

Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais

Faculdade de Letras

Curso de Especialização em Ensino de Inglês

An approach to English teaching using modern topics

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Belo Horizonte

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An approach to English teaching using modern topics

Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso apresentado ao Curso de  
Especialização em Ensino de Inglês da Faculdade de Letras da  
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Belo Horizonte

11 de dezembro de 2014

*I really thank you, dad.*

*If you hadn't helped me with all your fast and great ideas,*

*it would have never reached an end.*

*Believe me when I say never...*

*I thank you, Thiago, my husband.*

*Who has been there for me when I want to quit everything.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Every new group I start teaching, I always ask them, “Why are you studying English?” The answer I hear the most is “because of my job”. I believe it is a reality for most learners everywhere.

This material was developed for these learners. Learners who know what they want; who know what they need; who care about what really matters in their business world and what is happening around them; and who do not have time to waste.

For many of these students, what happens is that they do not have much time to study a language. It makes them need to use their lunchtime at work to do so. For this reason, proposing some kind of material to be used with this public, at lunchtime, was a great challenge. We knew it would have to be interesting enough so that they would not fall asleep in the middle of their class and fun enough so that they would enjoy using it as much as we enjoyed producing it.

This material has been developed for intermediate business English learners. Adults from 18 years old to life.

You will notice that our tests are not traditional. It is because I have always believed that only tests cannot prove anything. Many students do well in class, but when they have to sit down and take a traditional test, whether written or oral, they get disoriented and do not do as well as they do in class. For this assignment, I developed what I believe can be used with all kinds of students and all of them will be benefitted in the end.

These units and tests are intended to any students, from the most analytical ones to the most active ones. During their development, I thought about the "multiple intelligences" and tried to do something suitable for any of them. In addition, it was developed in a way that you, teacher, can be autonomous enough to notice your students' needs and adapt anything that is in this material to anything they may need. However, it was not developed for self-taught learners. This material requires a teacher to make it understandable and easy to be dealt with.

So, let's get started?

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## GENERAL TEACHER'S GUIDE

Dear teacher,

this material was made to help you understand your students' needs. Here, you will find steps to accomplish the activities, to watch the videos, to read the texts, some extra-activities you can do with your students, how to assess them, everything step-by-step.

All the activities were designed to show learners different points of view, new grammar points, and to provide them with extra-vocabulary on specific topics. There is also plenty of opportunity for students to produce language as much as they can.

In the beginning of each unit, you will find the objectives concerning language, which are grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. It helps learners to see what they are going to talk about and where they are going to.

Remember: students in the intermediate level are capable of expressing themselves and understanding the target language. At this point, mother tongue is no longer necessary.

In these units, you will not find any mentions of pronunciation. However, it is one of the most important topics to be taught in English because of all sounds we have in this language that we do not have in Portuguese. Students will find the IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) chart in the end of their material, so that they become aware of all the sounds of English and you should work with that in the first classes and throughout the course. There are also activities in the teacher's guide, which have not been included in the units because we wanted to treat pronunciation as something special, something that students are totally focused on, not just another activity in the book. You are responsible for talking to them about it, for showing them how important pronunciation is, mainly when talking about sounds we do not have in Portuguese, like [θ] or [ð], or sounds which are difficult for them to produce, like [ŋ] in ['sɪŋ-ə], for instance.

Have fun!

GRAMMAR - Word order in wh-questions - simple present, simple past

VOCABULARY - everyday words at work

PRONUNCIATION - new business words

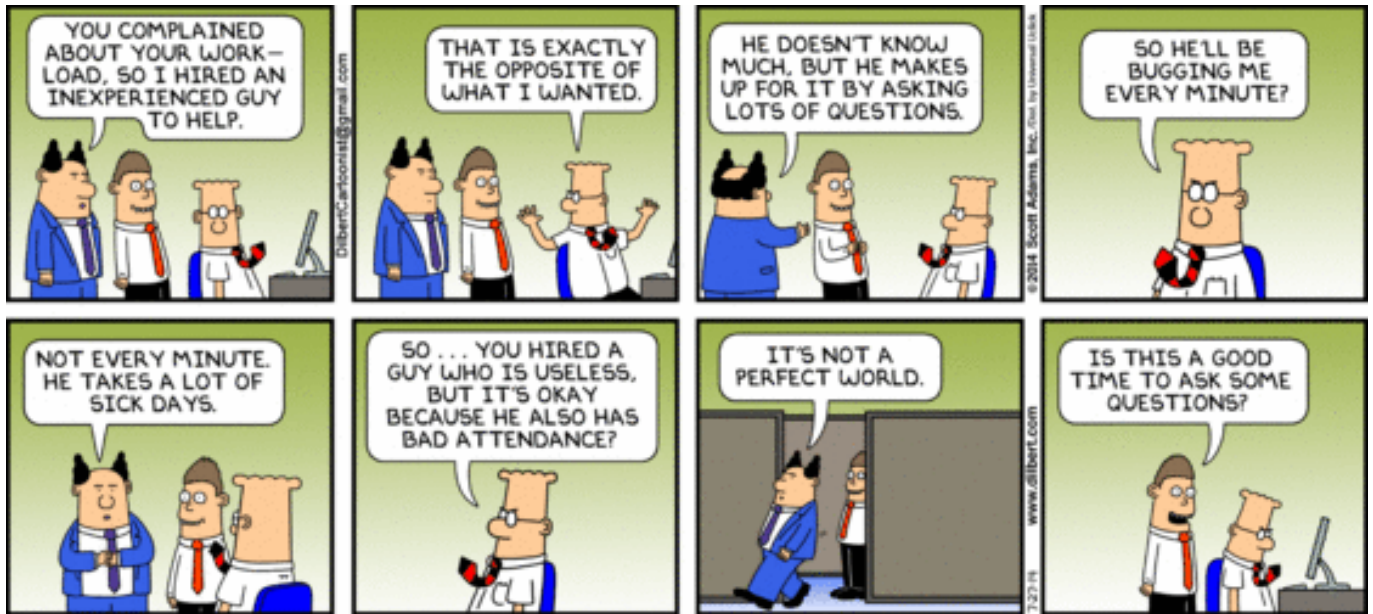
- STARTER:
- Do you ask many questions at work?
  - Do you know anybody who does it?
  - What do you think about asking too many questions at work?
  - What are effective questions?
  - Do you ask effective questions at work? At home?

# The Importance of Asking Questions



## WARM UP

1. Read the cartoon.



2. Answer the questions about the cartoon:

a. What makes this cartoon funny?

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b. What do you think about the boss's decision of hiring an inexperienced person who also has bad attendance to help Dilbert? Why do you think so?

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Speaking – work in pairs – compare your answers to your partner and discuss them. Do you agree or disagree with him/her?

## VOCABULARY

3. Read the cartoon again. Find words that match the definitions below:

- \_\_\_\_\_ (adjective) Being or having no beneficial use; futile or ineffective.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (noun) The frequency with which a person is present.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (verb) Engage the services of (a person) for a fee; employ.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (adjective) Lack of the knowledge gained from experience.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (verb) To annoy; pester.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (noun) The amount of work assigned to or expected from a worker in a specified time period.





## LISTENING

Before you listen...

1. What questions did you ask today?

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2. How many were effective? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Put the words in the correct order to make questions.

- a. questions / today / did / What / you / ask ?
- b. keys / Where / my / are ?
- c. into / this / did / I / Why / walk / room ?
- d. did / What / learn / school / in / you ?
- e. should / read / I / book / today / What / great ?

While you listen...

4. Watch or listen to Chic Thompson talking about people's question asking ability.



YouTube

What Questions Did  
You Ask Today?

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=O6ZnJldgc1A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O6ZnJldgc1A)

5. According to Chic Thompson, are the sentences below true (T) or false (F)?

- ( ) An average 5-year-old child asks about 165 questions a day.
- ( ) An average 8-year-old child asks about 41 questions a day.
- ( ) After retiring, we start asking more meaningful questions than we did before.
- ( ) We entered school as question marks and we graduated as periods.
- ( ) We don't find, create, or invent creative solutions. We reveal them by asking any questions.
- ( ) He found that asking great questions is also a three-step process: you start with "what" and then "why" questions, before you ever ask "how" questions.
- ( ) Instead of asking your kids what questions they asked at school today, ask about what they learned.

# The Importance of Asking Questions

6. In the video you watched on Exercise 1 (listening), Chic Thompson mentions his favorite three questions when he is dealing with any challenges. He says that the order in which those questions should be asked is very important. Number the questions below so that they are in the order proposed by him.

( ) How are we going to achieve this result?

( ) Why do we want to achieve this result?

( ) What is the result we want to see, feel and hear?

7. Why does he say that this order is important?

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8. "What", "why", and "how" questions were mentioned in the video. Watch it again and complete the examples below:

\_\_\_\_\_ are my keys?

\_\_\_\_\_ do we want to achieve this result?

\_\_\_\_\_ did I walk into this room?

How \_\_\_\_\_ we going to achieve this result?

What \_\_\_\_\_ the result we want to see, feel and hear?

\_\_\_\_\_ did you learn today in school?

What questions \_\_\_\_\_ you ask today?

## PRACTICE

9. Now, circle the correct words:



Remember that word order in questions in English is different from many other languages.

In questions in any tense, the auxiliary verb or the verb to be comes **before / after** the subject.

In wh-questions, the wh-word comes in the **beginning / middle**.

# The Importance of Asking Questions

10. Unscramble the words to make questions:

a. job what your is?

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b. doing what you by do yourself prefer?

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c. difficult find who you do to to talk?

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d. Sunday enjoy what you on doing mornings do?

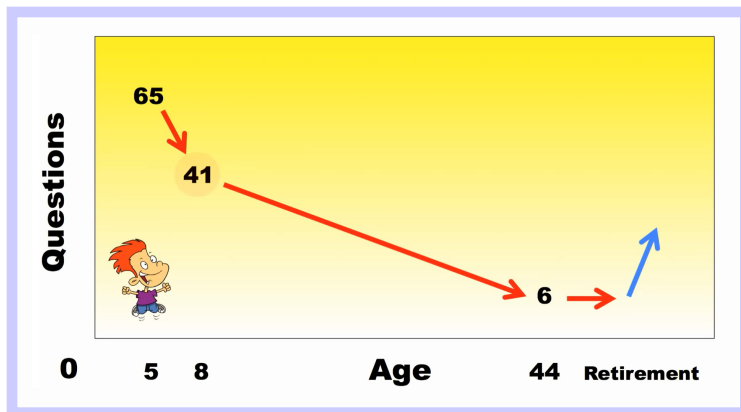
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e. week feel how you at of do end the the?

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After you listen – talk to your partner:

11. Look at the graph below. It has been taken from the video you watched on exercise 1.



What does this graph tell you?  
What did Chic Thompson say about it?  
Do you agree with him? Why (not)?

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# The Importance of Asking Questions

## READING

1. Ask and answer these questions with a partner:

- Do you think you have to listen to people carefully before you ask them an effective question?
- Are you a good listener?
- Are you good at asking questions?
- Do you know what “thought provoking” questions are?
- Have you ever had the feeling that your opinion was blocking you from learning more information?

2. Read the article below and compare your answers to what they say:

### The Art of Effective Questioning: Asking the right question for the desired result.

“Asking good questions is productive, positive, creative, and can get us what we want”. Most people believe this to be true and yet people do not ask enough good questions. Perhaps one of the reasons for this is that effective questioning requires it be combined with effective listening.

Effective questions help you:

- Connect with your clients in a more meaningful way
- Better and more fully understand your client’s problem (...)
- Work with your staff more effectively
- Help your staff take responsibility for their actions and solve problems within the workplace more easily
- Cross examine more effectively
- Take revealing depositions
- Gather better information
- Do more solution oriented problem solving
- Improve your negotiating skills
- Reduce mistakes
- Take the sting out of feedback
- Defuse volatile situations
- Get cooperation
- Plant your own ideas
- Persuade people

### Effective Questions

Effective questions are questions that are powerful and thought provoking. Effective questions are open-ended and not leading questions. They are not “why” questions, but rather “what” or “how” questions. “Why” questions are good for soliciting information, but can make people defensive so be thoughtful in your use of them. When asking effective questions, it is important to wait for the answer and not provide the answer.

When working with people to solve a problem, it is not enough to tell them what the problem is. They need to find out or understand it for themselves. You help them do this by asking them thought provoking questions. Rather than make assumptions find out what the person you are talking to knows about the problem.

For example: “What do you think the problem is?”

Behind effective questioning is also the ability to listen to the answer and suspend judgment. This means being intent on understanding what the person who is talking is really saying. What is behind their words? Let go off your opinions so that they don’t block you from learning more information. Pay attention to your gut for additional information.

Adapted from: <http://www.coachingforchange.com/pub10.html>



# The Importance of Asking Questions

3. In pairs, read each topic on how asking effective questions can help you and discuss them in trios. Do you agree or disagree with each of them? Why?

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4. Answer the questions below according to the text.

- a. What are effective questions?
- b. How can effective questions help you solve a problem?
- c. "When working with people to solve a problem, it is not enough to tell them what the problem is." Why?

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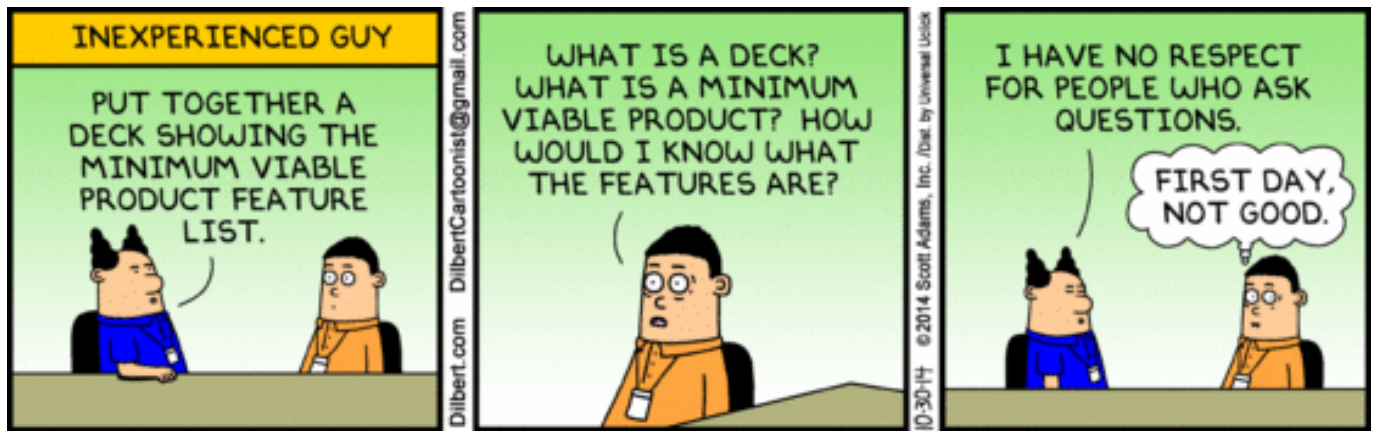
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# The Importance of Asking Questions

## WRITING

1. Read the cartoon:



Deck: in US English, a complete set of playing cards is called a deck ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Playing\\_card](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Playing_card)). A long time ago, a collection of punched cards relevant to a particular computer program was called a deck. Probably, the choice in the cartoon referred to "a heap or store: a pile of things laid flat one upon the other".

### Work in pairs

1. After having watched the video "What questions did you ask today", page 9, by Chic Thompson, and having read the text "The Art of Effective Questioning: Asking the right question for the desired result", page 12, discuss with your partner if you think the inexperienced guy from the cartoon asked good questions or not and why. Write down your conclusions:

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2. You and your partner are going to develop a product. You can either create something new or make changes to something existing. Write down your ideas:

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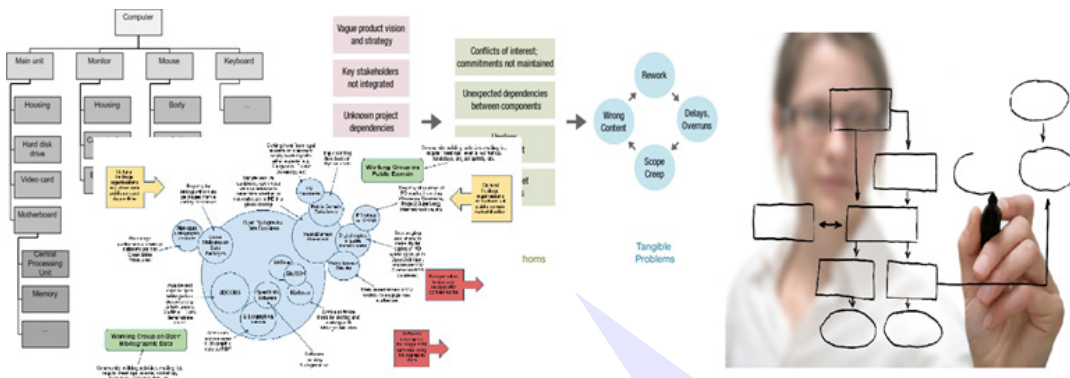
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# The Importance of Asking Questions

Below you can see some models of product project:



A project is something that is planned or devised; a plan or scheme. It can be a mind map, as you can see in the picture, or a graph, for instance.

3. Together with your partner, develop a project for your hypothetical product and provide answers for the questions issued by Chic Thompson in the video.
4. You and your partner will present your new product to your colleagues. They are potential investors. You can use power point presentations, Prezi, posters, etc.

## Some important points to pay attention to when you are preparing your presentation:

- **Pronunciation** - if you need new words, check their pronunciation in advance. If you have any doubts about any words, ask your teacher before presenting;
  - **Speak loud and clearly;**
- **Clearness** - you are creating a product for different people. Make sure everyone will understand it the same way;
- **Preview** - make sure everyone who is watching it can see your presentation clearly. They are all equally interested.

## TEACHER'S GUIDE – UNIT 1 – The importance of asking questions

Students at this level tend to forget or not pay attention to some of the most basic rules of English. The grammar objective of this unit is to remind them of how wh-questions are asked and draw students' attention to it. The vocabulary part will give them some new words related to work. The pronunciation part will help them pronounce these new words.

**STARTER:** you can ask your students these questions and get answers from the whole group or you can have your students working in pairs so that they ask each other. If you decide to group them, give 3 minutes (if they have not finished in three minutes, no problem. They can answer and discuss the last questions in the whole group) and have them telling everyone their answers. In this part, you should tell your students what "effective questions" are (*meaningful and understandable questions*), so that they can move on discussing the next topics properly.

**WARM UP –** In language lessons, it is always more interesting to have your students sitting in a big circle so that any questions you ask, they can see each other's faces. There are lines on questions 2.a and 2.b for students to answer (produce – written) in their books, then discuss with the whole group or in pairs. Answers for these questions may vary.

**ABOUT THE CARTOON:** Dilbert stories are non-sense. Its authors use everyday situations that happen in companies and the characters deal with them with sarcasm in a way that real people cannot do because there are social boundaries that tell them not to.

3. In this activity, students are supposed to read and understand the cartoon and the words related to jobs. They have read the cartoon again in order to find words that match the definitions, knowing that they have to find an adjective, a noun, or a verb.

- a. Useless ['juːsləs] (adjective) – Being or having no beneficial use; futile or ineffective.
- b. Attendance [ə'ten dəns] (noun) – The frequency with which a person is present.
- c. Hired [haɪərd] (verb) – Engage the services of (a person) for a fee; employ.
- d. Inexperienced [ˌɪnˌɪk'spɪərɪːənst] (adjective) - Lack of the knowledge gained from experience.
- e. bugging [ˈbʌɡɪŋ] (verb) – To annoy; pester.



- f. Workload ['wɜːrklaʊd] (noun) – The amount of work assigned to or expected from a worker in a specified time period.



**ASSESSING:** when you ask questions to your students, it is always important to assess their answers. Make sure you have a copy of the oral assessment sheet so that you can take notes of your students' answers. Take turns when asking them so that in the end of a month, for example, you have asked the same amount of questions to each student.

### LISTENING:

To do this activity you can use the video or the audio in the CD or, if you have Internet access in class, you can also use the link and watch it online on YouTube.

Pre-listening: this is the moment to get your students in the mood to start watching / listening to the video. Remember the concept of effective questions from the STARTER. Do not correct them at this point.

1. Answers may vary.
2. Answers may vary.
3. a. What questions did you ask today?
  - b. Where are my keys?
  - c. Why did I walk into this room?
  - d. What did you learn in school?
  - e. What great book should I read today?

While they watch/listen: play the video/audio once. Tell them to close their books so that they do not try to answer any questions at first.

Ask them what they understood from the video. Encourage them to say words or sentences they got. Play it again if it is necessary. Ask them what they think about what was said in the video. Ask them if they agree or disagree with that and why.

5. At this point, it is important not just to give the write answers to your students, but also to have them discussing how they would correct the false statements.

( F ) An average 5-year-old child asks about 165 questions a day.

( T ) An average 8-year-old child asks about 41 questions a day.

( F ) After retiring, we start asking more meaningful questions than we did before.

( T ) We entered school as question marks and we graduated as periods.

( F ) We don't find, create, or invent creative solutions. We reveal them by asking any questions.

( T ) He found that asking great questions is also a three-step process: you start with what- and then why-questions, before you ever ask how-questions.

( F ) Instead of asking your kids what questions they asked at school today, ask about what they learned.



**ASSESSING:** at this point you should assess your Ss concerning correctness of their answers and their discussion – content.

6. (1) What is the result we want to see, feel and hear?

(2) Why do we want to achieve this result?

(3) How are we going to achieve this result?

7. Because if you start asking the how-question before you have defined your challenges with the what- and why-questions, you will come up with solutions about an ill-defined problem.

8. It is time to have your Ss remembering some wh-words. Tell them to complete the questions from memory. Play the audio/video again if necessary. Pause after each sentence and have them repeating it.

Where are my keys?

Why do we want to achieve this result?

Why did I walk into this room?

How are we going to achieve this result?

What is the result we want to see, feel and hear?

What did you learn today in school?

What questions did you ask today?

PRACTICE:

9. Read the sentences with them and elicit that they have to circle *before* or *after* in the second sentence and *beginning* or *middle* in the third sentence.

Answers: before and beginning

10.

- a. What is your job?
- b. What do you prefer doing by yourself?
- c. Who do you find difficult to talk to?
- d. What do you enjoy doing on Sunday mornings?
- e. How do you feel at the end of the week?



ASSESSING: after they finish unscrambling the sentences, they can get in pairs, ask and answer these questions. You can tell them to ask for more information. You can assess their pronunciation, vocabulary, discourse management, and grammar.

After you listen – talk to your partner: tell Ss to look at the graph and tell what they see in it and what they remember from the video/audio. Then, tell them to answer the questions in pairs. (If possible, have them changing pairs so that they have the opportunity to talk to different people.)

READING: tell Ss to keep working in pairs. Tell them to ask and answer the questions together. They may take notes if they want to. Answers are personal.



ASSESSING: have them sitting in a semi-circle and discussing together with the whole group after they have answered in pairs. Have your scoring criteria ready when they are discussing.

2. Give them 3 minutes to read the article.

3 and 4. Tell them to keep working in pairs to answer these questions.

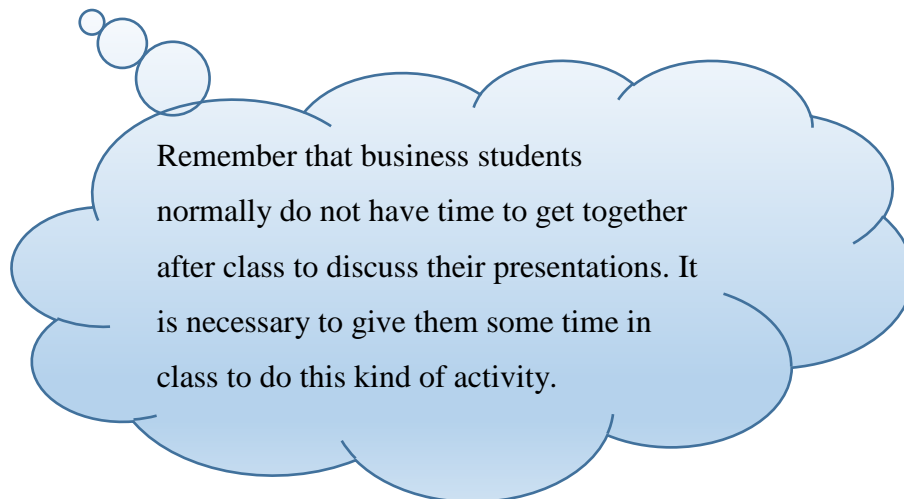
WRITING – Before you start this section, you can recap what was said before about the importance of asking questions, mainly if you are starting the writing activity in a different class. Then, tell them to read the cartoon and the definition of deck. This cartoon is also from the Dilbert collection.

2. Students' own conclusions.

3. At this point, your Ss will start doing a project to be presented to the others. It is important that you guide them through all the steps so that they do not get lost in the process.

As they are business Ss, we considered that they already know what a project is and it was just mentioned on the last page. You can ask them if they have any doubts concerning it, and if they have, you can go farther with the explanation. There is also a small picture to help them come up with some ideas to their projects.

Numbers 4 and 5 are the final assignments to this unit. In number 4, they are supposed to invent something or improve something that exists and in number 5 they have to present it the whole group. You can give some minutes or one class for them to develop this product; it depends on the result you want: if you want something they will have to put more thought into, give one class and have them presenting in the final 15 minutes.



#### PRONUNCIATION:

Give one copy of the box below to each student. Encourage them to pronounce all the words to complete the box. If they have any doubts about the symbols, go to the pronunciation page and recap / talk about all the symbols and the sounds. If they do not know any of it from previous levels, it may be useful for you to use two or three classes to talk about it. You will find the photocopyable box in the end of this material.

The words below were taken from unit 1.  
Write the words to the transcriptions below.  
Make sure you pronounce every word.

[ˈjuːləs] \_\_\_\_\_

[əˈtɛn dəns] \_\_\_\_\_

[haɪərd] \_\_\_\_\_

[ˌɪnˌɪkˈspɪərɪːənst] \_\_\_\_\_

[bʌɡɪŋ] \_\_\_\_\_

[ˈwɜːkləʊd] \_\_\_\_\_

Answers:

The words below were taken from unit 1.  
Write the words to the transcriptions below.  
Make sure you pronounce every word.

[ˈjuːləs] useless

[əˈtɛn dəns] attendance

[haɪərd] hired

[ˌɪnˌɪkˈspɪərɪːənst] inexperienced

[bʌɡɪŋ] bugging

[ˈwɜːkləʊd] workload

This activity was developed to make sure students are pronouncing questions correctly. From this activity on, make sure your Ss do not forget how to pronounce questions. If they ask you a question with the wrong intonation, ask them to repeat and help them with intonation. If they just repeat it the same way, remind them of question intonation. You will find the photocopiable box in the end of this material.

Questions in English have a different rhythm.  
Only meaningful words are stressed.

What is your job?

What do you prefer doing by yourself?

Now, it is your turn. Read aloud the questions below and underline the meaningful words.

- a. Who do you find difficult to talk to?
- b. What do you enjoy doing on Sunday mornings?
- c. How do you feel at the end of the week?

Answers:

Questions in English have a different rhythm.  
Only meaningful words are stressed.

What is your job?

What do you prefer doing by yourself?

Now, it is your turn. Read aloud the questions below and underline the meaningful words.

- a. Who do you find difficult to talk to?
- b. What do you enjoy doing on Sunday mornings?
- c. How do you feel at the end of the week?

“TEST”

Self-assessment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

How difficult do you think each of these language areas are?

Give a score from 0 (= very easy) to 5 (= very difficult). Say why you have given each score.

Language area	Score (0-5)	Comment
Grammar		
Words and phrases		
Pronunciation		
Listening		
Reading		
Writing		
Speaking		

Evaluation of oral presentation

Student(s): \_\_\_\_\_

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Assign a number to each box according to your assessment of the various aspects of the speaker's presentation.

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 3 | Excellent |
| 2 | Good      |
| 1 | Fair      |
| 0 | Poor      |

Content:

- The purpose or objective of the presentation was accomplished.
- The introduction was lively and got my attention.
- The main idea or point was clearly stated toward the beginning.
- The supporting points were
  - clearly expressed
  - supported well by facts, argument
- The conclusion restated the main idea or purpose.

Delivery:

- The speaker used gestures and body language well.
- The speaker maintained eye contact with the audience.
- The speaker's language was natural and fluent.
- The speaker's volume of speech was appropriate.
- The speaker's rate of speech was appropriate.
- The speaker's pronunciation was clear and comprehensible.
- The speaker's grammar was correct and didn't prevent understanding.
- The speaker used visual aids, handouts, etc., effectively.
- The speaker showed enthusiasm and interest.
- (If appropriate) The speaker responded to audience questions well.



GRAMMAR – modal verbs (deduction, ability, and possibility)

VOCABULARY – modern technology

PRONUNCIATION – driving and technology words and expressions

- STARTER:
- Do you like to drive?
  - Have you ever heard of the self-driving car?
  - Would you like to have one?
  - Can you see any advantages or disadvantages in having it? If so, what are they?

# Driverless Car

## LISTENING

Before you listen...

1. These words are related to cars and technology. Write a definition to each of them. Check a dictionary, if necessary.

ride (verb) \_\_\_\_\_

vehicle (noun) \_\_\_\_\_

prototype (noun) \_\_\_\_\_

steering wheel (noun) \_\_\_\_\_

curve (noun) \_\_\_\_\_

accelerate (verb) \_\_\_\_\_

While you listen...

2. Google has been working on the self-driving car project for some years. Watch or listen to the video.



**You Tube**

A First Drive

Google Self-Driving  
Car Project

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=CqSDWoAhvLU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CqSDWoAhvLU)

After you listen...

3. Real prototypes were built from adapted cars. How do you like this idea?

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4. Would you like to try this car? Why (why not)?

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5. Do you think the development of a self-driving car is important for people in general? Why (why not)?

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## READING

1. Can you think of any problems the self-driving car may have?
2. Do you think there would be any solution to these problems?
3. Read the text below.

### Driving in Circles

The autonomous Google car **may** never actually happen.

A good technology demonstration so wows you with what the product **can** do that you **might** forget to ask about what it **can't**. Case in point: Google's self-driving car. There is a surprisingly long list of the things the car **can't** do, like avoid potholes or operate in heavy rain or snow. Yet a consensus has emerged among many technologists, policymakers, and journalists that Google has essentially solved-or is on the verge of solving-all of the major issues involved with robotic driving. Google co-founder Sergey Brin forecast in 2012 that self-driving cars **would** be ready in five years, and in May, said he still hoped that his original prediction **would** come true.

It's easy to understand the excitement about the Google car. The first two prototypes were heavily modified Prius and Lexus models; the most recent, a dome-shaped two-seater with a top speed of 25 mph, is entirely computer-controlled, lacking even a steering wheel. (Because California allows the testing of a robotic car only if a human is on board to assume control in an emergency, the company **can't** test the latest prototype on public roads.)

Keeping a gigantic database of road maps current is vastly difficult. These maps contain the exact three-dimensional location of streetlights, stop signs, crosswalks, lane markings, and every other crucial aspect of a roadway. But the maps necessary for the Google car are an order of magnitude more complicated. The maps have problems, starting with the fact that the car **can't** travel a single inch without one. The company frequently says that its car has driven more than 700,000 miles safely, but those are the same few thousand mapped miles, driven over and over again.

Another problem with maps is that once you make them, you have to keep them up to date, a challenge Google says it hasn't yet started working on. Considering all the traffic signals, stop signs, lane markings, and crosswalks that get added or removed every day throughout the country, keeping a gigantic database of maps current is vastly difficult.

Noting that the Google car **might** not be able to handle an unmapped traffic light **might** sound like a cynical game of "gotcha." But MIT roboticist John Leonard says it goes to the heart of why the Google car project is so daunting. "While the probability of a single driver encountering a newly installed traffic light is very low, the probability of at least one driver encountering one on a given day is very high," Leonard says. The list of these "rare" events is practically endless, said Leonard, who does not expect a full self-driving car in his lifetime (he's 49). The Google car will need a computer that **can** deal with anything the world throws at it.

&gt;

>

The mapping system isn't the only problem. The Google car doesn't know much about parking: It **can't** currently find a space in a supermarket lot or multilevel garage. It **can't** consistently handle coned-off road construction sites, and its video cameras **can** sometimes be blinded by the sun when trying to detect the color of a traffic signal. Because it **can't** tell the difference between a big rock and a crumbled-up piece of newspaper, it will try to drive around both if it encounters either sitting in the middle of the road. (Google specifically confirmed these present shortcomings to me for the MIT Technology Review article.) **Can** the car currently "see" another vehicle's turn signals or brake lights? **Can** it tell the difference between the flashing lights on top of a tow truck and those on top of an ambulance? If it's driving past a school playground, and a ball rolls out into the street, will it know to be on special alert? (Google declined to respond to these additional questions when I posed them.)

Every unfinished piece of technology-every prototype, which is what the Google car is-has plenty of items to check off on its to-do list. But the biggest issue with the Google car is one that has bedeviled computer researchers for as long as computers have been around: how to endow the machines with the sort of everyday knowledge that humans acquire and use from childhood on. Because Google is promising the world a totally driverless car, it will need an in-vehicle computer that can deal not only with all the obvious tasks of driving but anything else the world throws at it, whether on a congested city street or a highway with an 85 mph speed limit.

When 2001: A Space Odyssey premiered in 1968, MIT's Marvin Minsky assured the public that machines like HAL would indeed be possible in 30 years. Perhaps one day tech enthusiasts will be able to visit a Museum of the Future That Never Was, where the Jetsons' hover car and the Google super-robocar will sit side-by-side as showcase exhibits. Expect long lines for both, because the demos will be sensational.

Adapted from: [http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/technology/2014/10/google\\_self\\_driving\\_car\\_it\\_may\\_never\\_actually\\_happen.single.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/technology/2014/10/google_self_driving_car_it_may_never_actually_happen.single.html)

1. What are the problems the author mentions?

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2. Why can't Google test the self-driving car in the streets of California?

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3. What do you think about all those problems?

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4. Can you think of any solution to them? Make a list of possible ways these problems could be solved.

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5. Read the quote: "Perhaps one day tech enthusiasts will be able to visit a Museum of the Future That Never Was, where the Jetsons' hover car and the Google super-robocar will sit side-by-side as showcase exhibits." Do you agree with the writer? Why (why not)?

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6. Circle the words you do not know. Look them up in a dictionary.

<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>

7. Read the text again. Focus on the highlighted words. Match the examples below to its meanings:

The autonomous Google car <b>may</b> never actually happen.	ability
... you <b>might</b> forget to ask about ...	possibility
It <b>can't</b> currently find a space in a supermarket lot ...	deduction
... said he still hoped that his original prediction <b>would</b> come true.	

In English there are some verbs which do not change in third person singular. They also do not require an auxiliary verb in questions and negatives. They are known as **modal verbs**. They express ability, possibility, and deduction.

# Driverless Car

## PRACTICE

Write sentences to the pictures below. Use may, might, can, can't:



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## VOCABULARY

8. Read the text below and order the paragraphs so that they make sense. Numbers 1 and 5 have been done for you.

### Human Driver Crashes Google's Self-Driving Car

JAY YAROW  
AUG. 5, 2011, 12:15 PM

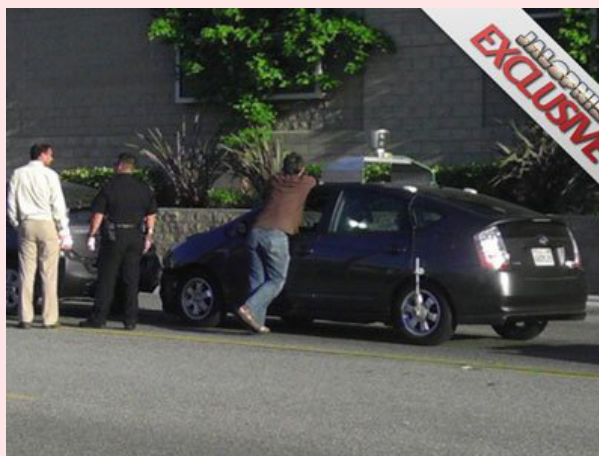
**1** Google's **self-driving cars**<sup>1</sup> have gotten into their first accident, Justin Hyde at Jalopnik reports. A reader sent in a photo of a Google car having **rear-ended**<sup>2</sup> another Prius. You can tell it's a self-driving car by the thing on the roof of the car.

Ironic that the car got in an accident while being manually driven. Maybe they should have stuck to letting the robot control things.

Thankfully, this wasn't a very serious **accident**<sup>3</sup>.

A Google spokesperson gave us this quote about the accident: "Safety is our top priority. One of our goals is to prevent **fender-benders**<sup>4</sup> like this one, which occurred while a person was manually driving the car."

**5** UPDATE: The original version of this post didn't have a comment from Google, and said that it was going to make getting self-driving cars a reality almost impossible. If it's true that a person is to blame for this accident, then it will have the opposite effect! More **robo-drivers**<sup>5</sup>!



Adapted from:

<http://www.businessinsider.com/googles-self-driving-cars-get-in-their-first-accident-2011-8>

9. The **highlighted** words are related to driving and technology. Choose the correct meaning for them.

1.     a. a car that is driven by a human being  
       b. a car which is driven by itself
2.     a. ran into another vehicle from behind  
       b. hit another vehicle violently
3.     a. a result of effect that is intended or desired  
       b. anything that occurs unintentionally or by chance
4.     a. an accident  
       b. an explosion
5.     a. a robot that drives a car  
       b. a robot that uses a computer to drive a car

## WRITING

1. Work in groups. Think about new products that would be useful for these targets. You do not have to fill all the gaps.

The elderly \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Taxi / bus / truck drivers \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Teachers \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Young children \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Nannies \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

House cleaners \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Teenagers \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Parents \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Driverless Car

2. Choose one target and product you created. Why would this target need this product?

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According to the target you chose and the product you created, answer the questions below:

3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of your product?

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<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>

4. At what moments would your target need your product the most?

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5. How would you convince your target that they need your product?

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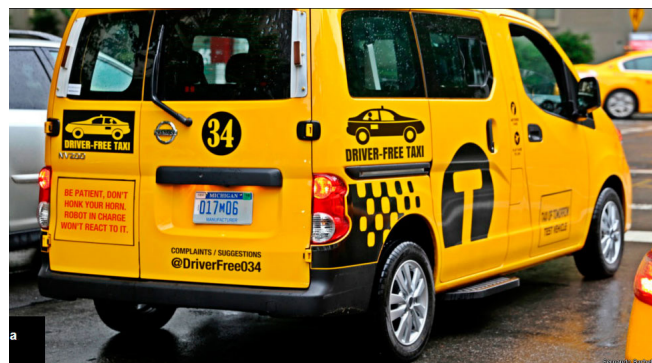
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6. Using the ideas you had on your product and on convincing your target he/she needs it, make a flyer of your product.

Flyer is a piece of paper containing an advertisement or information, usually given out to people walking by or posted on walls or poles. In order for your flyer to work, first you have to get people to notice it.

1. Write a headline - simple and big.
2. Add a picture or a graphic.
3. Write a description.
4. Add your contact information or where people can test and buy your product.



Design by Sabin  
[graphicriver.net/user/sabin\\_vp](http://graphicriver.net/user/sabin_vp)

## CHALLENGE!

Present your product to your colleagues, but do not say what your intended audience is. If your colleagues can discover your target, you did a great job!



## TEACHER'S GUIDE – UNIT 2 – Driverless Car

Unit 2 brings a very controversial subject: the Google self-driving car.

The grammar objectives are modal verbs. We are going to talk about things the car can do, things it cannot do yet, and things it may never be able to do. Vocabulary and pronunciation will deal with driving and modern technology, as we are talking about such high technology car.

STARTER: you can ask your students these questions and get answers from the whole group or you can have your students working in pairs so that they ask each other these questions. If you decide to group them, give 3 minutes (if they have not finished in the end of these three minutes, no problem. They can answer and discuss the last questions in the whole group) and have them telling everyone their answers. These questions will introduce the topic of the self-driving car, which is a new issue, not only for Ss, but also to the world: the new Google prototype has started being tested in 2014.

LISTENING: the first activity in this unit is a listening activity for students to get to know what they will be talking about. You can use the video or the audio in the CD to do this activity or, if you have Internet access in class, you can also use the link and watch it online on YouTube.

### Pre-listening:

1. tell Ss to do the first activity so that they get to know some words they are going to use in unit 2. They can either think about definitions to these words, or use a dictionary. Suggestions below are from

<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/american-english/>

ride (verb) to sit on a horse, bicycle, etc. and travel on it while controlling its movements, or to travel in a vehicle, such as a car, bus, or train.

vehicle (noun) something used to transport people or goods, esp. something used on land or roads.

prototype (noun) the original model of something from which later forms are developed.

steering wheel (noun) the wheel in a vehicle that the driver turns in order to make the vehicle go in a particular direction.

curve (noun) to form or move in the direction of a line that turns continuously and has no straight parts, or to cause something to do this.

accelerate (verb) to move more quickly, or to make something happen faster or sooner.

2. Draw your Ss attention to the picture and the title (A First Drive). Ask them what they think they are going to listen/watch. Do not correct them at this moment. After predicting what they are going to talk about, give them some time to read the questions. Questions 3 to 5 are personal.

While they watch/listen: play the video once. Tell them not to answer any questions at first. You may tell them to close their books. Play it again.

After they watched/listened: Ss answer questions 3 to 5. They discuss their answers in groups of three.

READING: this text brings things the Google self-driving car cannot do and predicts things it will never be able to do.

Pre-reading: you can ask your students these questions and get answers from the whole group or you can have them working in pairs so that they ask each other these questions. If you decide to group them up, give them 2 minutes to discuss (if they have not finished in the end of these two minutes, no problem. They can answer and discuss the last questions in the whole group) and have them telling everyone their answers. Questions 1, 2, 3, and 4 will make students give their own opinion about the text and the car.

After read – text comprehension: questions 1, 2, and 3 can be easily found in the text. Questions 4 and 5 make Ss reflect upon what they have just read. Question 6 is for them to acquire new vocabulary and think about it.

Question 7 draws students' attention to the use of modal verbs to express what the car can do and some possibilities. Make sure Ss notice that they will have to repeat one meaning.

*The autonomous Google car may never actually happen. and ... you might forget to ask about... are possibilities.*

*It can't currently find a space in a supermarket lot... is an ability.*

*... said he still hoped that his original prediction would come true. is a deduction.*

PRACTICE: Ss are supposed to write sentences to the pictures using may, might, can, or can't according to what they saw in the previous activity and in the text.

Suggested answers:

*It might rain.*

*It can swim.*

*You can't make a U-turn here.*

*It may fall down.*



ASSESSING: good moment to assess your students' writing and understanding grammar of modal verbs. Make sure you have your criteria sheet on your hand when correcting it.

VOCABULARY: Although this is the correct order, other orders may be possible as well. The objective of this activity is not only to have Ss finding the original order, but also to have them reading and thinking about the best way to accomplish this exercise and reflecting about how / why the accident happened.

1. Google's self-driving cars have gotten into their first accident, Justin Hyde at Jalopnik reports. A reader sent in a photo of a Google car having rear-ended another Prius. You can tell it's a self-driving car by the thing on the roof of the car.
2. Thankfully, this wasn't a very serious accident.
3. A Google spokesperson gave us this quote about the accident: "Safety is our top priority. One of our goals is to prevent fender-benders like this one, which occurred while a person was manually driving the car."
4. Ironic that the car got in an accident while being manually driven. Maybe they should have stuck to letting the robot control things.
5. UPDATE: The original version of this post didn't have a comment from Google, and said that it was going to make getting self-driving cars a reality almost impossible. If it's true that a person is to blame for this accident, then it will have the opposite effect! More robo-drivers!

The original order is: 1, 4, 2, 3, 5.

7. This activity was developed for Ss to guess the meaning of the highlighted words by context.

1. b; 2. a; 3. b; 4. a; 5. a.

**WRITING:** as Ss follow the steps in order to accomplish this activity, they develop a new product. Do the first activity with them and guide them through the other activities. Make it clear that first they have to develop a new product having in mind an intended audience. Then, they have make a flyer to present this product to the others in class. Make sure they understand that they cannot tell who their intended audience is. Their colleagues will have to discover it.



**ASSESSING:** students will have to present a flier about their new product. Assess their presentation (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, discourse management, if they are clear at what their new product can do) and their flier (if they do not have the proper resources or ability to create it, assess them according to what they have).

In order to have more written material from your Ss, ask them to write a description of their product and hand in before their presentations. Assess it according to your criteria for written activities.

PRONUNCIATION

The words below were taken from unit 2. Write the words to the transcriptions below. Make sure you pronounce every word. Pay attention to the options.

[raɪd] ride

['vi:t·kəl, -hɪ·kəl] vehicle

['prəʊ:tə,taɪp] prototype

['stiə·ɪŋ ,hwɪl, ,wɪl] steering wheel

[kɜ:v] curve

“TEST”

Self-assessment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

How difficult do you think each of these language areas are?

Give a score from 0 (= very easy) to 5 (= very difficult). Say why you have given each score.

Language area	Score (0-5)	Comment
Grammar		
Words and phrases		
Pronunciation		
Listening		
Reading		
Writing		
Speaking		

## Evaluation of oral presentation

Student(s): \_\_\_\_\_

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Assign a number to each box according to your assessment of the various aspects of the speaker's presentation.

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 3 | Excellent |
| 2 | Good      |
| 1 | Fair      |
| 0 | Poor      |

### Content:

- The purpose or objective of the presentation was accomplished.
- The introduction was lively and got my attention.
- The main idea or point was clearly stated toward the beginning.
- The supporting points were
  - clearly expressed
  - supported well by facts, argument
- The conclusion restated the main idea or purpose.

### Delivery:

- The speaker used gestures and body language well.
- The speaker maintained eye contact with the audience.
- The speaker's language was natural and fluent.
- The speaker's volume of speech was appropriate.
- The speaker's rate of speech was appropriate.
- The speaker's pronunciation was clear and comprehensible.
- The speaker's grammar was correct and didn't prevent understanding.
- The speaker used visual aids, handouts, etc., effectively.
- The speaker showed enthusiasm and interest.
- (If appropriate) The speaker responded to audience questions well.

# IPA Chart

Voiced 

Voiceless 

V O W E L S					C O N S O N A N T S					
<b>Monophthongs</b>					<b>Fricatives</b>					
1	2	3	4	15	24	25	26	27	28	
i: need	I thin	e went	æ cat	ai fine	f full	θ think	s sight	ʃ shirt	h high	
5	6	7	8	16	33	34	35	36	37	
ə alive	ɜ: third	ʌ fun	ɑ: car	əʊ no	v vest	ð those	z zoo	ʒ vision	dʒ joy	
9	10	11	12	17	<b>Plosives</b>					
u: few	ʊ put	ɔ: talk	p rob	eə care	20	21	22	23	<b>Nasals</b>	
	p pin	t time	k cash	ʔ football	30	31	32	<b>Approximants</b>		
	b bag	d door	g girl		38	39	40	41	42	43
					m mood	n now	ŋ bang	r room	w wall	j yes
					<b>Diphthongs</b>					
					13	14	144			
					ei pay	oi noise	l t law pill			

Retrieved from: <http://thesoundofenglish.org/phonetic-sounds-of-english/>



The words below were taken from unit 1. Write the words to the transcriptions below. Make sure you pronounce every word.

[ˈjuː.ləs] \_\_\_\_\_

[əˈten.dəns] \_\_\_\_\_

[hɑːrəd] \_\_\_\_\_

[ˌɪn.ɪkˈspɪər.i.ənst] \_\_\_\_\_

[bʌɡɪŋ] \_\_\_\_\_

[ˈwɜːrklaʊd] \_\_\_\_\_

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[ˈwɜːrklaʊd] \_\_\_\_\_

Questions in English have a different rhythm. Only meaningful words are stressed.

What is your job?

What do you prefer doing by yourself?

Now, it is your turn. Read aloud the questions below and underline the meaningful words.

- Who do you find difficult to talk to?
- What do you enjoy doing on Sunday mornings?
- How do you feel at the end of the week?

Questions in English have a different rhythm. Only meaningful words are stressed.

What is your job?

What do you prefer doing by yourself?

Now, it is your turn. Read aloud the questions below and underline the meaningful words.

- Who do you find difficult to talk to?
- What do you enjoy doing on Sunday mornings?
- How do you feel at the end of the week?

The words below were taken from unit 2. Write the words to the transcriptions below. Make sure you pronounce every word. Pay attention to the options.

[raɪd] \_\_\_\_\_

[ˈviːɪ.kəl, -hɪ.kəl] \_\_\_\_\_

[ˈprɒʊ.t̪ə.t̪aɪp] \_\_\_\_\_

[ˈstɪər.ɪŋ ,hwɪl, ,wɪl] \_\_\_\_\_

[kɜːrv] \_\_\_\_\_

[ɪkˈsel.ə.reɪt, æk-] \_\_\_\_\_

The words below were taken from unit 2. Write the words to the transcriptions below. Make sure you pronounce every word. Pay attention to the options.

[raɪd] \_\_\_\_\_

[ˈviːɪ.kəl, -hɪ.kəl] \_\_\_\_\_

[ˈprɒʊ.t̪ə.t̪aɪp] \_\_\_\_\_

[ˈstɪər.ɪŋ ,hwɪl, ,wɪl] \_\_\_\_\_

[kɜːrv] \_\_\_\_\_

[ɪkˈsel.ə.reɪt, æk-] \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluation of oral presentation

Student(s): \_\_\_\_\_

---

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|---|-----------|
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- The speaker's grammar was correct and didn't prevent understanding.
- The speaker used visual aids, handouts, etc., effectively.
- The speaker showed enthusiasm and interest.
- (If appropriate) The speaker responded to audience questions well.

Self-assessment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

How difficult do you think each of these language areas are?

Give a score from 0 (= very easy) to 5 (= very difficult). Say why you have given each score.

Language area	Score (0-5)	Comment
Grammar		
Words and phrases		
Pronunciation		
Listening		
Reading		
Writing		
Speaking		

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Listening		
Reading		
Writing		
Speaking		

## RATIONALE

Our objective when we were developing the activities for *An approach to English teaching using modern topics* was to make learners aware of what surrounds them and, in case they already know something about the topics, to give them the opportunity of sharing their previous knowledge and motivate them to research what is discussed in class encouraging them to become more autonomous when learning. We chose interesting up-to-date topics in order to give them some food for thought after class. According to Harmer (2004, p. 335), “however good a teacher may be, students will never learn a language – or anything else – unless they aim to learn outside as well as during class time”.

As we mentioned previously in the introduction, this material was not developed for students to work on their own, in a self-taught way. Instructions are clear in each activity; however, some guidance is required to accomplish these activities without any doubts. Besides a teacher is essential to guide students through this material, it can be considered student-centered in its methodology because “students and instructors share the focus. Instead of listening to the teacher exclusively, students and teachers interact equally. Group work is encouraged, and students learn to collaborate and communicate with one another.” (Concordia Online Education, 2015) It means that the teacher will help students in class, guide them all the time, help them with the activities, but students will be able to accomplish their activities by themselves, make their own decisions, ask questions, and complete tasks independently.

Both units were developed based on the communicative approach. There are activities, which will give learners a communicative purpose, such as developing a project and a product, for instance. When they are working together, preparing their presentation, they have to communicate in order to accomplish their objective. At this moment, “the accuracy of the language they use is less important than successful achievement of the communicative task they are performing.” (Harmer, 2004, p. 85)

When using this material, the teacher should bear in mind that it was proposed for intermediate level students. According to the Common European Framework Reference, students at this level are capable of

“understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization. Can

interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.”

Knowing that intermediate students are capable of so much, our purpose when developing this material is that teachers should not speak Portuguese at any moments and should not allow students to speak Portuguese either because they do not need it to understand anything nor to be understood. Language learners need input in the target language so that they absorb as much as possible in order to produce it. However, it is not our objective that students do not understand what is being taught. As Krashen posed in one of his speeches, “we acquire language in only one way. When we understand messages.” According to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL),

“instructors use a variety of strategies to facilitate comprehension and support meaning making. For example, they

- provide comprehensible input that is directed toward communicative goals;
- make meaning clear through body language, gestures, and visual support;
- conduct comprehension checks to ensure understanding;
- negotiate meaning with students and encourage negotiation among students;
- elicit talk that increases in fluency, accuracy, and complexity over time;
- encourage self-expression and spontaneous use of language;
- teach students strategies for requesting clarification and assistance when faced with comprehension difficulties; and
- offer feedback to assist and improve students’ ability to interact orally in the target language.”

In other words, these students are capable of understanding and producing a great amount of language, but they are still learning. They need comprehensible input in the target language.

The sections in both units were explicitly named (for instance, “LISTENING” and “READING”) in order to make it clear to learners what they are going to practice at each moment. Some more analytical learners find it easier to focus when they know what the objectives are explicit.

Most times, activities are to be done in pairs or groups, so that they can discuss the issues with each other. As Harmer (2004, p. 116) said, there are many advantages in pair work, for instance,

- “It dramatically increases the amount of speaking time any one student gets in the class.
- It allows students to work and interact independently without the necessary guidance of the teacher, thus promoting learner independence.”

*An approach to English teaching using modern topics* was developed to be used with more contemporaneous students who come to English classes nowadays. We believe that these students do not need a formal piece of paper full of activities to prove they have learned what they have been taught. These students are assessed all the time, in class, when they start speaking in pairs, groups, making a presentation, writing the answers to any activities and so on and so forth. This is the reason why there are not traditional tests in this assignment. It does not mean they are not being formally assessed. Even though they do not have traditional tests, they will be assessed and have feedback from this assessment all the time. Specific sheets for this assessment were put in the end of each unit. It is the teacher’s duty to listen to what students are saying and fill out these sheets when they start speaking in class. Opportunity for them to produce language will be found on every single page (speaking and writing) and to show they are capable of understanding the target language (listening and reading), as well.

All language input which students have through each unit serves as language stimulus for the final writing activity and presentation that follows in the end of them. In addition, as they are business students, we invested in developing writing activities that would be helpful for them, not only in English lessons, but at work as well.

As teachers and once students, we know that learners are not all the same. Some understand better what they can visualize, others, what they hear. Gardner (1983) identified eight kinds of intelligences:

- Logical-Mathematical
- Musical
- Bodily/kinesthetic
- Spatial
- Naturalistic
- Linguistic ("word smarts")
- Interpersonal

- Intrapersonal

In this material, we attempted to please most of these personalities, if not them all. We worked with videos, pronunciation charts, texts; activities that can be visualized, listened, worked with words, or more logical. We tried to benefit them all. What we have to have in mind when teaching with this and any other material is that everything can be taught in different ways. However, we know we cannot teach the same issue eight times in class to work with the multiple intelligences because it is not practical. It is necessary to reflect upon what is been done: can all students understand what was said? If the answer to this question is “yes”, a teacher’s job was well done. On the other hand, if the answer to this question is “no”, it is always important, possible, and necessary to do it again, in a different way. In addition, not all students will understand everything a teacher teaches at first. That is why it is important to make a backup plan when planning lessons. Harmer says that

“Lesson planning is the art of combining a number of different elements into a coherent whole so that a lesson has an identity which students can recognize, work within and react to – whatever metaphor teachers may use to visualize and create that identity.”

It shows that it is important to combine elements like the material you are using, any extra-material you may find, and your students’ contexts so that they are capable of identifying and understanding it all properly.

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