should put it in the box on your table. You will then pull out some of the notes to read to the class. They can guess who wrote it. When you read, you can automatically correct any mistakes. OR the notes are kept anonymous and the class corrects any mistakes that you point out to them.

Activity 3

Email 1 is informal and email 2 is formal. Discuss with the students what makes these two emails different: the style, the words, the contractions in the informal email. If you wish to add a bit of grammar to this activity, you could point out the difference in the use of "so" and "such" as demonstrated in the first email.

Activity 4

You can get the students to do both tasks or just one.

Topic Seeing life optimistically / Paragraphing

Aim Writing a short optimistic story

Warm Up

Maybe you have a story to share with the class where someone said something positive to you and helped you.

Talk about the attitude of the two people in the illustration with the students so that they recognize that the speaker on the right is an optimist.

Activity 1

This is a text on the value of hope in our lives and is quite challenging in both topic and vocabulary. You will need to give weaker students extra help. Activity 1b and the sticky note give background information on the structure of a paragraph. Before looking at this, elicit from the students what they know about paragraphs.

Activity 2

Pre-teach the word "busker" (street musician) and ask your students what they think of buskers. Have they ever tried to earn money this way? What is the life of a busker like?

You may want to refer to "A street cat named Bob" by James Bowen. This is a book that has been on the bestseller list about a real busker whose life changed when a cat came into his life.

See this article:

www.theguardian.com/books/2014/mar/18/bob-street-cat-books-sell-1m-copies-in-uk-james-bowen

There are several clips on YouTube, for instance.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Y7gjjwTars

www.youtube.com/watch?v=MePaWG7g5FA

Activity 3

You could do further work on linking words before the students start writing if you wish. Ask the students to come up with other examples: furthermore, additionally, sometimes, during, while, etc.

One possibility is to get the students to write the story in small groups. They could then read their story aloud and the class could pay special attention to the linking words used.

Activity 4

The students can either use the picture for inspiration or the word cloud. The words in the word cloud are only supposed to be a starting point. Students do not have to use them all.

Topic Things that might go wrong while travelling

Aim Expressing worry or concern correctly

Warm Up

You might also want to introduce the phrase “Is the glass half full or half empty?” here.

Activity 1

Practice the use of “may” and “might” to express possibility. If the students have difficulty with this grammar topic and need further practice, you can easily add more example situations to Activity 1b (e.g. I want to start my own business / get married / get a dog / move to Japan) or ask the students to come up with their own ideas.

Activity 2

If necessary, add a few additional examples while doing Activity 2a to help the students understand the difference between “will” and “might”.

For further practice, use the examples in Activity 2b to make chain sentences: If your plane crashes, you **might** get stranded on a deserted island. → If you get stranded on a deserted island, you **might/will** ...

Activity 3

For further practice: Ask each student to make a sentence about his or her plans for the future (e.g. I want to change jobs. My friends and I want to go to the beach this weekend. I want to adopt a cat. My husband and I want to sell our house next year.). The other students try to think of things that might possibly go wrong and respond with “What-if” sentences.

Activity 4

If you would like to expand on the topic in this activity, ask the students if they can think of any other dangers that people might face if they go on a safari. To help the students get started, write the following words on the board or create a word cloud prior to class and hand it out (e.g. www.wordle.net): BUGS SAFETY WATER TOILETS THEFT CRIME HIPPOS SNAKES HYGIENE VEHICLES ACCIDENTS DIARRHEA INSECTS DISEASES

Activity 5

Depending on the interests of your group, feel free to change the situation described in the instructions. In order to encourage them to express worry or concern, the students shouldn't feel completely at ease with the type of holiday and/or some of the activities suggested.

Topic Expressing satisfaction and approval

Aim Writing a positive consumer review

Warm Up

Although this unit is about consumer reviews, the students might come up with a variety of ideas in the Warm up (e.g. the person in the illustration may be showing a language certificate, a new work contract, a successfully completed business plan, etc.). It's fine if they don't mention consumer reviews at all, but if you want to point them in that direction, feel free to give them a hint: Imagine the person on the left has just opened up a new restaurant or hotel. What do you think he may be looking at?

Activity 1

Make sure that the students understand the expression "consumer review". Also, consider explaining the difference between the words "review", "evaluation", "feedback" and "rating".

Activity 2

Look for additional reviews of restaurants on the Internet, print them out and discuss them in class, e.g. Jamie Oliver's restaurant in London or the restaurant reviews for Tim's Place, which is covered in Unit 2, Reading:

http://www.tripadvisor.com/Restaurant_Review-g60933-d2001930-Reviews-Tim_s_Place-Albuquerque_New_Mexico.html

Activity 3

Point out that young people often have "in" words to refer to things and situations they really like, which change from year to year. Do your students know any examples? Possible examples at time of print: awesome, cool. The students could check out websites for young people's magazines, blogs, etc. to find some "in" words.

Activity 4

This is a good opportunity to practise adjectives and their opposites. Pick suitable adjectives from the mind map or from the consumer reviews you found on the Internet and write them on the board (e.g. lovely, inspiring, delicious, beautiful, etc.). Then ask the students to find the opposites to these words.

Activity 5

Remind the students that this unit is about positive reviews. (For the language for negative reviews, see Unit 9, Writing and Speaking.)

Activity 6

Assign this exercise as homework. Encourage the students to use an online thesaurus to look for synonyms (and antonyms). Explain that a thesaurus is a useful tool to help them find the most precise words for what they want to say, but also make the students aware of its limitations. An entry in a thesaurus usually consists of a word or short phrase. Synonyms should be chosen carefully because two words often have the same basic meaning, but different connotations. That is why it is a good idea to use the thesaurus in conjunction with a dictionary that provides example sentences.

Topic Being a good guest / host

Aim Writing an invitation

Warm Up

If you have students with different cultural backgrounds in your group, you can also talk about social etiquette in different countries:

Are guests expected to take their shoes off before entering the house? Is it common to bring a gift? If so, what type of gift is appropriate? etc.

Activity 1

In this activity, it might be helpful to write the students' ideas on the board or large pieces of paper so that everybody can see them.

1b: Create a table with four columns on the board and write down the students' most important ideas. If necessary, help them to find the right words for what they want to say.

1c: Discuss the "house rules" that each group has come up with in class and create one long list of house rules that combines the ideas from the different groups. You can either write them on one large piece of paper or use one smaller piece of paper for each rule.

Activity 2

After the students have completed this activity, draw their attention to the word "venue" and explain that it refers to a location where an event takes place, e.g. The Parkview Hotel is an ideal venue for business meetings and conferences.

Activity 3

The writing task is preceded by a fairly lengthy oral activity. This helps the students picture the situation clearly in their minds before they start writing.

Topic Favourite things, e.g. Christmas / adverbs and adjectives

Aim Writing a blog

Warm up

You could lead into this activity by showing two pictures, one of a sunny beach and one of a big chocolate cake, and asking students to choose which one they like best. When they choose one or another, ask them why. Then elicit that chocolate or sunshine makes them feel happy, then ask them to write their list.

Activity 1

You could introduce this by telling the students that your favourite day of the year is your birthday because you get lots of presents and a delicious cake. Then ask them if any of them have a favourite day of the year. Elicit more details from the response.

Activity 2

Pre-teach the word 'awesome' and point out the difference to the word 'awful', which is negative. The link to Neil's blog is:

<http://1000awesomethings.com/>

If possible, use a Smartboard or projector to show the website in class. Enlarge just one of the shorter entries so that the students can't see the whole blog, and ask them to read it (try to use an entry which is different from the ones listed in the unit). You could then ask the students if any of them have their own blog, and ask them briefly to describe it to the class.

If no technology is available, you can print a couple of entries and enlarge them and stick them on to card or paper to give out to students.

Optional: It is quite difficult for students to understand the specific sense of humour with a range of uncommon vocabulary at this level so you could choose a few entries from the 1000 Awesome Things blog and pre-teach vocabulary.

Activity 3

Draw students' attention to the yellow "sticky note". Ask for examples of adjectives and adverbs, and as students give them, write them on the board in two columns. Then choose one of the elicited words and ask a student to build a short sentence using the chosen word. Repeat with other words and ask a different student each time.

This leads into the activity. Make sure that the students understand that more than one word will fit in each gap. Since this is not the usual gap-fill, it would be a good idea to do the first one with the class to be sure that they all grasp it.

Activity 4

Before starting this activity, you could prepare a few ideas for things to make people happy (perhaps borrowed from some entries on 100 Awesome Things which you haven't looked at), in case any students state that they can't think of anything at all. Alternatively, you could produce a short list of possible favourite days of the year (Christmas Day, first day of the summer holidays/a summer holiday, Halloween) to give students ideas.

Additional listening activity

Watch this TED talk on how to be happy. You can choose English subtitles to make it easier to follow.

http://www.ted.com/talks/matt_killingsworth_want_to_be_happier_stay_in_the_moment.html

You can also find Neil Pasricha on TED talking about his Awesome Things Blog. www.ted.com/

Topic Homesickness

Aim Developing your main points

Warm Up

If the students in your group know each other well and feel comfortable with each other, you can also ask them to talk about their personal experiences with homesickness.

Activity 1

This unit prepares students to move progressively from writing individual sentences (Activity 1) to writing related sentences in a short paragraph (Activity 2 and Activity 3) to free composition (Activity 4). To get the most out of this unit, the students should therefore complete the exercises in the order in which they are presented.

Activity 2

Before the students start writing, take some time to analyse the example in the book:

1) First, draw the students' attention to the main idea of the example text (Send presents back home.). Point out that the students can simply use the sentences from Activity 1 as topic sentences and don't have to come up with ideas of their own.

2) Then, take a look at the supporting details. The text gives a **specific example** of a suitable present ("something that is typical of your new home town or country") and a **reason** why the strategy will be work ("... is not only fun but it also helps you get out of the house and explore your new environment").

If you think that your students may have difficulty with this type of activity, start slowly and ask them to pick one strategy instead of two. Then, analyse each text as outlined above and make suggestions for improvement, if necessary.

Activity 3

You might want to suggest that the students read the gap text first in order to get a general idea of what it is about.

Activity 4

If you decide to assign this exercise as homework, consider reviewing phrases beforehand.

For example:

making suggestions - Why don't you ...?
cheering people up - Look on the bright side ...
showing empathy - I can imagine that must be frustrating.

Topic	Urban Legends
Aim	Writing an urban legend

Urban legends are an excellent way of teaching creative writing. Very often people hear of a strange incident and then can tell a similar story of their own. Further information about urban legends can be found at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urban_legend and <http://www.snopes.com/>. In comparison, an anecdote is about something that really happened to you or someone you know. So, you could say that urban legends start off as anecdotes. *Anecdotes are the topic of the unit Speaking – Amusement.*

Warm up

Please remind your students that “gnome” is pronounced without sounding the “g”. Your students will probably know similar stories to the one in the warm up. You could also refer to the film “Amélie”, in which the girl Amélie gets postcards from her garden gnome. Maybe you have your own urban legend that you can tell the class at some point during the lesson. Also encourage students to tell their stories.

Activity 1

Get the students to work in pairs or alone when putting the sentences in the right order. Then have the story read aloud in class, first in the present tense and then in the past tense. After working with the story, ask if anybody has ever left anything on their car roof or know of someone who has. Students are sure to have some stories.

Activity 2

It's important to have groups of three for this activity. Have an example to show the class. It also makes it easier if you get the students to fold the paper into three before they start so that the students know how big the drawing should be.

Activity 3

It is good practice and preparation for the next task for the students to write out the story in full in their exercise books making sure they use the verbs in the past tense.

Explain that the words in speech marks do not change because this is what is actually said.

Activity 4

You could get the students to swap their stories with a partner or in small groups.

Not every student is happy about sharing their story with the rest of the class so the following is an optional activity: The stories could be collected on the teacher's desk in a box or hat. Then some stories could be pulled out and read and the class could guess who wrote it. You could also vote for the funniest story.

Extra activities

Get the students to do an internet search for the following common urban legends:

- alligators in the sewer
- the disappearing hitchhiker
- the \$250 cookie recipe

[<http://urbanlegends.about.com/od/humor/ss/Funny-Stories-Urban-Legends.htm> might help you]

If you have spare time, you could get the students to act out one of the stories.

Topic Things that make people angry

Aim Describing annoying behaviour clearly and precisely

Warm Up

In addition to the categories mentioned in the book, the students are also welcome to come up with ideas of their own. For example, if they'd prefer to talk about how politicians make them angry, that's fine.

Activity 1

If the students in your group are already familiar with the words in Activity 1a, you might want to introduce a few additional "anger words" such as outraged, fuming, frustrated, livid, mad, etc.

Activity 2 and 3

To practise using these expressions, ask the students whether they know any celebrities who have displayed angry or aggressive behaviour in public (e.g. Naomi Campbell allegedly assaulted her driver, Hugh Grant is said to have kicked a photographer in his private parts, Mel Gibson insulted a reporter by calling him names, Justin Bieber shouted at the police officer who pulled him over, soccer player Luis Suárez bit Giorgio Chiellini's shoulder during the 2014 World Cup match between Uruguay and Italy, etc.).

Activity 4

This activity directly prepares the students for the writing task in Activity 5, so we recommend not to skip it.

If your students enjoy learning idioms, this is a good opportunity to introduce some additional idioms of anger (e.g. to fly off the handle, to blow your top, to see red).

Activity 5

Remind your students that they may use informal language if they want to. Discourage them from using too many idioms though, as this may sound unnatural.

Topic Memorable “firsts” in a person’s life

Aim Writing about personal experiences, story telling

Warm Up

If the students in your group do not have any particular first-car memories, ask them to talk about another object that they feel emotionally attached to (e.g. their first teddy bear, their first suit or formal dress, etc.).

Activity 1

For further practice: The students ask and answer questions about memorable firsts in their lives. If the students are comfortable with each other, this activity can be great fun and elicit authentic conversations. Keep in mind, though, that some students may not want to answer questions that are too personal (e.g. What was your first kiss like?).

Activity 2

This activity directly prepares the students for the writing task in Activity 5. It (a) helps them become aware of the key events of a story, (b) provides an example of a first-person narrative and (c) draws the students’ attention to a relevant grammar topic (using the past progressive).

Activity 3

In order to describe past events or experiences, the students should be able to use the past tense fairly correctly. Since many students have difficulty deciding when to use the simple past and when to use the past progressive, this activity is designed to remind them of the difference between the two. Feel free to add further grammar exercises if necessary.

Activity 4

This activity offers an opportunity to become familiar with the expression “remember doing something” which is easily confused with “remember to do something”. Explain the difference in class and consider adding a few examples for further practice (e.g. remember locking the door / to lock the door, remember to return / returning the books to the library, remember calling / to call you etc.)

Activity 5

Some students may have trouble deciding what to write about. Tell them to use the examples in Activity 1 and Activity 4 for inspiration and spend a few minutes brainstorming ideas before they start writing.

Creatively written by an international team of English language professionals and brought to life by telc, *English Practice Material – vhs* is a four-part series, using a fresh, flexible and practical approach. The parts are: Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking.

Targeted at adult learners with upper B1 / lower B2 competence, each unit is based on a human emotion. A variety of aspects of each emotion are covered in a number of communicative situations. Learners are encouraged to compare and discuss their own experiences and emotional responses, thus covering all typical competencies of the Council of Europe's *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) levels B1 and B2. This material is designed in a way that provides immediate access for both teachers and learners. All the activities are clear and self-explanatory and there are plenty of opportunities for individual or group work, role-plays, interviews, debates and discussions.

Like building blocks, the material can be used together either comprehensively or individually in a workshop or short course. The units can also be used flexibly to supplement other teaching material. Most importantly, a variety of tasks typically found in telc examinations are featured, making this series excellent preparation for a telc language test.