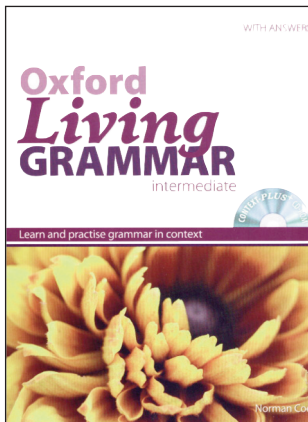


OXFORD LIVING GRAMMAR WITH ANSWERS

ELEMENTARY (Ken Paterson)
PRE-INTERMEDIATE (Mark Harrison)
INTERMEDIATE (Norman Coe)
Oxford University Press, 2009



Oxford Living Grammar is a series of three books ranging from A1 to B1 in terms of CEF levels and categorized by the authors as Elementary (CEF A1+ , by Ken Paterson), Pre-Intermediate (CEF A2, by Mark Harrison) and Intermediate (CEF B1, by Norman Coe). Each book comes with a *Context-Plus+ CD-ROM* with additional exercises. As stated by the authors in the introduction section of each book, the aim is to explain and practise grammar in everyday contexts and to show how grammar is used in real-life situations. The books can be used for self-study, for homework, and in class. The books are divided into ten grammar modules featuring the major grammar topics dealt

with throughout the 30 four-page units of each book. General topics are verb tenses, modal verbs, questions, verb forms and other structures, nouns, pronouns and determiners, adjectives and adverbs, prepositions, and building sentences. The grammar points presented in the lower-level book are presented in a more compact way and complexity is added in the upper-level books. New grammar points are also added in the upper-level books. This is especially remarkable in the *Verb forms and (other) structures* module, as shown below (each topic is preceded by the unit's number):

Verb forms and other structures		
Elementary	Pre-Intermediate	Intermediate
17 The imperative	13 The Infinitive	09 Infinitives and -ing forms (1)
18 Have got and have	14 The -ing form	10 Infinitives and -ing forms (1)
19 Verb + Infinitive	15 The passive	11 The passive
	16 Conditionals	12 Phrasal and prepositional verbs
	17 Connected future sentences	13 Indirect speech (1)
		14 Indirect speech (2)
		15 Conditional sentences

Each unit begins with an explanation of the grammar point, including a *Grammar in action* section which, according to the authors, shows how the grammar is used in typical everyday situations. This is followed by a number of *contextualized exercises* for learners to practise the grammar they

have read about. The second part of each unit is organised in the same way as the first part. The authors dwell upon the fact that the grammar shows real English in real situations, which learners can recognize and apply to their own experience. In some of the exercises you may find useful *Word focus* boxes to clarify unfamiliar words or expressions: some of the boxes just provide a short definition for each term, while others are short matching or finding exercises. At the end of every unit, the learner is prompted to continue practising the topics of the unit in the *Over to you* section

at the back of the book. Most of them are free writing activities based on the grammar point dealt with in each unit. This section could have been integrated within each unit instead of being a separate section with separate answers unnaturally located on the back pages. Each book is completed with a few pages

of *Form tables*, which are charts summarising the main grammar points, and two *Answer keys*, one for all the exercises in the units and the other for the exercises in the *Over to you section*.

Although structured as a three-stage course, the *Oxford Living Grammar* should obviously be used as complementary material for a general English course. The grammar points are well presented with many examples and lots of charts and tip boxes to clear up tricky bits. Most aspects of English grammar are covered with a gradual increase in complexity as we go from one book to the next one. However, as the authors intend this to be a *living grammar*, with exercises based on real-life topics, a reference to each unit's topics would be most appropriate on the *Contents* pages. Moreover, the layout of the books is quite plain, which otherwise could be a bonus for the learner to concentrate on the fully-compacted grammar exercises. With very few illustrations, more room is left for longer and wordier exercises. Providing contextualized exercises could be a handicap

for low-level learners, as each grammar topic is tested within real-like dialogues and passages from the very beginning, which means having to cope with a lot of vocabulary and more complex structures than those the learner is supposed to be familiar with at each stage. In this line, the *Word focus* boxes seem somewhat insufficient as vocabulary aids. All exercises are based on a few traditional grammar exercise patterns (mostly gap-filling, word completion, word correction and multiple choice), which are recurrent throughout every unit and every book at the three levels. Having fixed exercise patterns makes it easy to focus upon the particular grammar aspect under scrutiny in each exercise.

The accompanying *Context-Plus+ CD-ROM* provides further grammar and vocabulary exercises. Listening and speaking exercises based on written dialogues makes it more attractive for the learner. The CD exercises are quite intuitive and closer to the learner's expectations than the exercises in the books. However, the interface again looks rather plain, with no animations, hardly any

illustrations and poor images, which otherwise allows the learner to easily navigate through the different activities on the CD. A bonus to the CD is the series of multiple-choice tests covering all the units.

Making a sharp correspondence between these grammar course levels and secondary education levels is a rather complicated task, as the course seems to be intended as a self-study grammar aid for adult learners preparing for Cambridge exams. However, I would strongly recommend teachers of ESO Level 4 and Bachillerato Levels 1 and 2 to use some of the exercises in the books as complementary material to reinforce the grammar topics presented in class, though each particular exercise will need further explanation concerning other grammar points and new vocabulary. Moreover, this grammar course will be a valuable self-study aid for teachers involved in teaching their subjects in English at schools within a bilingual program.

Francisco Rubio Cuenca

CHEEKY MONKEY

Kathryn Harper
and Claire Medwell
Macmillan, 2009



Cheeky Monkey es uno de los cursos que la Editorial Macmillan oferta para la enseñanza de la Lengua Inglesa en el Segundo Ciclo de Educación Infantil. El curso es una serie que abarca los tres niveles de dicha etapa, comprendiendo edades entre los 3 y los 5 años. Para cada nivel hay un libro: 3 años (*Hello Cheeky*), 4 años (*Cheeky Monkey 1*) y 5 años (*Cheeky Monkey 2*).

El curso completo, es decir, los tres niveles, ha sido escrito por Kathryn Harper y Claire Medwell. Sus autoras han creado un mundo de divertidas aventuras que giran alrededor de unos atractivos personajes. Todo esto, junto a unos materiales llamativos y con multitud de ideas para el profesorado, hace de este libro una buena herramienta para la enseñanza del inglés en esta etapa.

En líneas generales, Cheeky Monkey es un curso que contiene una metodología flexible, motivadora y lúdica adaptándose a las diferentes situaciones de enseñanza-

aprendizaje que se presentan en el aula. Un aspecto a resaltar es el uso que hace de los cuentos.

Todas las unidades contienen un cuento, en el cual aparece el vocabulario básico de la unidad. Los cuentos son sencillos y, por lo tanto, fáciles de recordar. Estos cuentos ofrecen multitud de posibilidades y situaciones dentro del aula: lectura, comprensión oral, dramatización, aprendizaje del lenguaje activo, etc. Una novedad es que los cuentos han sido reproducidos en láminas A4 y con el texto en el reverso, lo que facilita al maestro/a la narración del mismo. Además, estas láminas están realizadas en un material resistente y plastificado, permitiendo así que el alumnado pueda trabajar con dichas láminas (secuenciación temporal, búsqueda de vocabulario, etc.)

Cada curso (para 3, 4 y 5 años) está compuesto por seis unidades que giran en torno a situaciones de la vida cotidiana de los niños y niñas. Así, podemos encontrar contenidos como los saludos, el cuerpo, la familia, la ropa, la climatología, la comida, los animales y la casa. Aparecen también conceptos básicos como los números, los colores y algunos adjetivos sencillos. Además, el material ofrece unas “mini-unidades” muy útiles, relacionadas con festividades como *Halloween*, *Christmas*, *Easter*, etc.

Algo muy interesante, a mi parecer, es que se adapta a la necesidad que existe en

Educación Infantil de mantener las rutinas de trabajo. En esta etapa es muy importante que los niños y niñas se muevan dentro de una serie de momentos educativos que son fijos a lo largo de la jornada escolar. *Cheeky Monkey* está diseñado para desarrollarse dentro de esta rutina. Cada unidad contiene siete lecciones. Estas lecciones están claramente estructuradas y se dividen en tres momentos claros: *Circle time* (actividades colectivas de conversación); *Story Time* (canciones, juegos con *flashcards*, etc.); *Transition time* (período de transición entre las actividades colectivas y el trabajo individual en el “Pupil’s Book”) y *Table time* (trabajo individual en el “Pupil’s Book” y con el material extra fotocopiable). En la sección *Teacher Talk* de la guía del profesor/a, encontramos diversos chants que podemos utilizar en los diferentes momentos de la rutina.

Otra novedad que incluye es la implicación de la familia en el proceso de aprendizaje de sus hijos/as. *Cheeky Monkey* proporciona una serie de cartas para fotocopiar y entregar a los padres/madres del alumnado. Hay una carta de bienvenida para entregar a principio del curso escolar y una carta para cada unidad. En ellas se exponen los contenidos que se han visto a lo largo de la unidad, un resumen de los cuentos y la letra de las canciones que se han aprendido y que podrán escuchar en casa con el Multi-ROM que incluye el libro del alumno. En mi opinión, estas

cartas son un material muy útil para involucrar a los padres y madres en el proceso educativo de sus hijos e hijas.

Los materiales que aporta el curso son los usuales con algunas novedades interesantes que merecen ser destacadas:

El material del alumno/a incluye Pupil's Book, pegatinas, troquelados y un Multi-ROM. El contenido del Multi-ROM es muy completo, pues además de las canciones, aporta cuatro juegos para cada unidad didáctica, a través de los cuales se repasa el vocabulario.

Un elemento novedoso dentro de los materiales del alumno/a es el "Busy Book". Se trata de un cuaderno de actividades opcionales que presentan material extra. Dicho cuaderno contiene unidades completas divididas en tres lecciones cada una. El "Busy Book" es compatible con el curso principal, pero, en mi opinión, es suficiente con las actividades colectivas en el *Circle Time*, los

juegos y las actividades individuales en el "Pupil's Book". Para completar, me parecen más recomendables las actividades extra de cada lección y las "worksheets" fotocopiables. De esta manera se puede controlar mejor el tiempo y la cantidad de material.

El Material del profesorado me parece muy interesante. Además de *flashcards*, *Story Cards* y la marioneta de Cheeky Monkey, el curso aporta recursos muy útiles y originales como la *Play Mat*. Es una alfombra de vistosos colores e ilustraciones llamativas en la que se representan los lugares de la ciudad de Cheeky. A través de ella se pueden explorar los lugares de los cuentos y los principales personajes. El libro del maestro sugiere varios juegos para sacar partido a esta original alfombra que nos servirá para repasar el lenguaje activo, los colores, las formas, recordar historias y

cuentos de unidades anteriores, crear interés y ubicar los cuentos que se escuchan por primera vez, y sobre todo, estimular y motivar a nuestro alumnado.

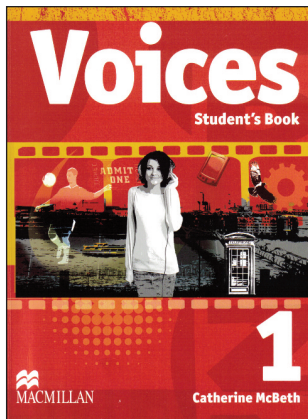
Otros materiales interesantes son el Audio CD, y el DVD. En este último aparecen dibujos animados de todos los cuentos, canciones y escenas interpretadas por niños y niñas. Además, se ofrecen fichas para imprimir y fotocopiar que se pueden realizar después del visionado del CD.

En mi opinión, *Cheeky Monkey* es un material muy completo y recomendable para todos aquellos maestros y maestras que quieran introducir en la Etapa de Educación Infantil la Lengua Inglesa de un modo flexible, lúdico y motivador.

M^a Dolores Martos Garrido

VOICES 1

Catherine Macbeth
Katherine & Steve Bilsborough
Macmillan, 2005



The latest English language course Macmillan has published for Compulsory Secondary Education is **Voices**, presented in a series of four different levels for E.S.O. students. *Voices* comes out as new material which tries to be up to date as far as the latest methodological trends are concerned, paying special attention to the cultural aspects of the countries where English is the mother tongue.

Two different kinds of materials can be distinguished: the student's materials and the teacher's materials. Regarding the former, they include a Student's Book, a workbook, an audio CD accompanying the workbook, a Portfolio, and a link to a student's website, voices.mac-english.com. On the other hand, the materials available for the teacher are a Teacher's book, a Teacher's Resource File, a Test and Exams Pack, the class CDs for the Student's Book, and the

latest Interactive Classroom for Digital Student's Book and Workbook. Despite being an English language course, some sections included in the workbook offer explanations in Spanish, in *Catalán* or in English -in case teachers want to choose the monolingual version for their students.

Concerning the **Student's Book**, it consists of: a *chart of contents*; a *starter unit*; *nine units* which include the contents of the book in terms of linguistic components and skills; and, finally, every three units is followed by an *end-of-term unit*.

Regarding the topics of the different units, they seem to be related to the students' interests. Although some of their titles seem to overlap, as in the case of "Free Time" (unit 3) and "Days Out" (unit 6) in *Voices 1*, checking these units demonstrates that they deal with different aspects and semantic fields. In spite of this, the topics are related to the vocabulary and communicative situations presented throughout the units.

As for the different sections in each unit, a thorough analysis reveals both the Student's book and the workbook have got a similar structure. Therefore, there are continuous cross-references when students are working with their textbook in order to widen their knowledge or to have more practice using their workbook. So, the analysis below has considered how the different skills and linguistic components are treated in both books.

Every unit begins with a "Presentation" sheet which

introduces the contents of the corresponding unit. It also works as a warm-up section that motivates students to keep on learning or reviewing things associated with it.

Concerning the **linguistic components**, the **vocabulary** of each unit is presented under two main sections: *Vocabulary 1* and *Vocabulary 2*. The vocabulary shown is presented in a motivating way, supported by means of pictures. Furthermore, students are constantly recycling the vocabulary learnt since this is not only practised in the vocabulary sections but also in the sections dealing with grammar and the different skills. In addition, when students finish practising the vocabulary seen in the *Vocabulary 1* section, there is always a cross-reference to two sections called *Vocabulary Bank* and *Vocabulary Plus* in the workbook.

Regarding **pronunciation**, this linguistic component is practised along the different listening tasks within each unit but they do not always appear in the same place in each unit; it can appear after the vocabulary or grammar sections depending on the phonetic aspects to be practised. From a formal point of view, there is only an introduction to the sounds of the language. Also, stress is the only suprasegmental aspect covered in *Voices 1*.

As for the **grammatical** aspects of every unit, this linguistic component is presented in two different sections: *Grammar 1* and *Grammar 2*. Both sections

deal with different linguistic units which are briefly presented with the help of charts. Consequently, both sections always include a cross-reference to a section called *Language Guide* appearing at the end of every unit, which also reviews the main vocabulary studied throughout the unit. In addition, the emphasis on the study of grammar is evident when we check how the workbook includes the same corresponding sections, *Grammar 1* and *Grammar 2*, as they appear in the student's book, but, moreover, it also integrates both in a new section called *Grammar 1 and 2*. Furthermore, there is always a speaking section once students have finished the *Grammar 2* section. The intention is to give prominence to the communicative dimension of grammar, which justifies the absence of drills or repetitive grammar exercises.

With respect to the **language skills**, every unit consists of sections devoted to the practice of reading, listening, speaking and writing. Moreover, a section at the end of each unit is included called *Dialogue Builder*, which fosters the fifth skill of interaction.

Concerning the receptive oral skill or **listening**, the content of some of the proposed tasks could be a bit difficult for students, although the grammar forms and vocabulary correspond to the unit. Students will also have the chance to practise different subskills such as listening for general understanding or for detail. Furthermore, every

workbook unit includes listening tasks, which raises the students' exposure to the oral language. Finally, the speed of the recordings seems to be appropriate.

As far as **reading** is concerned, all the units include a reading which always occurs after the *Vocabulary 1* section, so the topics of the texts are related to the semantic field of the units. Readings are generally followed by some tasks including a task based on listening to the text, an exercise to work on textual vocabulary, and some comprehension questions. Moreover, there is always a cross-reference to the *CLIL Across the Curriculum* Section in the workbook, since every text offers a communicative situation which is related to a different subject or area of the school curriculum.

Concerning **writing**, under the heading of *Writing Dossier*, this section focuses on two different aspects: firstly, it provides students with a section called *Language Focus* containing activities which are centred on the use of punctuation, spelling and basic connectors to start learning how to give cohesion to ideas in a text; and secondly, some communicative tasks are suggested in the *Writing Plan* section.

The last skill to be mentioned is **speaking**. The tasks dealing with oral production are usually integrated with other skills, both receptive and productive. The speaking section always takes place after the second section of grammar in each unit, so the suggested communicative situation is

linked to the grammatical contents learnt.

As we mentioned at the beginning of this review, this series of textbooks gives prominence to the **cultural** aspects of the countries where English is spoken as a mother tongue. Therefore, each unit includes a section called *Culture* which mainly consists of a text which is related to the semantic fields of the unit, followed by some reading comprehension tasks. Students can establish comparisons with their own culture. This section always includes a cross-reference to its counterpart in the workbook.

All the units in the student's book end with a *Progress Check* section which is mainly centred on the grammar and vocabulary of the unit. The subsection called *Cumulative Grammar* asks students to complete a text where the previous grammar contents are also tested, so the continuous character of evaluation becomes prominent.

As far as the workbook is concerned, the last two sections which are worth mentioning are: a *Revision* section, which is only focused on vocabulary and grammar, leaving no room to test the skills learnt; and a *Cumulative check* section, which is offered as an extension of the *Cumulative Grammar* section. However, there is no room for the practice of pronunciation or the different skills in any of these sections, either in the student's book or in the workbook.

Concerning other components of the course, students can keep a detailed record of what

they have learnt in a *Portfolio* book which they can complete unit by unit. Therefore, by the end of the course students will have filled in their language biography as a personal register of their learning experience.

The course is also accompanied by a *Teacher's Resource Pack* which includes: some *multi-level worksheets* (standard and extra according to students' level) which can be used to review the contents of a unit; more worksheets for *pairwork* to have more practice in oral interaction; some tasks dealing with *translation* and *dictation*; a diagnostic test, *multi-level tests* for every unit and *end-of-term exams* that can only be applied to standard and to high level students; more extra follow-up material appears, which corresponds to the sections of *Culture* and *Across the Curriculum*; and finally, a *Test Generator* and *Exams Multi-Rom CDs* are also included, which helps teachers create their own tests or edit the ones proposed in the *Teacher's Resource Pack*.

Voices is also supported by some resources that students can find on the website www.ace.macenglish.com/mvc/. This site seems to offer some activities and video clips and, in addition, teachers can evaluate their students' progress and their tasks concerning the different skills and linguistic components of every unit. Teachers, on the other hand, are said to have extra resources on www.macmillanelt.es. Finally, the *Teacher's Book* reproduces the student's book and, at the same time, offers didactic

guidance about how to present the different contents to students.

Once the description of the course has been completed, a general assessment of all its components will be carried out. First of all, the textbook seems attractive at first sight. In this sense, there is a visual impact by means of pictures and photographs which make this material and its content more attractive and motivating. The size and type of print is excellent because it helps students distinguish the instructions of the tasks and the tasks themselves.

Concerning instructions, they are simple and concise. This is obviously an advantage now that we have to pay attention to the diversity of levels in the classroom, since students can manage by themselves without the teacher's continuous explanations of what they are supposed to do.

Secondly, the material is handy and easy to follow although it may include lots of cross-references to different sections either in the student's book or in the workbook. Some of these cross-references could in fact be avoided if, for instance, grammar explanations might be condensed into one or two sections maximum. However, the units have got the same layout and are quite systematic.

Thirdly, although there are some tasks which would require the teacher's intervention to make things clear, the bulk of this material is appropriate according to the curriculum requirements. However, in terms of its timing,

the material would be very difficult to be covered throughout one academic year because most of the sections dealing with culture and across the curriculum, despite being very interesting, would take a lot of time.

This material presents an important drawback as there are no low-level tests and exams for students to whom curricular adaptations have to be carried out. Only standard and high level students seem to be the recipients of the printed materials for evaluation, though the test generator CD may help teachers make any adaptations they feel appropriate for their students. The accompanying material for the student's book is quite good in spite of the possible disadvantages we have been pointing out along this review. Perhaps it could be improved if it were a bit more synthesized and offered low-level test and exam adaptations.

There is a relative balance of the four skills because they seem to receive the same degree of attention except for speaking. The practice of this skill is not included in the workbook, which makes us think it has been devised for homework, which is not always the case. Furthermore, the different tests and exams do not include any section to check our students' production, which can make students think speaking is not as important as other skills. We are obviously aware of the limited production of our students at this stage of language learning, however, they should be asked to utter simple messages.

Concerning the linguistic components, the author has undoubtedly given more relevance to grammar and vocabulary, leaving pronunciation relegated. In the student's book, there are three sections per unit dealing with grammar and two sections dealing with vocabulary, apart from the grammar explanations given in other sections or even in the workbook. That's why we previously suggested that they should be synthesized, so the section called *Grammar 1* and *Grammar 2* could not be necessary to some extent. Meanwhile, simple phonetic notions could appear. There is no clear basic introduction to the sounds of the language or any simple phonetic notions like those represented by the

contrasts of pairs of simple sounds. The pronunciation tasks seem to be related to the correct use of grammar forms like the third person singular morpheme *-s*.

Finally, the different activities are never isolated. Students are constantly using the same vocabulary and grammatical forms whenever they are asked to complete a task dealing with any skill. Moreover, the exercises are always contextualized, since they are always about the unit topic and its vocabulary. The book's content ranges over a variety of topics connected with students' interests such as sports, clothes, the weather, daily life activities or tourism among others.

All things considered, provided that the rest of the series follows the same layout, and taking into consideration our students' learning profiles, *Voices* could be highly recommended since we, teachers, will find, at our disposal, an incredible amount of materials which will not only make our students learn English in an amusing and motivating way but will also put them in contact with Anglo-Saxon civilization and the cultural aspects characteristic of the countries where English is the mother tongue.

Juan Ignacio Gámez Martínez