

New Headway

Beginner Teacher's Book

Amanda Maris
Liz and John Soars



OXFORD

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Introduction

New Headway Beginner

New Headway Beginner is a foundation course for adult and young adult absolute beginners. It is also suitable for students who have already learned a little English, perhaps some years ago, but who don't yet feel confident enough to move on. They want to go back before they move forward.

New language is introduced gradually and methodically, in measured amounts, and in a logical order. Vocabulary has been selected carefully to avoid overloading. There are many controlled practice activities which aim to give beginners the confidence to proceed, but there is also some simple skills work, which incorporates manageable communicative activities appropriate for the low level. In the *Everyday English* section, we deal with social and functional language, and survival skills.

Organization of the course

The organization of *New Headway Beginner* is similar to *New Headway Elementary* and *New Headway Pre-Intermediate*. Each unit has these components:

- Starter
- Presentation of new language
- Practice
- Vocabulary
- Skills work – always speaking, combined with reading and/or listening and/or writing
- Everyday English

STARTER

The *Starter* section is designed to be a warmer to the lesson and has a direct link with the unit to come. This link might be topical or grammatical, or it might revise input from a previous unit.

PRESENTATION OF NEW LANGUAGE

New language items are presented through texts, mainly dialogues, which students can read and listen to at the same time. This enables students to relate the spelling to the sounds of English, and helps with pronunciation, as well as form and use. Sometimes there are two presentation sections. This is to break up what would otherwise be too large a 'chunk' of new language.

The main verb forms taught are:

- *to be*
- Present Simple
- *there is/are*
- Past Simple
- *can/can't*
- *I'd like*
- Present Continuous for now and future

We have chosen not to teach *have got*, for two reasons. Firstly, its Present Perfect form (*have* + the past participle) is confusing as *have got* refers to the present, not the past; secondly, *have* with its *do/does/did* forms is perfectly acceptable. This pattern has the advantage of fitting in with all the other verbs that students are learning.

There are *Grammar Spots* in the presentation sections. These aim to focus students' attention on the language of the unit. There are questions to answer, charts to complete, and short exercises. The *Grammar Spot* ends by cueing a section of the Grammar Reference at the back of the book.

PRACTICE

This section contains a variety of controlled and freer practice exercises. The primary skills used are speaking and listening, but there is also some reading and writing.

There are information gap exercises, mingle activities, information transfer listening exercises, questionnaires, and a lot of personalized activities. There are exercises where the aim is overt analysis of the grammar, such as *Check it*.

VOCABULARY

There is a strong lexical syllabus in *New Headway Beginner*. The vocabulary is carefully graded and recycled throughout, so that students don't suffer from overloading. Lexical sets are selected according to two criteria. They complement the grammatical input, for example, daily activities with the Present Simple; or members of the family with apostrophe 's. However, they are mainly chosen for their usefulness. Low-level students need to know the words of everyday life – food, sports, numbers, dates, travel, time, jobs, describing people and places, shopping, sightseeing, saying how you feel.

Skills work

LISTENING

Regular unseen listening sections, in dialogue or monologue form, provide further practice of the language of the unit and, later in the course, help to develop students' ability to understand the main message of a text.

READING

At the beginning of the course, the language in the readings is tightly controlled and graded, and only one or two words will be unknown to the students. As the course progresses, the readings become longer, with slightly more unfamiliar vocabulary in the texts. This gives students practice in dealing with new words and prepares them for the longer texts in *New Headway Elementary*.

SPEAKING

In the presentation sections, students have the opportunity to practise the pronunciation and intonation of new language. In the practice sections, less controlled exercises lead to freer speaking practice.

There are many speaking exercises based around the listening and reading activities. There is speaking to do *before* a text, to launch the topic and make students interested; and there are speaking activities *after* a text, often in the form of discussion.

WRITING

Writing exercises are usually, but not always, small in scope. Students are invited to write about their best friend, a postcard, a short introduction to their home town, and a description of a holiday.

EVERYDAY ENGLISH

This is a very important part of the syllabus of *New Headway Beginner*. There is language input and practice of several kinds:

- survival skills, such as numbers, saying dates, the alphabet, saying prices, filling in forms, and asking for directions
- social skills, such as social expressions and greetings
- functional areas, such as making requests, going shopping, and saying how you feel

There is sometimes an element of 'phrasebook language' in these sections. We are not asking students to analyse too deeply how a piece of language operates. For example, in Unit 7 we introduce *Can I ...?* in a variety of situations. We don't want teachers or students to worry too much about a modal verb that inverts in the question and doesn't take *do/does*. We merely want students to see how this phrase can be used to get what you want in a polite manner.

GRAMMAR REFERENCE

This is at the back of the Student's Book, and it is intended for use at home. It can be used for revision or for reference.

REVISION

There are four Stop and check tests on pp130–139 of the Teacher's Book. There are also three Progress tests, on pp121–127.

Workbook

All the language input – grammatical, lexical, and functional – is revisited and practised. There are also vocabulary, pronunciation, and listening exercises.

A Student's Workbook Cassette/CD accompanies the Workbook. There are listen and repeat exercises, and also unseen listenings. The cassette/CD is particularly beneficial to students who lack confidence in speaking and who have listening and/or pronunciation problems.

1 Most of the exercises in the Workbook can be completed without the cassette/CD. However, a small number (e.g. the unseen listenings) will require students to listen to the recording. Students for whom this is not possible can refer to the tapescripts on p81.

Teacher's Resource Book

This contains photocopiable games and activities to supplement the main course material.

Video

A *New Headway Beginner* Video, Video Guide, and Activity Book are available to accompany the course. The video takes the form of six episodes centred around four people sharing a house in Oxford. The first episode can be shown after Unit 4, and subsequent episodes after Units 6, 8, 10, 12, and 14.

Finally!

The basic criterion for selection of every activity in *New Headway Beginner* is its usefulness for the survival of a low-level student in an English-speaking environment. The book provides a package that will fit neatly in the suitcase! We are trying to lay the foundations for what we hope will be a successful and enjoyable language-learning future.

A step-by-step approach

Beginners require a very careful, staged approach with plenty of repetition, practice, and revision to help them internalize new language and to give them confidence. Suggested stages are as follows:

STARTER

This short warmer to the lesson must not be allowed to go on too long. Generally speaking, five minutes is the maximum.

PRESENTATION OF LANGUAGE POINT

You can vary the presentations if you like. Sometimes it is useful to play a recording first while the students look at the picture with the text covered. Then, after that, they can read and listen. This method may be helpful for some non-European students who are not very familiar with Roman script.

LISTENING AND REPEATING (DRILLING)

When introducing a new item of language, stop and practise pronunciation when students have grasped the meaning. You can use the recording as a model, or provide the model yourself. There are short pauses on the recording; you will need to stop the tape/CD to give students time to repeat at an appropriate pace. Allow students to listen to the word, phrase, or sentence two or three times before you ask them to repeat it. For example, to drill the sentence *How are you?* Play the recording and/or model the sentence yourself two or three times using the same pronunciation and intonation, then ask the students as a class to repeat the phrase, i.e. *choral drilling*. Don't say it with them, but instead listen to what they are saying. Say *Again* for them to repeat a second time. If it sounds as if they have got it right, ask one or two students individually to say it again for you to check, i.e. *individual drilling*. If the choral repetition *doesn't* sound right, remodel the phrase for students to listen to again, then have them repeat chorally again, before moving on to individual drilling.

PRACTICE

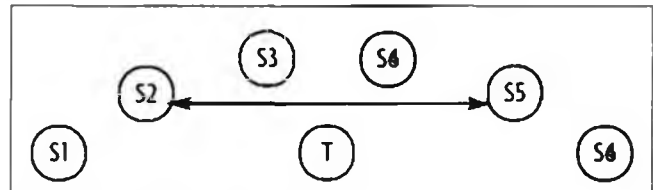
Move carefully from controlled to freer practice. Beginners require plenty of practice in order both to get their mouths round new language and vocabulary, and also to internalize and remember it. Don't stint on practice or revision, but equally do not spend too long on any one thing, or the students may get bored and switch off. You can always come back later and do more work on it.

The following techniques ensure enough practice as well as variety.

Pairwork

A lot of work can be done in pairs. Open and closed pairwork are often referred to in the teaching notes.

Open pairwork



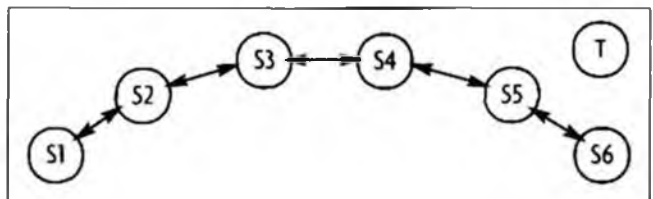
As a stage after drilling and before closed pairwork, you can call on two students at a time to practise the lines of a dialogue, ask and answer a question, etc. across the room, with the rest of the class listening.

Do open pairwork:

- to set up and demonstrate a closed pairwork activity
- to check understanding of a task
- to check students' grammar, pronunciation, and intonation before they go on to closed pairwork
- after a closed pairwork activity or a written exercise to check performance of the task.

Don't call on the whole class to perform open pairwork. Two or three pairs of students, each performing one or two exchanges, should be sufficient to check language. More than this may make the activity drag and become boring.

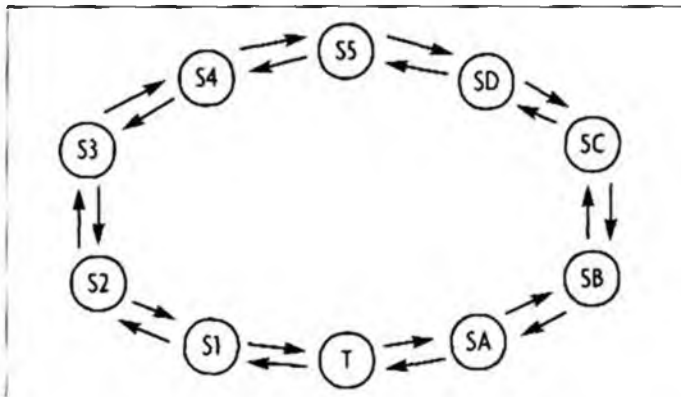
Closed pairwork



With closed pairwork, students talk and listen only to each other. This gives them more speaking time and a chance to practise with a peer without having to 'perform' in front of you and the class. It is important, though, for you to monitor students' performances unobtrusively. This will help you to identify persistent errors and misunderstandings. Do not interrupt and correct students while you monitor unless absolutely necessary, as this inhibits fluency. Instead, make a note of persistent errors and put some of them on the board for students to correct afterwards. (It is probably not necessary to identify the culprits!)

Chain practice

This is a good way of using flashcards in a practice speaking activity. It offers variety, a change of pace, and a lot of speaking practice of the language point without becoming boring. The following example describes a way of using flashcards of famous people.



- 1 Stand in a circle with the students, with the flashcards in your hand.
- 2 Turn to S1 on your left, show the first card, and ask a question, e.g. *What's his/her name?* S1 answers, and receives the flashcard from you.
- 3 S1 then turns to S2 and asks the same question. S2 answers, and receives the card.
- 4 While S1 is asking S2, turn to SA on your right, show the second card, and ask the question *What's his/her name?* SA answers, receives the card, and turns to ask SB.
- 5 While SA is asking SB, turn back to S1 with the third flashcard, and ask the same question.
- 6 Continue the process until all the flashcards are in circulation and the students are asking and answering. There will be a bottleneck when the student opposite you starts getting questions from both sides at once, but it's part of the fun. Eventually the flashcards should all come back to you. This practise game can get fast and furious!

Classroom practices

Whether you have a monolingual or a multilingual class, it will save a great deal of time and effort if, at the beginning, you set up clear classroom practices and establish familiar routines. This will quickly provide comfort and reassurance for beginners who can find it nerve-racking to deal with a new and alien language. Also, many complete beginners are adults who haven't been in the classroom for a long time, and whose previous experience of learning a language was probably very different.

CLASSROOM LANGUAGE

Numbers 1–30 and the alphabet will have been introduced by Unit 4 so that you can refer students to page and exercise numbers in English, and spell words for them. You could also spend a little time at the beginning pre-teaching some useful

classroom language, e.g. *Sorry, I don't understand.*, *Can you spell it, please?* and instructions, e.g. *Work with a partner, Read, Listen, Repeat, All together, Again, Homework*, etc. All of this will enable you to keep an 'English' atmosphere.

When having to give instructions for an activity, rehearse them beforehand so that they are simple, clear, and concise, and *demonstrate* rather than explain wherever possible. Avoid repeating yourself or over-explaining, as it tends only to create further confusion.

EXPLAINING NEW VOCABULARY

Explanation of new vocabulary to beginners can be problematic, particularly in multilingual classes, and/or where you have no knowledge of the students' mother tongue. Make sure that students have a simple bilingual dictionary. Use pictures and/or draw on the board whenever possible. Do not worry if you are not a brilliant artist – simple line drawings are very quick and effective. Start collecting flashcards, posters, photos, etc. to help you.

Example sentences with the new word in context are often better than explanations. Giving a similar word or the opposite can also be useful, e.g. *finish = stop*, *get up = go to bed*.

PRONUNCIATION OF NEW VOCABULARY

When you introduce new vocabulary, make sure you drill the pronunciation of the words as well. This should be done after the meaning has been established so that students are not mouthing words that they do not understand. It is also a good idea to get yourself into the habit of highlighting and marking up on the board the main stress of new words, and having students copy this down, e.g. *teacher* or *teacher*.

USE OF MOTHER TONGUE

There can be no doubt that it is useful to *know* the students' own language (L1), especially if you have a monolingual class. How much you use it is another matter. It is probably best to use it sparingly:

- Perhaps in the first lesson talk to students in L1 about the course, how they will work, etc. and explain that you will be using English with them.
- Perhaps use L1 to check instructions for a new and unfamiliar activity, or to check understanding of a new language point, but only after using English.
- You can use L1 for translation of new vocabulary (where there is a one-to-one direct translation) and to deal with students' queries, particularly when it would waste a lot of time trying to explain in English.

Otherwise, you may find that if beginners feel that it is acceptable to use their own language freely in the classroom, they are inhibited from taking the plunge and speaking English to you and to each other, and it becomes more difficult for them to make that important leap.