Balloon English Secondary

Teacher's Guide

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1. Introduction

Source

Based on *Discovering English* and parts of *Extensive Reader* created and published by International Language Teaching Services (UK publisher)

Language

British English

Age group

Secondary Education, Grades 7-12

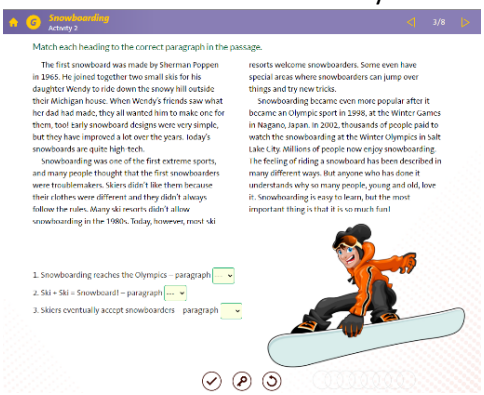
Scope

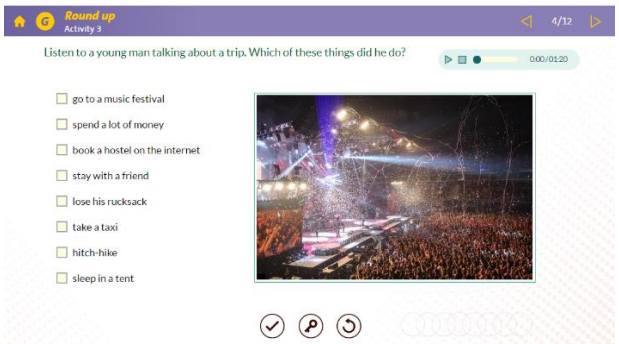
35 main lessons and 2 tests per grade

2. Methodology

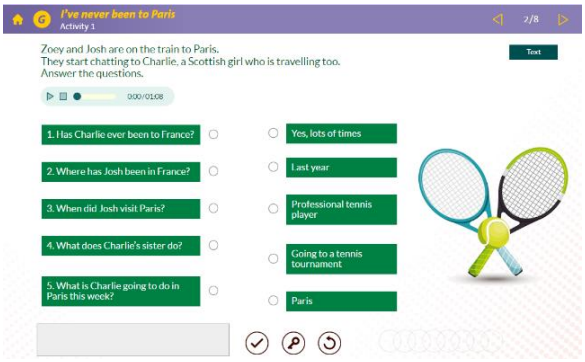
2a. Skills

The emphasis of the course is on skills development: students learn English by using it in lively communicative activities and by interacting with a wide range of written texts and audio recordings.

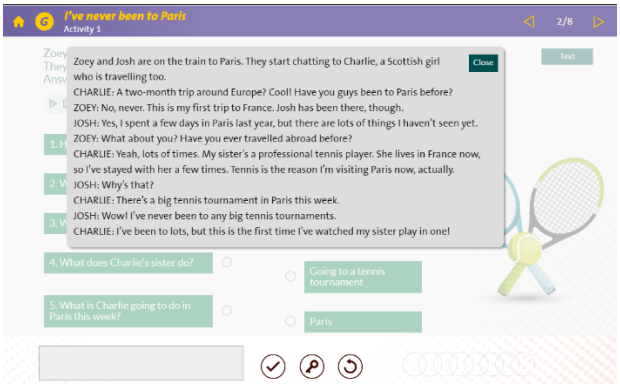




A typical lesson features a dialogue or other text which introduces the main language points of the lesson. This is followed by activities which develop students' understanding of the language, and require them to use it for themselves. There are also screens offering a variety of grammar and vocabulary activities which consolidate the content of the lesson.



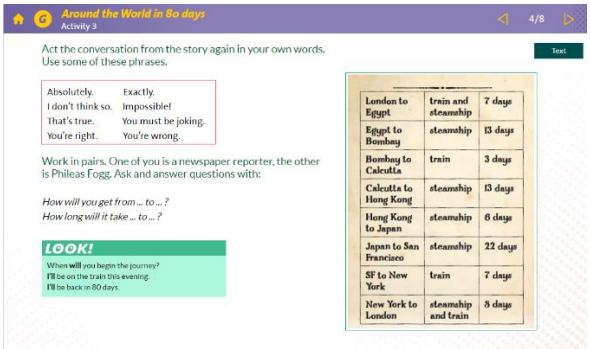
Each listening activity is accompanied with the transcription available in a pop up. This is especially helpful for weaker students who have problems with the listening skill.

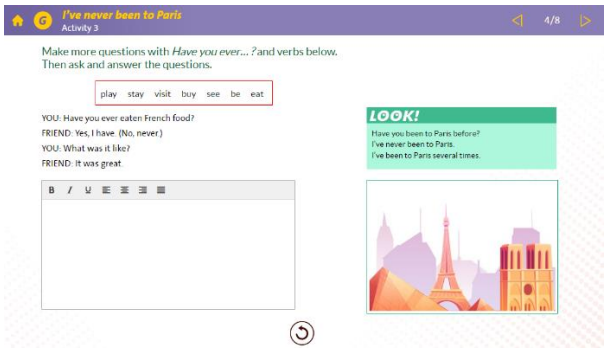


2b. Digital offer

Being digital, the resources support seamless and personalised blended learning so that face-to-face classes are combined with online practice that children can access from home.

Balloon English Secondary provides students with perfect conditions for building their communicative skills. Its interactive resources, real-life situations, up-to-date topics and opportunities for spontaneous and creative interaction are designed to motivate the students and provide them with strong learning stimuli.





Personalized learning is essential in communicative language teaching. ***Balloon English Secondary*** provides a rich source of material which can be personalized by the students in the more creative parts of the lesson, where learners are encouraged to practice what they have learnt in pairs or small groups, and in a uniquely personal way. Personalization is strongly supported by artificial intelligence (AI) which has been built into the ***Balloon English Secondary*** tests. The Grammar and Listening test provides suggestions for individual learning paths based on the students' results. The Vocabulary and Reading test is a perfect drill for playing with new words and where the learning path is built on the fly. The results of each screen determine if the students receive an easier or more difficult set of activities within a given topic.

Student performance data can be easily tracked and assessed. This data provides the teacher with a range of flexible course options best suited to the learners' needs, either for remedial teaching or for a particular focus on the relevant areas of language knowledge and skills.

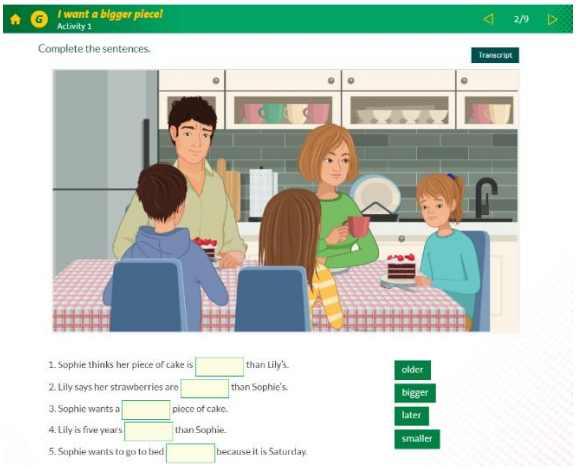
2c. Regular characters

Many of the lessons feature a regular cast of characters. The principal characters are:

The Morgan Family

Lily and Ben (aged 12) are twins. Their younger sister Sophie is 6. They live with their parents (Mr and Mrs Morgan) in Cambridge, a university city in the south-east of England. They have a dog called

Leopold (or Leo) and a cat called Cleopatra (or Cleo). They are visited by Lily and Ben's American cousin Zoey, who is 18.
Ben and Lily's friends and teachers
Ben's best friend is Jack; Lily's best friend is Emma. They also make a new friend: Natalie, a teenage girl from the Island of Grenada. They have a teacher called Mr Patel.



3. Lesson structure

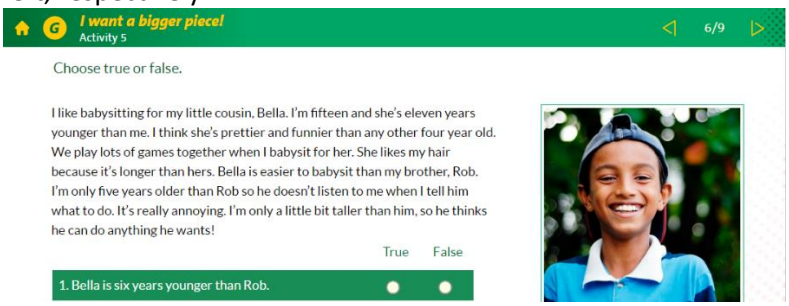
Lessons are constructed in a similar way throughout the whole course. Each lessons starts with the Table of contents, next there are activity screens, usually the first one is a form of presentation (text, audio, animation), the Report Page is the last screen. Number of screens vary across the lessons.

4. Working with the lesson

4a. Navigation

Every lesson screen is equipped with navigation arrows that allow you to move among lesson pages. Each activity screen additionally has a set of control buttons enabling to check your answers, show the correct ones or reset the activity.
You can jump to any screen from the Start page and you can go back to the Start Page by clicking on the Home button. You can also move from screen to screen using the Next and Previous buttons. When on the Report screen, you can also quickly jump to any activity included in the report.
If you want to move to a selected page, click on the title link within the Table of contents page.

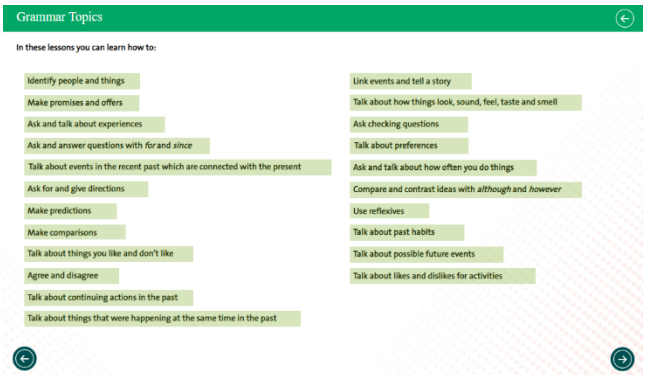
If you want to move to the next or the previous page, click the arrow on the right or the arrow on the left, respectively.



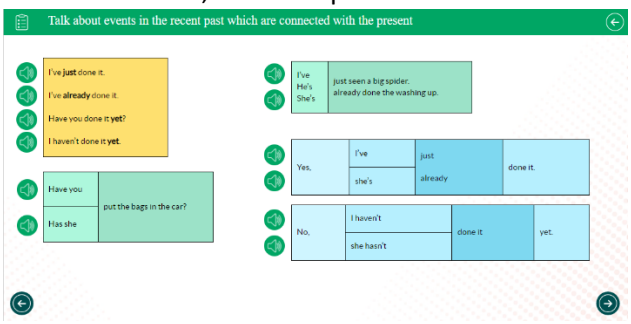
At any point you can return to the first page of the lesson (Table of Contents page). If you want to return to the Lesson contents page, click on the Home button located at the top-left corner of every page or use navigation arrows to go back to the first page of the lesson.

4b. Grammar topics

Students are provided with the list of all grammar topics covered in each grade. You can open the Grammar tool at any time by clicking the G icon on the navigation bar. Students can view all topics on the TOC screen.



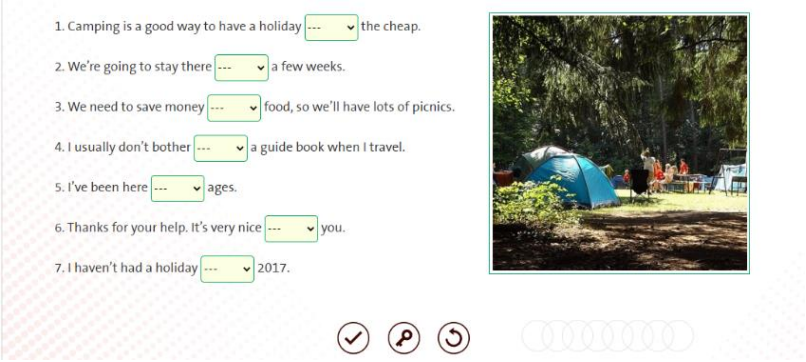
They can read and listen to sample sentences and expressions presenting particular grammar structures in use, which helps to understand and memorize them.



4c. Control buttons

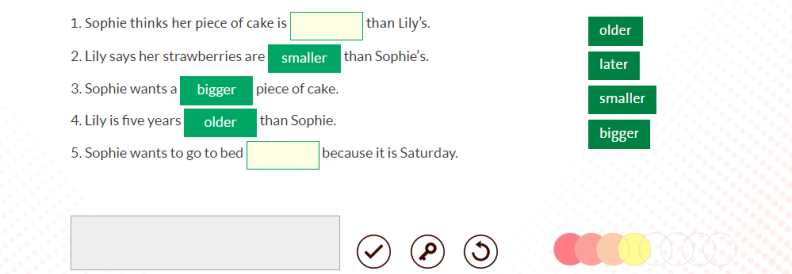
At the bottom-right corner of every activity screen there are three control buttons available. They include Check button, Show answers button, and Reset button.

Check button is used when you want to verify if a particular exercise has been done correctly. Show answers button allows you to preview the correct answers while doing the exercise. If you want to do the exercise again, use Reset button.



4d. Feedback

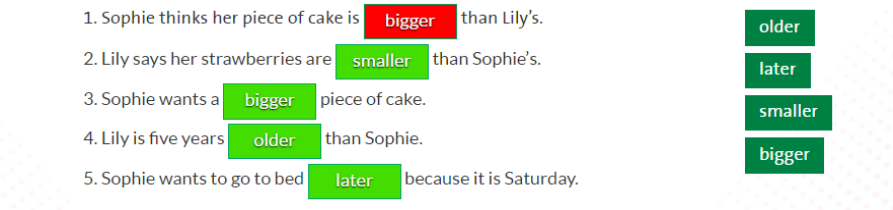
The course features an advanced feedback system. Everyone likes to be rewarded when they do something well, especially students. Every correct answer is marked in a progress bar (with coloured circles).



Every activity completed without errors is rewarded with an animation, an applause and a trophy representing student's achievements.

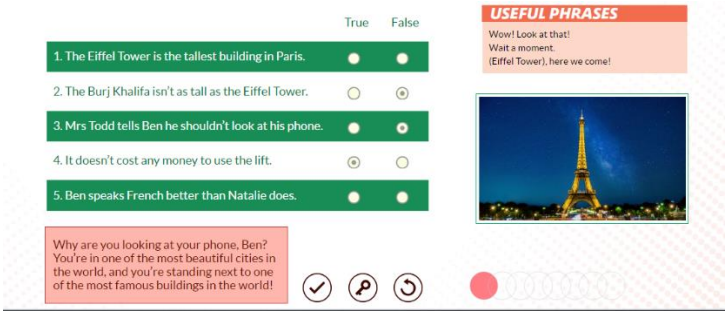
Additional functionalities:

- Click the Key button to see the answer key.
- Click the Check button to see the wrong/correct answers (green and red respectively).



This motivating approach is strengthened with the specific instant feedback, which is displayed on giving wrong answers. Textual hints help weaker students to solve difficult activities. Most often these are quotes from the texts. They guide students to the right solution instead of simply giving

them a correct answer.



When you go to the report screen you can see the result presented in %, the number of hints used and the number of errors made by the student.

4e. Activities

Activity screens include one exercise per page and they are designed to check students' comprehension of the material. Possible types of exercises include:

– Cloze editable – filling the gaps in the text with the use of a keyboard

– dropdown – filling the gaps in the text by selecting elements for the gap from the drop-down list, individually for each gap

– Cloze draggable – filling the gaps in the text by dragging and dropping the selected source list element

– Identification (text or images) – marking elements by clicking on them

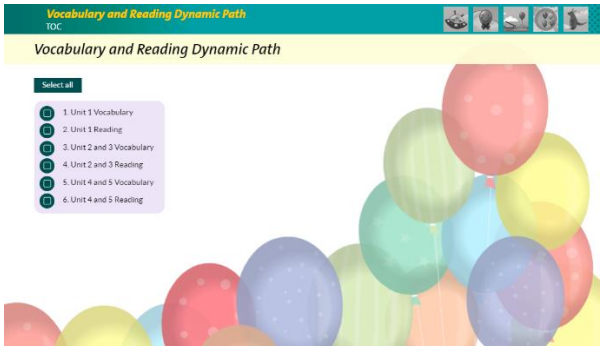
– Connection – connecting text cells (single words, sentences, long texts), illustrations and other elements

– Ordering (text or images) – specifying the correct order of texts or graphic elements

– Single Choice or Multiple choice – selecting one or several possible answers.

5. Tests

AI-based Grammar and Listening Progress Check and Vocabulary and Reading Dynamic Path tests are a perfect way to verify students' knowledge. Easy to use as a pre-test, end-test or unit-tests. They cover the grammar, listening, vocabulary and reading topics used in each course level.



5a. Artificial Intelligence

AI interwoven into the tests provides numerous benefits:

– Real-time feedback on students' progress

– A clear view of students' knowledge gaps with the ready to use learning material suited to the learners' needs

– Personalized Learning Paths adapt in real-time along with a student's progress (a pathway can change based on how the student is doing in the lesson)

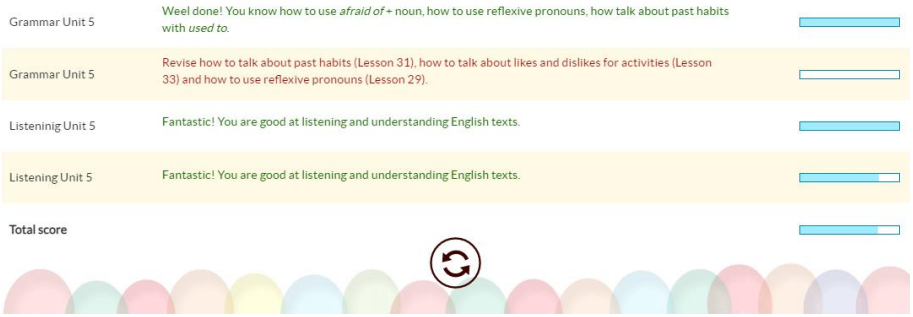
– Based on their language skill, most or all students complete a differentiated series of activities to master their academic objectives

– Optimization of students' and teacher's performance

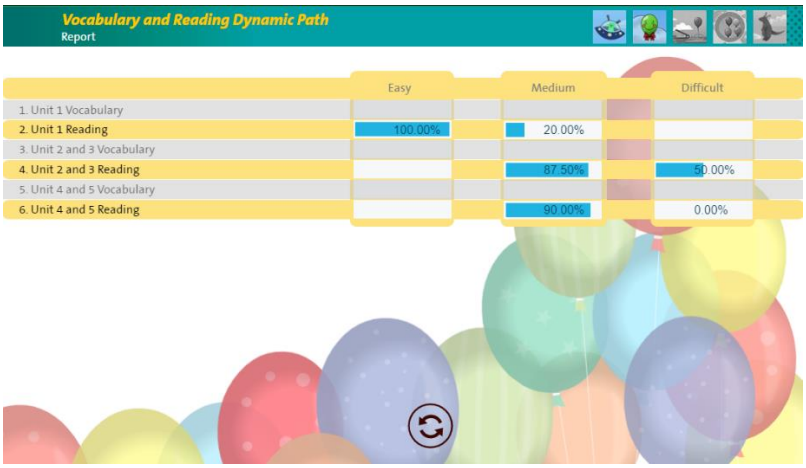
5b. Test mode

There are no hints or check buttons in both tests. Submit button moves you to the next screen, but you cannot go back.

The Grammar and Listening test provides suggestions for individual learning paths on the basis of students' results.



The Vocabulary and Reading test is a perfect drill for playing with new words, where the learning path is being built on the fly. The results of each screen determine if students get an easier or more difficult set of activities within a given topic (you always start with the difficulty set at medium level).



You can view each screen of both tools in read-only mode when you go there from the report page. In this mode you will see what is correct or wrong (green or red colour).

5c. Games

Games are perfect for grabbing the students' attention and boosting their motivation. There are five games in the Vocabulary and Reading test. They serve as a reward for those who choose to work with the test topics. The more topics you choose to work with, the more games will be awarded. For example, when there are five topics, you have to choose at least one to get one game. You can check which games are available on the TOC screen. They are activated as soon as you finish doing the test topic and reach the Report screen.

Then you can finally enjoy playing the games. Simply click on a game's icon. The games are easy to play. You have to catch or pop balloons, pump them up or sort them.