UNIT 2 AS/A Level Language course – Progression

Recommended Prior Knowledge Skills progression and grammatical knowledge from Unit 1

Context

This Unit builds on the basis of skills and knowledge laid down in Unit 1. For the A Level course, there is an introduction to more extensive reading as a prelude to the study of Component 4, Texts.

Outline

The content focuses on the range of topics grouped under Daily Life. Text-type and length are extended and skills developed further. More extended writing is introduced.

	Learning Outcomes	**Suggested Teaching Activities**	**Resources**
1	Acquaintance with lexis and structures of a range of listening and reading texts presenting the Topic focus.	Topic focus 2: Daily Life (Patterns of daily life; urban and rural life; food and drink; health and fitness; the media; religion and belief; contemporary aspects of the country/countries where the language is spoken.) Texts (Reading and Listening) Sequential, Descriptive, Informative, Explanatory. Concrete and some abstract vocabulary with a variety of tenses and some complexity of sentence structure (subordination). Length 200-250 words. Introduction of appropriate lexis and structures for dealing with texts chosen. See Introduction, Section 6, Teaching methods: Stage 1 Encounter with the text.	Further general sites concerned with language teaching: Learning resources index: www.ngfl.gov.uk/lri/index.html www.authentik.com (range of books covering learner autonomy etc.)

	Learning Outcomes	Suggested Teaching Activities	Resources
2	Listening and speaking practice	Teacher questions/student response provides the commonest sort of initial listening practice. But there are many ways in which listening skills may be developed, using the recorded materials which accompany most current course materials. In the section of the Introduction entitled "What exactly is Listening Comprehension?" the following points were made: *"Learning to listen is a continuous process of the listener attempting to increase his/her capacity to interpret and respond to language events. In classroom approaches, controlling the level of difficulty is important to prevent students from being demoralised. Students should be encouraged to develop their capacity for interpreting a text by carrying out some of the following processes:* ▪ *Deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words.* ▪ *Infer information not explicitly stated.* ▪ *Recognise indicators for introducing an idea, changing topic, emphasis, clarification, expressing a contrary view.* ▪ *Construct the main idea or theme in a stretch of discourse and distinguish the main point from supporting details.* ▪ *Predict subsequent parts of the text.* ▪ *Identify elements in the text that can help to recognise a pattern of organisation."* Some examples of tasks which help to develop these skills: (a) Running memory exercise This drill sets out to train the listener's short-term memory which must be trained to store information decoded in the language. The student, listening individually, notes a word heard in a sequence, then stops the tape soon after. S/he then repeats the section of the tape from the word to the point where the tape stopped. (b) Listening ahead	Ur, P. (1996), *A Course in Language Teaching*, CUP.

The teacher stops the tape at a certain point and asks students to complete the rest of the sentence. Lexical, grammatical and semantic cues can help to suggest the continuation.

(c)   Following a written text

Listen to a text and read it at the same time. This is a valid task in helping to bridge the gap between reading perception and writing.

(d)   Make notes on a text

To focus the listening skills, a summary or notes are useful.

(e)   Transcription

This is a form of very intensive listening, similar to dictation, but with the opportunity of replaying the tape so as to train the ear to pick up details not at first heard.

Student exchange of views (as discussed in Unit 1) continues to be an important way of practising oral skills. In addition, role plays can provide further opportunities for interaction.

Role-playing requires more from the student than repetition of pre-learned items. He/she must assume a role in an exchange or conversation. This presents the opportunity to get outside his/her own opinions and attitudes and adopt a different stance. Which roles are worth rehearsing depends on the opportunities provided by the topic. In the case of Daily Life, students can be grandparents or children, disapproving or affectionate, they can threaten or advise. A student could, for example, prepare to respond to an interview as the oldest inhabitant of a village or students could take the role of parents complaining about their teenage children. Students may find this style of communication more attractive than discussions. The language is personal and the situations are realistic.

As with the other activities suggested in these notes, the language for role-play must be carefully prepared, although the outcomes may be unpredictable, if the students are genuinely inventive and creative.

3	Reading practice and developing grammatical awareness	For reading development see Section 6 (Teaching Method) of Introduction Stage 2: Collecting information and language. Individual and group tasks for getting to grips with the text. Grammar awareness and recognition tasks As proposed in Unit 1, students are asked to look closely at a text and highlight or underline key constructions. One extension to this recognition task is that they write brief notes explaining in their own words why a particular structure is used. Such a task helps to develop cognitive and analytical skills necessary if grammar is to be used with understanding.	*Raising the standard* (addressing the needs of gifted and talented pupils), Anneli McClachlan, CILT, 2002
4	Developing writing skills	Grammar practice – manipulation and controlled drills. (See Introduction Section 7) Guided, meaningful grammar practice Meaningful drills still have an element of guidance, but there is more chance for students to make choices. So they might be asked to write a series of statements about a member of the family, stating likes and dislikes but staying with the present tense, or another defined structure. Following on from the micro-writing suggested in Unit 1, there may now be some development towards freer, more responsive writing. Two possibilities suggest themselves: Free sentence composition Paragraph writing (up to 80 words) There must first of all be some guidance in the form of ideas (taken from the stimulus texts) and asking for short written responses. For example, a statement such as, "children are best seen and not heard" could produce a single sentence response, e.g. "This is an old-fashioned idea which has no place in a modern family where children's views are respected." Short paragraphs may be developed from an opening sentence given to the student. Within 80 words a short story can be developed from a sentence such as "I was glad when the time came for me to leave home. I needed to get away…."	*Stimulating grammatical awareness*, H. Rendall, CILT, 1998 *Grammar Practice Activities*, Ur, P. CUP, 1988

		A paragraph may also have a specific function in preparing the way for later discursive essay writing, for example a single paragraph supporting or opposing a statement.	

Introduction to A Level Component 4 (Texts)

Learning Outcomes	Suggested Teaching Activities	Resources
Develop extensive reading skills in a range of short texts, i.e. short stories, anecdotes, humorous extracts.	Individual reading time for students to tackle a range of short texts. These may not be exclusively "literary" but should be inventive and imaginative and different therefore from the range of texts presented in the rest of the course. Discussion time for students to present views about their reading	"Reading Skills and the Study of Literature in a Foreign Language" (Chapter in "Literature and Language Teaching", C J Brumfit & R. Carter,OUP 1986)
Develop study skills, distinguishing between extensive and intensive reading. Understanding of skills of scanning and skimming texts	Class presentation of short poems. Class discussion. How does writer gain effects? How do individuals respond? Class presentation of selected short story (around 700 words). Present the story a section at a time to develop habits of reading ahead. Elucidate language problems and then explore. What happens next? How will he/she react to this news? How is he/she feeling about this event? What will he/she say/do next?	Website concerned with stimulating language work for able and gifted students: www.nc.uk.net.gt/languages/teaching.htm