

# Blended Learning

A Guide to Implementation with *Touchstone*

**TOUCHSTONE**

FLEXIBLE LEARNING,  
PROVEN RESULTS

## Cambridge – Leading the way in Blended Learning

Cambridge was the first ELT publisher to develop a purpose-built Learning Management System (LMS) to deliver online English language programs. In 2008 the pioneering *Touchstone* Online Course was published — the first English course to offer a fully-flexible Blended Learning experience, allowing ELT programs to deliver any combination of printed and online content.

Since then we have listened carefully to our customers to make the Cambridge LMS even better suited to their needs. As a result of this, *Touchstone* Second Edition was developed and delivered through an improved LMS, which we continue to update based on user feedback.

Choosing Cambridge means working with a publisher who understands how to make the leap from traditional classroom models to Blended Learning. We have a wealth of experience working closely with many types of customers to implement a variety of Blended Learning programs. We can work with you every step of the way to ensure that the transition to Blended Learning is as smooth as possible, enabling your institution to achieve its goals.

“For the past seven years, Laureate has worked together with Cambridge to bring best-in-class language services to our network of global institutions. Cambridge understood our needs from the outset and worked very closely with us to provide ideal Blended Learning solutions to suit the different needs of our network.”

Gordon Lewis,  
Vice President of Laureate Languages,  
Laureate International Universities

## What is Blended Learning?

In its simplest form, Blended Learning means combining learning inside and outside the classroom, learning both with a teacher and alone – something students have done for years. These days, however, technology offers us new and exciting ways to teach and learn using computers and mobile devices. So Blended Learning has come to mean learning via a mix of face-to-face class time and computer-based materials.

Blended Learning has clear benefits for language learning programs. For example, it allows you to:

- plan courses which make the most of face-to-face time with students
- free up class time for communicative activities
- teach multilevel classes more effectively
- keep track of students' progress in the online environment
- review students' online work to help determine where students need additional instruction.

There are clear advantages for students too. Because it is student centred, Blended Learning allows students to:

- learn and practice at their own pace
- control when, where, and how long they spend learning
- access a wider range of art, video, and audio material, including games
- interact with classmates outside of class by doing speaking and writing activities online
- get instant feedback on their work and track their own progress.

Blended Learning is a winning formula – however you mix it.

Michael McCarthy, Jeanne McCarten,  
Helen Sandiford  
Authors of *Touchstone* and *Viewpoint*



## Why choose *Touchstone* Blended Learning?

*Touchstone*, together with *Viewpoint*, is a market-leading, 6-level, fully-flexible Blended Learning English language program. It offers the possibility of delivering the program in any combination of print and online content and is suitable for any type of Blended Learning program.

In *Touchstone*, every unit is made up of four lessons, for example:

Lesson A - Grammar, pronunciation, & speaking  
Lesson B - Vocabulary, grammar, & speaking  
Lesson C - Conversation strategies, listening, & speaking  
Lesson D - Reading, writing, listening, & speaking

All the lessons can be delivered either in class (using the Student's Book) or online (using the Online Course through the Cambridge LMS). This is possible because the online and print materials are clearly connected and deliver the same learning outcomes, so you can be confident that when students work online, they are learning the same material as they would in class.

Unlike other online materials, the Online Course provides not just effective practice, but also effective teaching. With animated presentations that teach grammar, conversation strategies, pronunciation, and writing – plus an abundance of practice activities – you can be sure that your students are engaged in successful learning while online.

Fully-flexible Blended Learning with *Touchstone* and *Viewpoint* means that you can choose the best blend of class work and online work to suit your teaching requirements and the needs of your learners. It will ultimately deliver a deeper, more satisfying learning experience to your students.

## What to consider before implementation

Once you have decided to implement Blended Learning, you need to decide how to use it. In other words, you need to decide what your students will do as online self-study and what they will do in class.

To help you decide how to do this, it is useful to think about the following:

- What do you want to achieve? Think of your institution's objectives and your students' and teachers' needs
- What is the ideal number of hours in the program? How much overall class time do you have? How much time do you want students to spend studying online?
- What content do you want to focus on in class time (e.g. grammar, pronunciation, conversation, reading)?
- How do you want students to use their online time (e.g. to prepare for class by learning the language they need for interactive class activities, to review and consolidate their learning after class, or simply for extra practice)?

We recommend that you start out by establishing a pattern for Blended Learning in your program and use it consistently so that your students and teachers are clear about what work will be done in class and what will be done online.

The following Case Studies show some of the most popular ways that *Touchstone* is being used for Blended Learning by our customers around the world.



## Case Study 1: Preparation Blend

For institutions that want students to study part of a lesson online in order to prepare for class. For example, they may do the initial reading activity online, or learn the vocabulary before coming to class.



### CENTRO COLOMBO AMERICANO, BOGOTA, COLOMBIA

The Centro Colombo Americano, officially recognized by the Embassy of the United States as a Binational Center, is a non-profit foundation dedicated to strengthening cultural and academic links between Colombia and the United States and to provide quality services in a suitable and effective English learning environment.

### How is *Touchstone* used?

“Students prepare for the face-to-face class by doing the vocabulary and pronunciation activities online at home. *Touchstone* offers really useful tools for class preparation, such as providing access to the class audio and allowing students to study the grammar online at their own pace.”

### Why was this blend chosen?

“Our Adult English Program curriculum has revolved around this paradigm: for language learning to happen, students’ investment in time and dedication outside the classroom is pivotal. *Touchstone* helps us to get our students working in this way.”

### How has this blend been successful?

“*Touchstone* allows students to learn in a more self-paced, self-regulated way. The Adult English Program works very well for our students because it allows the learning, project-based work, constant reflection and self-assessment to happen outside the classroom so students are much better prepared for their face-to-face lessons.”

### What advice would you offer for successful implementation?

“Be aware of students’ capabilities when using technology. Don’t assume students will be proficient with computers and used to studying online. It’s essential to explain how to use the online course with examples beforehand.

Work out the right balance of time devoted to online work and class work so it suits your classes.

Plan for teachers to reference the online work during the face-to-face classes.”

Samuel Reales,  
Adult Program Coordinator,  
Centro Colombo Americano

## Case Study 2: Lesson-by-Lesson Blend

For institutions that want students to do whole lessons in class and whole lessons online. For example, you might want your students to do the grammar and speaking lessons (A, B and C) in class and the skills lesson (D) at home.



### CASA THOMAS JEFFERSON, BRASILIA, BRAZIL

Casa Thomas Jefferson is a Binational Center, founded in 1963. Their main goal is to promote cultural exchange between Brazil and the US, teaching English to students of all ages and levels while also promoting cultural education.

### How is *Touchstone* used?

“

Students do Lessons A and C in class, and Lessons B and D online. We have face-to-face classes for 2 hours and 30 minutes every other week. In class, we focus on conversation but also recycle some of the main content from the online lessons. We use exercises in the Student's Book to provide students with more opportunities for speaking practice.”

### Why was this blend chosen?

“

We want to develop students' speaking skills in class and their other skills, such as reading, online.”

### How has this blend been successful?

“

This model works very well for us because it allows students to use their class time to focus on conversation, as they only have a limited amount of time for this. This blend gives students the chance to work fully on their speaking skills in class and so classroom time becomes more meaningful because of the communicative and student-centered approach.”

### What advice would you offer for successful implementation?

“

We feel it's really helpful to provide tutorials to make sure students understand how to use the LMS. We also provide students with a calendar at the beginning of the course with dates for the lessons students are expected to do online, and which lessons are going to be covered in the face-to-face classes to keep them on track.”

Carla Arena,  
Innovation and Technology  
Department, Casa Thomas Jefferson



## Case Study 3: Communicative Focus Blend

For institutions that want students to study whole lessons online, and then attend class to put what they have learned into practice in a communicative way.



### CEUTEC, HONDURAS

CEUTEC started operating in 2006 with the purpose of providing working adults in Honduras with quality higher education. All of its degree programs follow a Blended Learning approach to teaching: students prepare and study at home prior to face-to-face classes with their tutors.

### How is *Touchstone* used?

“We ask students to study one lesson online before coming to the face-to-face class. Before class students upload homework assignments, participate in forums, check their grades, etc. Teachers prepare classes that include activities that consolidate what students have studied online. Students are expected to work online for at least 3.5 hours per week and they have three 90-minute face-to-face classes every week.”

### Why was this blend chosen?

“This works perfectly for our school model because the combination of face-to-face classes and online work allows us to provide the right number of guided hours needed to reach a B1 or B2 level of proficiency, which is the school’s target for graduates.”

### How has this blend been successful?

“Our students are given the maximum opportunity to practice in the face-to-face classes. Teachers do not have to spend precious minutes of class time presenting and explaining grammar and vocabulary from beginning to end, but rather eliciting from students from what they have learned online or clarifying certain points. Most of the face-to-face time is devoted to practicing language in a meaningful, communicative way. Classes are then more dynamic, motivating, and student-centered and the teacher becomes a facilitator or language coach.”

### What advice would you offer for successful implementation?

“Students are encouraged to work on the lessons on a daily basis for short periods of time. We felt it was better for them to work on the material little by little and not the entire lesson at once so that they have the chance to internalize it better.

Make sure that whatever work they study and prepare online is practiced in class, thus learning is more meaningful to them.

We give students a calendar that shows them exactly which lesson they need to do online before coming to each face-to-face session. It is very important to give clear instructions.”

Carolina Euceda de Fonseca,  
Head of the National EFL  
Program, CEUTEC



## Case Study 4: 100% Online Model

For institutions who want a distance learning solution. A number of institutions are using *Touchstone* Online for 100% online programs. Fully-online programs meet the needs of students who are in fully-online degree programs, working adults, and alumni who are no longer attending the university but need to continue to update their English.



### LAUREATE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITIES

Laureate International Universities is an international university network offering degree programs to more than 1,000,000 students worldwide. The Laureate English Program (LEP) uses *Touchstone* Blended Learning, and was founded with the aim of providing students a minimum level of English (B1) by the time they graduate from a Laureate institution. Laureate International Universities use *Touchstone* in many different blended programs across their various institutions, including using *Touchstone* in a 100% online program.



### How is *Touchstone* used?

“*Touchstone* is well-suited to the 100% online model because students are fully supported while they are studying alone on the online course through the well-structured lessons, scaffolded activities, and animated language presentations. Laureate Languages recognizes the importance of the teacher in any language learning situation, even if fully online. Teachers can check student’s progress in the asynchronous environment (Cambridge LMS) to help plan the teacher-led online sessions.”

Joseline Castaños,  
Program Director,  
Laureate Languages

# How can Cambridge support you with Blended Learning?

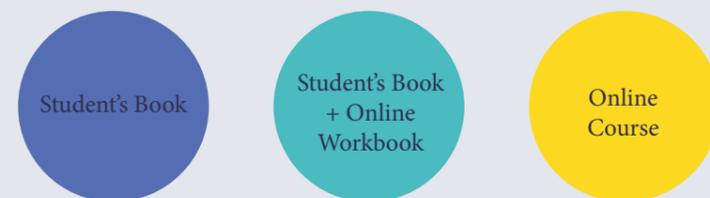
## Gradual implementation

For institutions that want to implement Blended Learning gradually, replacing a printed workbook with an online workbook is a great introduction to studying online. The Online Workbook can be used to provide extra practice for students at home while the Student's Book is used in class.

You can then move on to incorporating the Online Course and increasing the amount of online work students do. We can help guide you through this process and work with you to develop a plan for gradual implementation of Blended Learning.

*Touchstone* – Flexible Learning, Proven Results

### COURSE COMPONENTS



### CHOOSE THE IDEAL BLENDED COURSE FOR YOU AND YOUR STUDENTS



## Advice and support

Having built ongoing relationships with many customers who have implemented Blended Learning with us, we are well-positioned to provide advice, training and support to ensure that you select the right products, implement them effectively, and get great results for you and your students.

When you choose to implement Blended Learning with Cambridge, we support you on the journey.

- **Program advice**  
Cambridge can provide advice and support on revising your curriculum and help you choose a suitable *Touchstone* blend.
- **Teacher training and support**  
Cambridge can provide full support for you and your teachers to make the move to Blended Learning as smooth and efficient as possible.
- **Impact studies**  
Cambridge has conducted a number of studies with a range of institutions that have implemented Blended Learning programs and can provide advice based on the results and conclusions.

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**Further Reading**

The Cambridge Guide to  
Blended Learning for  
Language Teaching

Edited by Michael McCarthy

Speak to your local Cambridge ELT representative  
to find out more about this cutting edge  
Blended Learning product from Cambridge University Press.

[cambridge.org/touchstone2](https://cambridge.org/touchstone2)



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