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Cambridge Business English Activities

Serious fun for Business English students

Jane Cordell

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Intonation dictation

This activity is inspired by an introduction to teaching intonation given during my initial training by the wonderful teacher, Martin Parrott.

Testing each other

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Map of the book

Introduction, p8

Activity and page number	Level	Business/ social function	Language focus	Timing	Type of activity	One-to-one
Unit 1: Finding out about your students						
1.1 Four skills needs analysis p9	Lower-intermediate	Discussing English language needs	Asking questions	30–40 minutes	Groups of four	Possible if adapted
1.2 This is me p12	Intermediate (adaptable for other levels)	Describing yourself	Adjectives and their antonyms	40 minutes	Individual then group	Yes
1.3 Graph skills analysis p14	Lower-intermediate	Describing English ability	Modals of ability	35–45 minutes	Individual and small groups	Yes
1.4 Personality scales p16	Mid-intermediate	Getting to know someone	Second conditional	50–55 minutes	Pair	Yes
1.5 Identity swap p19	Lower-intermediate	Finding out about new people	Question forms	30–40 minutes	Whole class	No
Unit 2: Socializing in English						
2.1 Introducing yourself and others p20	Lower-intermediate	Formal introduction and polite interruption	Polite greetings and question tags at higher levels	10–30 minutes (depending on level)	Whole class	Possible if adapted
2.2 Restaurant board game p23	Lower-intermediate	Socializing at a business lunch	Polite requests, enquiries and suggestions	70–90 minutes	Small group	Possible if adapted
2.3 Question and answer Pelmanism p28	Pre-/Mid-intermediate	Recognizing common social exchanges	Basic social questions and answers	12–15 minutes	Pairs and small groups	Yes
2.4 Asking questions p30	Elementary, pre-intermediate	Asking basic questions	Question forms	35–35 minutes	Class and pair	Yes

Unit 3: Using the phone						
3.1 A telephone maze p33	Mid-intermediate	Telephoning	Enquiring and checking	30–35 minutes	Class and pair	Yes
3.2 Phone quartets p36	Lower-intermediate	Telephoning for a variety of purposes	Telephone language	40–60 minutes	Groups of four	No
3.3 What not to do p39	Intermediate	Dealing with angry and impolite callers	Rude and tactful language on the phone	20–40 minutes	Cross-class pairs	Yes
Unit 4: Business writing						
4.1 Formal or informal? p41	Intermediate/upper-intermediate	Recognizing register in letters	Letter language/register	30 minutes	Pairs or threes	Yes
4.2 Writing a CV p45	Lower-intermediate	Discussing someone's experience	Past simple and present perfect questions; time prepositions	35–60 minutes	Pair	Yes
4.3 A letter to correct p47	Intermediate/upper-intermediate	Recognizing errors in a business letter	Error correction	30–45 minutes	Pair	Yes
4.4 A group letter p50	Lower-/upper-intermediate	Organizing a business letter	Using conjunctions	12 minutes or 22–37 minutes with extension activity	Whole class	Possible if adapted
4.5 Keeping it brief p53	Elementary intermediate Upper-intermediate	Writing a memo/fax after scan and skim reading	Language of faxes and memos	E 75–90 minutes; I/U 45–75 minutes	Individual and pairs	Yes
Unit 5: Making decisions						
5.1 Bingo diaries p58	Lower-intermediate	Arranging times to meet	Time expressions with present continuous	20–30 minutes	Small group	Possible if adapted
5.2 Napoleon's decision-making p64	Upper-Intermediate	Reaching a decision	Agreeing and disagreeing; giving and discussing opinions	30–60 minutes	Individuals, pairs and fours	Possible if adapted

5.3 How shall we market it? p67	Mid-intermediate Intermediate Advanced	Discussing how to market a product	Agreeing, disagreeing and reaching a group decision	75–90 minutes	Small group	Possible if adapted
5.4 A meeting p71	Upper-intermediate	Holding a meeting	Agreeing, disagreeing, asking for and giving opinions	60 minutes	Group	Possible if adapted
Unit 6: Negotiating						
6.1 Conditionals in a negotiation p73	Upper-intermediate	Negotiating	First and second conditionals	30 minutes	Whole class	Yes
6.2 Someone else's shoes p75	Mid-intermediate	Recognizing the other party's position in a negotiation	The language of negotiating	60–80 minutes	Pair	Yes
Unit 7: Describing change						
7.1 The crystal ball game p80	Lower-intermediate	Predicting future changes	Will/ going to	20–40 minutes depending on size of class	Whole class	Possible if adapted
7.2 A company's progress p81	Intermediate Upper-intermediate	Describing a company's development	The language of change	30 minutes	Small group and pair	Yes
7.3 Graph dictations p84	Lower-intermediate	Describing a line graph	The language of change	35–45 minutes	Pair	Yes
Unit 8: Describing companies and jobs						
8.1 Describe an organigram p87	Intermediate+	Describing company structure	Position, relative position	50–80 minutes	Whole class	Yes
8.2 Talking pictures p88	Intermediate	Describing and speculating	Agreeing and disagreeing plus modals	30–40 minutes	Pairs and threes	Possible if adapted
8.3 My working day p91	Elementary	Describing a work routine	Modals of possibility	35–55 minutes	Pairs	Yes
Unit 9: Describing processes						
9.1 A roof over your head? p93	Upper-intermediate	Organizing a process description	Instructions	45–60 minutes	Whole class and group	Yes
9.2 The process jigsaw p95	Mid-intermediate	Marking the stages of a process with key words	Cohesive and referential words	85–120 minutes	Pair	Possible if adapted

Unit 10: Making comparisons						
10.1 The best offer p99	Lower-Upper-intermediate	Agreeing, disagreeing and persuading	Comparatives and superlatives	60–80 minutes	Small group	Possible if adapted
10.2 Selling yourself p103	Pre-intermediate Intermediate	Describing yourself and preparing for interview	Comparatives and superlatives	30–40 minutes	Individual and pair	Yes
Unit 11: Pronunciation						
11.1 Intonation patterns p105	All	Appreciating the effects of different intonation		20–30 minutes	Pair	Yes
11.2 A phonemic phone call p107	Intermediate	Recognizing the order of a business call	The IPA	20–30 minutes	Pair or whole class	Possible if adapted
11.3 Strong or weak? p109	Intermediate	Recognizing weak forms	Describing a procedure	45 minutes	Threes	Yes
Unit 12: Giving feedback to your students						
12.1 A memo to your students p113	Any	Giving feedback	Depends on language used by students	15–20 minutes	Individual and group	Yes
12.2 Pairs to compare p116	Any	Error recognition	Depends on language by students	10–20 minutes	Pairs	Yes
Unit 13: Giving advice						
13.1 When it goes wrong p117	Pre-intermediate	Giving advice	Advice modals	45 minutes	Whole group writing	Possible if adapted
13.2 Business scruples p118	Mid-intermediate	Expressing opinions and giving advice	'If I were you ...' and advice modals	40–65 minutes	Small group	Yes
Unit 14: Using numbers						
14.1 Number noughts and crosses p120	Intermediate+	Using variety of numbers	Numbers	20–25 minutes	Pair	Possible if adapted
14.2 Checking the details p122	Pre-intermediate	Using variety of numbers	Numbers and using contrastive stress	15–25 minutes	Pair or teacher-led whole class	Yes
14.3 Shared number dictations p124	Intermediate	Using variety of numbers	Numbers	20–30 minutes	Pair	Yes
14.4 Testing each other p128	Pre-intermediate	Using variety of numbers	Numbers and using contrastive stress	15–25 minutes	Pair or teacher-led whole class	Yes

Introduction

Welcome to *Cambridge Business English Activities*! I hope that you will enjoy using it with your students.

What is *Cambridge Business English Activities*?

Cambridge Business English Activities is a book of 43 activities for enlivening business English classes. The activities are student-centred, highly participative and designed to complement most business English syllabi and coursebooks. As many of the activities are designed to provide students with conversation practice, they can also be used successfully with students of general English.

Who is the book for?

The book can be used with both experienced business people and pre-experience learners, in a variety of learning contexts. It has been designed as a flexible resource. There are whole group, small group and pairwork activities, with information in the **Teaching notes** on adapting the material for different-sized groups. Using it in a one-to-one situation is also given special comment. Almost all the activities can be used with a micro group or in a one-to-one class.

Which levels can the material be used with?

There are activities for elementary up to advanced levels in this book and the **Teaching notes** for each activity indicate the most appropriate level(s) for use. The activities foster a cooperative approach to learning that can help mixed level groups work better together. Also, the **Teaching notes** indicate when an activity can be adapted easily to other levels.

Using the activities

The **Map of the book** has been divided into sections under functional headings similar to those used in many business English coursebooks so that the activities can be used alongside such books.

The **Teaching notes** for each activity provide a clear, step-by-step description of how to carry out that activity in class, and there is a section which describes any pre-class preparation needed. Suggestions are made as to how to give feedback and, where appropriate, how to follow up the activity.

As this material is designed to be as flexible as possible, a precise list of language components is not provided for each activity. However, an indication is made at the start of the notes of which language areas will be practised. The actual language used by each group of students will depend on their ability, and, to some extent, the language you choose to emphasize.

A **Map of the book** follows this introduction, giving a complete breakdown of each activity. This will be particularly useful for teachers who need to select an activity very quickly.

Class management

Many of the activities in the book require the focus to be placed on the students. Be prepared to change your own position, and occasionally, to rearrange the classroom or training room to facilitate this. Ask yourself where you can stand or sit so that the students do not always feel obliged to acknowledge your presence. Also, how can the furniture be best positioned to allow for good communication, and if necessary, group changes? Initially you may find your students resistant to any sort of change in the classroom hierarchy or system, but a little physical movement in class can be very energizing and, once encouraged, most students see the benefits it can bring.

Facilities

The material in this book marked © Cambridge University Press 2000 **PHOTOCOPIABLE** may be reproduced and can be used in any classroom with a blackboard or a whiteboard. For some activities, however, an OHP or flip-chart will enhance a particular stage of a lesson and where this is the case, advice is given in the **Teaching notes**. If possible, use the walls of the room in which you teach to display students' work or the results of some of the activities (e.g. the **Four skills needs analysis** chart, or **Graph skills analysis** results). If you have access to a cassette recorder and/ or video camera and VCR, you could think about using them to provide feedback.

Giving feedback

Each teacher has his/her own methods for observing students' language and providing feedback on it. But if you need a few more ideas, there are two activities in the final section of the book called **Giving feedback** that you might like to try, and many of the activities also have a feedback stage described. Videoing or recording your students, with their prior permission of course, is a stimulating and revealing way of gathering information and means that students can participate in analyzing good use of language and their own errors.

Finally, I would be delighted to get feedback from you, the teachers using the material. Please write to me at the publisher if you have any comments to make.