

CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH

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Macmillan Education Limited, 1980

This series of six textbooks for a general English course combines the experience of the authors as textbook writers as well as their knowledge of the Mexican learning situation. It provides the university students with materials suitable to their needs.

The books are divided into units which are presented through listening comprehension exercises. These exercises, contrary to custom, are not being used only for comprehension but also to make the student aware of the new communicative elements he will encounter throughout the unit.

This leads into the reading of a chart, diagram or map which are commonly found in most university textbooks. The idea is to train the student on how to use the materials mentioned above to ask and/or give information. This substitutes the usual situational dialogue and/or story presentation. Here the student is given the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities which go from classwork to pair work and/or group work. Reinforcement is provided through written exercises. This format is repeated several times in a unit allowing the student further practice through the use of different materials. Further written practice is found to be lacking. However, workbooks, which will soon be available, may satisfy this need.

An unusual feature of the series is the inclusion of reading comprehension selections, taken from original texts, which enable the students to acquire reading strategies transferable to their own textbooks.

Throughout the books material is recycled by means of different teaching techniques. One of these is the interaction sequence that appears in each unit and that takes up different notions and functions orally. Recycling is continued in the consolidation sections. Unfortunately some new items are presented in these sections for which very little practice is provided.

The methodology behind the book is eclectic. Its goal is to make the student think in English by means of problem-solving activities. This implies a different technique on the part of the teacher. Therefore, it is highly important that guidance and training is given to the teacher in the use of the book. The teacher's book gives some of this guidance through useful notes on the book's handling as well as suggestions for extra reinforcement activities. Even though the authors of the series are British, an American English version is available as well as the International version.

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