

Review on Headway student's book

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The book is designed to prepare students for their school leaving exams at B1, B2 and its latest version also at C1 language level. Each book is divided into ten units each of which contains exercises relevant for the grammar to which each unit is dedicated. Each book provides material of approximately 120 hours of learning and has a potential to improve student's knowledge by one CEFR recognized level. All three books provide a combination of traditional teaching methods and also more recent approaches to teaching. It introduces new features in all aspects of learning to challenge predominately adult and also young learners. The units are composed in an interesting and motivating way as the activities are allocated equivalent length of time and ensure that a student remains enticed throughout the unit. Both authors of the book have many years experience as teachers and also teachers' trainers and both have worked at International House in London. Liz Soars was one of the main examiners of the Cambridge TEFL.

The articles used in reading comprehension section should be more enjoyable to read as they contain outdated information. Articles are mostly complaint with the discussed grammatical category. The vocabulary of the articles is full of synonyms and antonyms.

In terms of the listening comprehension exercises, they are very well elaborated as they test students' listening comprehension with focus on precision of the provided information. There are also exercises testing students' ability to understand the spoken text with distorted nature such as outside noise disturbing the provided information. Some exercises contain recordings of the native speakers' utterance which is fast and with heavy accent testing students' ability to pay attention to the most important information. Some units contain lyrics of songs in the form a gap text for the students to fill while listening to the song. This form of listening practice is especially enticing among students of all ages. As for the topics for discussion, they mostly reflect the grammar of the unit. These topics contain relevant pictures and illustrations which lead students to give elaborate speech. Sometimes these pictures are accompanied by additional questions or comments stimulating the flow of thoughts. Listening comprehension sections are also full of pictures instead of descriptive texts for the students to identify, sometimes even details, and match them subsequently with the audio information.

Writing skills whether in formal or informal register are practiced in each unit as each unit assigns students to compose different texts.

Each unit contains exercises with pronunciation practice.

Each book comes with the practice book full of exercises practicing the skills of the unit. Practice books contain sections dedicated to sophisticated vocabulary improving students' knowledge of synonymous, collocations verb patterns and also prepositions.

The sequence of books reflects the level for which they are designed and each following book further develops the knowledge already gained from the previous one. Books at a particular level fit partially with the preceding but also the following level with some exercises especially at the beginning of the unit revising the knowledge already gained from the previous book. Some exercises in individual units contain few sentences which level of difficulty is tantamount to the following higher level book.

The only disadvantage which many agree on is the topics themselves as they do not always discuss contemporary issues. Articles often contain either outdated issues or general and universal topics which are on one hand timeless but on the other hand do not capture students' attention, which is a very important aspect when learning new language.

The book complies with the criteria of CEFR as the topics that each book contains are on the appropriate language level. The four main areas of discourse development suggested by CERF are gradually elaborated with the vocabulary in topics going even beyond the individual topics. It has already been insinuated some topics raised in individual books contain articles which do not always capture students' attention which can make the process of acquisition little bit slow.

In conclusion I would highly recommend Headway book for learning purposes. It would be perhaps more advisable to use this book with older students not necessarily with the primary or the first grade of eight year grammar school students. This book can also be used for students at the university as the book has a potential to give a thorough insight into all grammatical categories required at all language levels and it has a potential to guide the learners to discuss any topic.

References

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