

Target learners

Matrix Intermediate prepares secondary school learners for their school-leaving examinations. It is a flexible course which can be completed in one school year by groups studying on either a regular programme of 3–4 hours of English per week or an extended programme of 5–6 hours per week.

Course components

Matrix comprises:

- Student's Book
- Workbook
- Teacher's Book
- Course Tests
- Two Class Cassettes

Student's Book

In Matrix there are ten theme-related units. A typical unit in the student's book consists of the following:

- **Reading**
- **Grammar**
- **Let's practise 1**
- **Listening and Speaking**
- **Writing**
- **Let's practise 2**

Let's revise pages feature after every second unit.

There is a **Grammar reference** on pages 134–141. This is cross-referenced throughout to the relevant units.

The **Wordlist** is on pages 142–152. It contains vocabulary activated in the units. Each word appears with its phonetic transcription, its classification as a part of speech and a full definition supported, if necessary, by an example of the word in use. It also gives details of plurals, comparatives and opposites.

Matrix Workbook

This revises, practises and extends from the Student's Book:

- the vocabulary and language focus of each unit
- reading skills and exam training
- writing skills

Matrix Teacher's Book

The Teacher's Book includes:

- Student's Book contents list
- keys to all exercises in the Student's Book
- transcripts of all recordings
- Workbook key
- detailed suggestions on how to approach the Student's Book activities
- optional activities and revision ideas
- *Culture notes* and *Language notes* on the exercises

Matrix Course Tests

There are ten Matrix Course Tests, and two Progress Tests – one after Unit 5, and the other after Unit 10.

Rationale

In Matrix, skills and language are presented and practised in integrated tasks which combine language in a way that reflects real-world use.

Language presentation and practice explore commonly confused structures and tenses. The contrasting of problem areas allows students to reflect on their understanding of English and to see it fall into place. *Tip and Slip* and *Just checking* deal with any misconceptions the students may still have, so both teachers and students can be confident of thoroughly examining any problem areas.

The units are theme-related and within each section the topic is looked at from a different angle. This variety ensures that all students will be able to find an aspect of the topic which is engaging and motivating.

Flexibility

Matrix has been structured to ensure it works equally well for mixed-ability groups taking extended language programmes (5–6 hours a week) or regular programmes (3–4 hours). The following are some of the ways in which teachers can tailor the course to their students' needs:

- **Practice and revision pages** can be set for homework (regular programme) or used in class (extended programme). In mixed-ability groups, these exercises can be done in the lesson by fast finishers.
- **Extension exercises** can be used in the extended programme to enlarge upon the vocabulary of the preceding sections or can be given to fast finishers in regular programmes.
- **Optional activities** in the Teacher's Book can be used for fast finishers or to provide extra practice in particular areas in mixed-ability groups.

Methodology

All skills and language work in Matrix is presented within clear, meaningful contexts which will help the students to understand the language.

Both the Student's and Teacher's Books suggest warm-up activities for each section. These preparatory activities are important because they activate and allow the teacher to assess the students' existing knowledge of the topic and engage them in the language learning process.

The classroom management suggestions for individual, pair and group work bring variety to the lessons, which will encourage motivation and concentration and will cater for a range of learning styles. Some activities can be presented to students with their books closed. This encourages students to listen more attentively, and not adopt a 'heads-down' approach to their studies.

Time to talk!, *Soundbites* and *Quick fillers!*, the ‘floating’ activities, can be used at any point to change the pace and focus of the lesson or to provide a bridge between activities.

Matrix provides a range of follow-up and revision activities which help students to remember and activate what they have learned. It is important that students take an active part in such activities if they are to benefit from the process of recycling and consolidation.

Exam tasks and training

Matrix develops grammar, vocabulary and the four main skills within an exam context. *Exam training* boxes feature throughout the Student’s Book, offering students advice on how to approach particular exam tasks. The *Exam training* boxes are always directly linked to a task students are about to do themselves. The practical advice helps students develop both study skills and examination techniques. The boxes offer advice on the following:

Reading

Skim reading, scanning, answering multiple choice questions, matching information, identifying missing sentences and paragraphs.

Listening

Completing sentences, completing notes, answering true / false questions, matching information, answering multiple choice questions, making notes, identifying statements.

Writing

Planning your writing, choosing key information, sequencing events, making your writing sound more realistic, estimating the number of words.

Speaking

Giving a talk, comparing pictures, stimulus-based discussions practising presenting and justifying opinions, asking for and giving information, giving an account, requesting explanations and repetition, discussing people, processes and phenomena.

Grammar

Choosing the right tense, answering multiple choice questions, identifying extra words.

Reading

In Matrix, students read a variety of texts such as articles of general and scientific interest, reports, literary extracts, and short stories. Students develop reading skills such as skim reading, scanning, and anticipating content, so that they handle different types of reading texts confidently. The Reading section covers a wide variety of exam reading task types, such as inserting missing sentences, multiple choice questions, and matching information to paragraphs.

Vocabulary work

Each Reading section contains extensive vocabulary work based on the reading text input. Exercises focus on the meanings and usage of adjectives, adverbs, nouns, collocations, prepositions and phrasal verbs. Further practice is offered by the relevant exercises in the *Let’s practise* and *Let’s revise* sections.

Matrix vocabulary exercises are designed to be used immediately after reading the main text. By using the words straightaway in contexts that support the meaning, students’ knowledge of the new item is reinforced without delay. To help students retain vocabulary, teachers should encourage them to use the words in sentences of their own and to record the words in a vocabulary notebook. Teachers can also devise a quick vocabulary test at the beginning of the next lesson to see how many words students have remembered.

Special features

Time to talk!

The ideas in these boxes are a stimulating way of encouraging students to react to the text by expressing their own ideas and opinions, and are excellent preparation for oral exam tasks. The statements in the box are often contradictory and students are asked which they agree or disagree with and why; thus skills such as negotiating, and presenting and justifying opinions are practised.

Time to talk! is a ‘floating’ activity: it can be used at any point in the lesson where an oral activity is appropriate. It is highly effective if done in pairs or small groups and the results compared with the rest of the class at the end of the discussion.

Grammar

The Grammar sections present and practise grammar in clear contexts, introduced with a warm-up activity which leads into the topic. The structures are presented through either a short reading or listening text in which the grammar is used naturally. The exercises themselves range from inductive and deductive to controlled and freer practice. In addition, there is a wide variety of exam tasks, such as sentence completion, transformations, and cloze.

Teachers can work through the exercises as appropriate, depending on the level of the class and time available.

Special features

Tip and Slip

The Tip and Slip dialogues highlight typical problems and queries which students encounter when studying particular areas of grammar. Tip and Slip discuss these areas with a touch of humour, using idiomatic language. Sometimes they ask questions for students to answer, on other occasions they resolve their queries themselves. All Tip and Slip’s dialogues are recorded, so there is maximum flexibility in the way they can be used in class.

Just checking

These activities encourage students to review what they have learned before going on to the next part of the Grammar section. They are usually in the form of a quick quiz, which highlights specific problems students may have. Students can do the quiz in class and compare their answers with another pair or group.

Let's activate!

This activity is designed to ensure that students make active use of the grammar they have studied in the preceding section. The emphasis is on oral work, although there is also scope for further written practice.

These activities are for pairs or small groups and can be done in the following lesson as a revision exercise.

Let's practise 1

This section revises and extends what students have learned in the Reading and Grammar sections of the unit and can be used for:

- additional classroom practice for extended programmes
- homework for students studying for fewer hours a week
- exercises for fast finishers

Exercises concentrate on:


- vocabulary
- grammar practice
- English usage

Special features

Spellcheck

Spelling is an area which is frequently neglected at intermediate level, so each *Let's practise 1* contains a Spellcheck exercise which focuses on difficulties of English spelling and offers help with simple rules. There is also a feature on the differences between American and English spelling.

Extension exercises

In the *Let's practise* sections there are a number of exercises which pick up and extend the language from the preceding sections. These exercises are marked with . Teachers can use these exercises for extra material in class or for homework, or to give to fast finishers.

Listening and speaking

Oral and aural work has a high profile in Matrix, with integrated exercises in all sections. The Listening and Speaking sections provide intensive focus on these skills.

Listening skills 1

Students listen to a range of different recorded texts, including radio announcements, talks, telephone conversations, interviews, and recorded messages.

The tasks practise listening for both specific and general information, as well as a wide range of exam listening tasks, including note-taking, multiple choice questions, matching, and identifying true/false statements. *Exam training* boxes give students advice on how to approach these tasks.

Pronunciation

Students are encouraged to develop better pronunciation through tasks such as identifying individual sounds, word stress, and matching sounds to spelling.

Special features

Soundbites

At the end of the Speaking and Listening sections in Units 4, 6, 8, and 10 there is a song with general questions for students to answer. The words of the song are related to the theme of the section and students are invited to react to the words and express an opinion about them. It is important that students do not feel they have to analyse every word of the song to be able to understand its message. The focus of *Soundbites* is the overall message of the song and how students react to it, rather than an exercise in comprehension.

Speaking skills

The exercises in this part of the unit are designed to develop oral fluency and confidence. The theme of the section is extended and students are encouraged to develop fluency by taking part in activities such as role-play, discussions, problem-solving activities, debates, talks, simulations, and describing, comparing and contrasting visual materials. The *Exam training* boxes give students advice on approaching these kinds of speaking tasks in exams.

Speaking practice is of particular importance in monolingual groups where students have few opportunities to use the language outside the lesson. One way of developing a culture of target language use in lessons is to use pair or group work and insist that, whenever possible, only English is spoken. During group or pair work the teacher can monitor by walking round the classroom listening to the students. Individual help can be given and general problems can be identified and dealt with after the activity. Teachers should encourage their students to use the vocabulary in *How do I ...?* to expand their repertoire of useful phrases.

Special features

How do I ...?

These boxes provide examples of useful phrases and everyday expressions which students can use to improve their fluency and confidence in English. Students are frequently referred back to *How do I ...?* so that they have the opportunity to practise and activate the language.

Writing

The aim of this section is to build up students' writing skills and make them aware of different styles, registers and layouts they may need to use, depending on the writing task they are doing. Students work with models and build progressively towards completing a task before checking their own work.

The Writing section covers a wide variety of exam writing task types, including letters, a composition expressing views for and against, a report, a CV, and a covering letter. The *Exam training* boxes give students advice on approaching writing tasks in exams.

Special features

Steps to better writing

These activities lead students into the main writing task by focusing on relevant grammar and vocabulary, and shorter pieces of writing.

It is important to spend some time studying the sample written texts so that students have a clear idea of what they are expected to produce. The writing task could be set for homework or done in class. In some units there are ideas for group writing. Students can use the *Checking* ideas to help them read through their work with a more critical eye.

Let's practise 2

This section revises and extends what students have learned in the Speaking and Listening, and the Writing sections. The exercises concentrate on:

- vocabulary
- grammar practice
- speaking practice
- writing practice
- *Factfile* completion

Like *Let's practise 1*, the section can be tailored to the needs of particular groups.

Special features


Speaking practice

These exercises provide both an opportunity for free oral practice and extra controlled practice in the *How do I ...?* expressions. The exercises are particularly useful as oral exam practice in which students role-play an exam situation.

Factfile

The *Factfile* gives students an opportunity to consolidate the cultural information provided in the unit and provides opportunities for cross-cultural comparison.

Extension exercises

In the *Let's practise* sections there are a number of exercises which pick up and extend the language from the preceding sections. These exercises are marked with . Teachers can use these exercises for extra material in class or for homework, or to give to fast finishers.

Let's revise

These sections appear after every two units, with a total of five *Let's revise* sections. They offer a chance for students to revise material they have learned in the previous two units. Teachers can use them as a progress check for homework, or in class as extra revision activities

The exercises focus on:

- grammar
- vocabulary
- listening