Key Features

Based on material published by ILTS and written by Gillian Flaherty and James Bean

BALLOON ENGLISH

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Designed and created by msm STUDIO

1. Basic information

Source
Based on Let's Read It! by Gillian Flaherty and James Bean
and published by International Language Teaching Services (UK publisher)

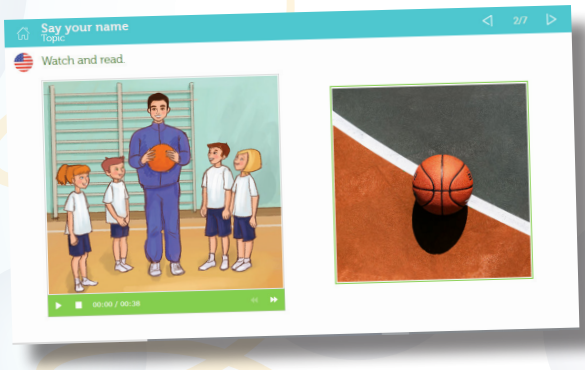
Language
American English

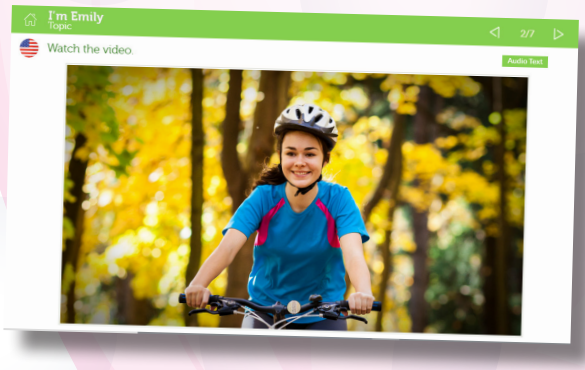
Age group
Primary Education, Grades 1-6, Starter A1

Format
SCORM or HTML5 packages
Works on LMSes like Moodle or mCourser
Off-line player (on demand)

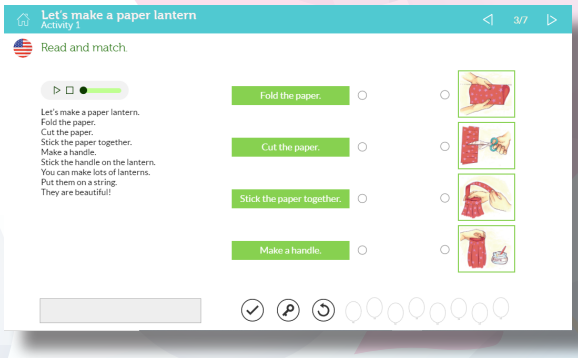
2. Methodology

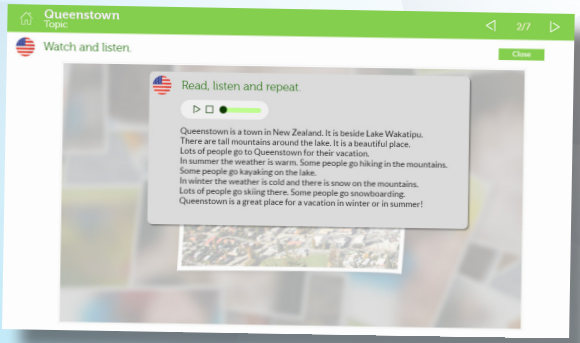
A communicative approach to language Teaching (presentation, practice, production).
Integrated skills approach with focus on reading and listening skills.





The focus is differentiated through colors in the top bar. Blue is for reading and green is for listening. Each reading lesson has texts placed in the Audio Text module where the text is synchronized with the audio.

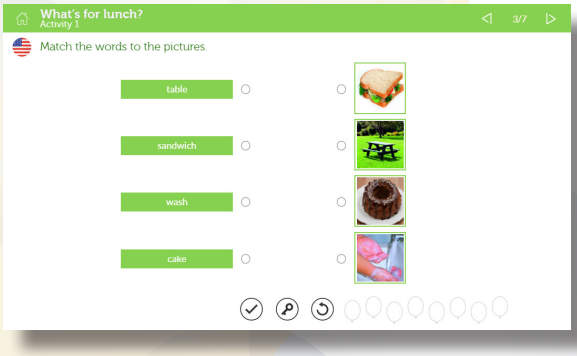


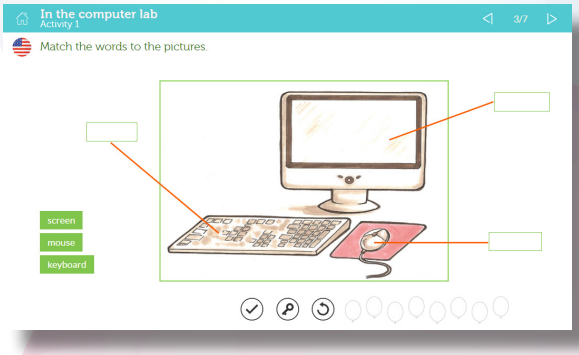


Each listening lesson's topic screen has audio mostly presented in the form of an animation. However, each narration text is also available in a pop up. This is especially helpful for weaker students who have problems with the listening skill.

Vocabulary and Comprehension

These activities deal with the key vocabulary and general comprehension of the presentation text. Students can complete these exercises individually, with a partner, in a group, or as a class with the teacher. There is a range of vocabulary exercises such as labelling pictures, completing tables and sentences, and matching words. Students should be encouraged to go back to the reading or listening text to check the meanings of the words. The comprehension exercises help students to establish understanding of the text.





Pick and choose

The structure of the course is flexible. You can follow the lessons linearly or you can choose the lessons which are most appropriate at a given moment. If you are not sure of the level of your new class/students, you can use the grammar tool test first and based on its intelligent feedback start with the suggested lessons.
It is also possible to reorganize the course structure and prepare a different table of contents. Lessons can be shifted easily between part A and B or between grades if necessary.

3. Scope

6 grades, Part A and B in each
Each part: 24 core lessons divided into 12 units + 1 Vocabulary and 1 Grammar tool
312 lessons in total and 576 different recordings
2300+ screens
Hundreds of illustrations and photos, slideshows, animations

4. Lesson structure

Constant lesson structure (PPP): Let's start (TOC), Topic (Presentation), Activity 1, 2 and 3 (Practice), Talk and play (Production), Report. (Levels 6A and 6B have 4 activity screens instead of 3.)

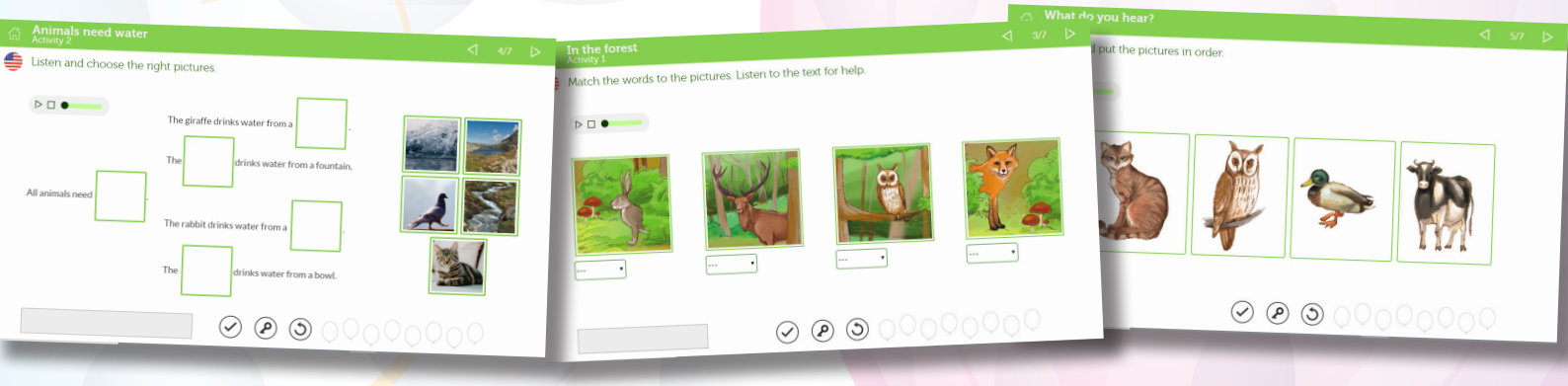
Easy to navigate

You can jump to any screen from the Let's start page, you can go back there using 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 into any screen with activities which are reported.

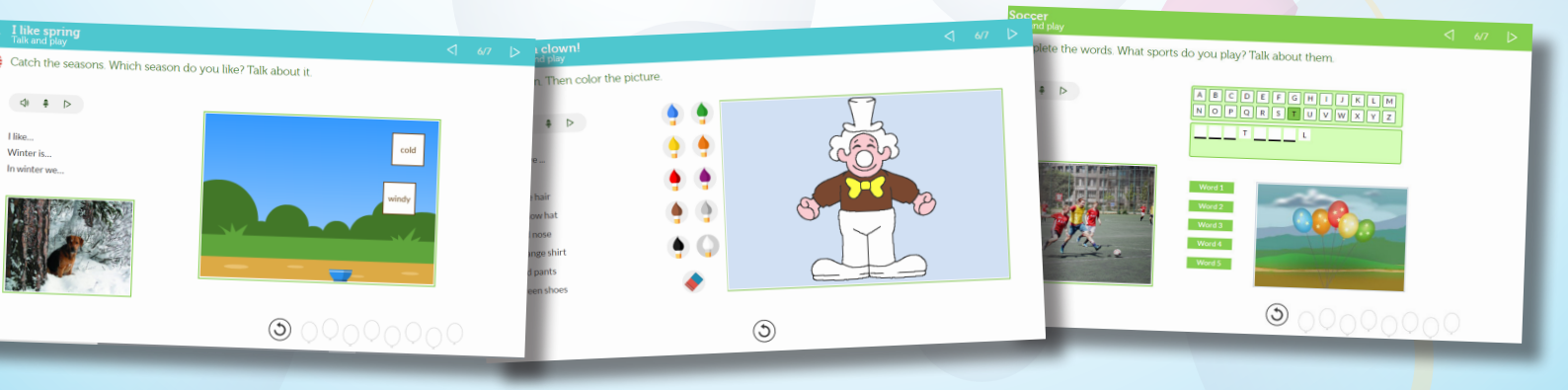
5. Lesson content

Topic screens: Animated stories, songs, interactive slideshows, illustrations and audio. Design and assets appropriate for the age group.

Activity screens: Gap filling, Connection, Choice, Ordering and many more.



Talk and play screens engage students with games and fun activities. The games refer to the material introduced in a lesson but they are not checking the student's knowledge of vocabulary, grammar or verifying skills they've practiced. That is why their score is not calculated on the report screen. Their main aim is to make the students relax and prepare them for the production phase. There are sample phrases on each Talk and play screen. These are supported with media recorder modules which allow students to listen to the original audio and record their own voice. In this way even if students do not work in pairs or groups, they still have a chance to practice the language structures they have learned in a lesson.

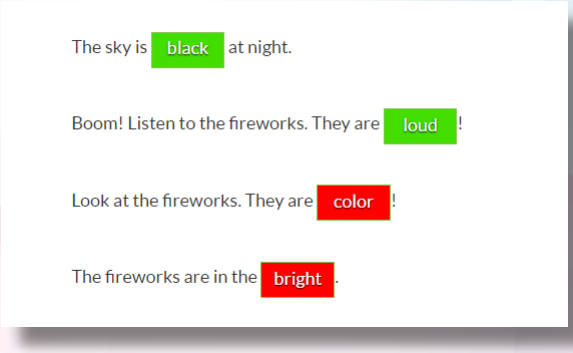


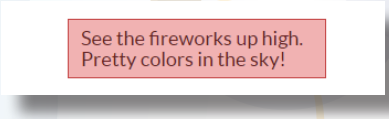
6. Feedback

There is an advanced feedback system used in the product.
Everyone likes to be rewarded when we do something well, especially kids.
Every correct answer is indicated in a progress bar (with coloured balloons).
Every activity completed without mistakes is rewarded with an animation and a trophy representing your achievements.

Additional functionalities:

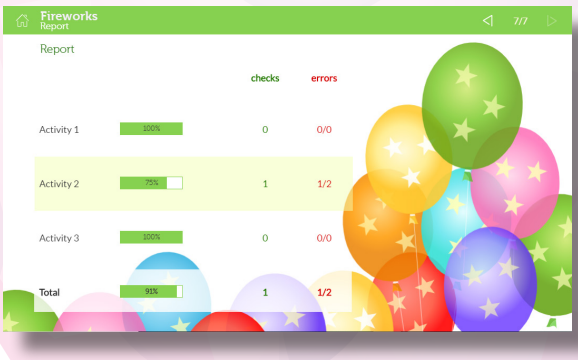
- Click the Key button to see the answer key.
- Click the Check button to see the wrong/correct answers (green and red respectively).





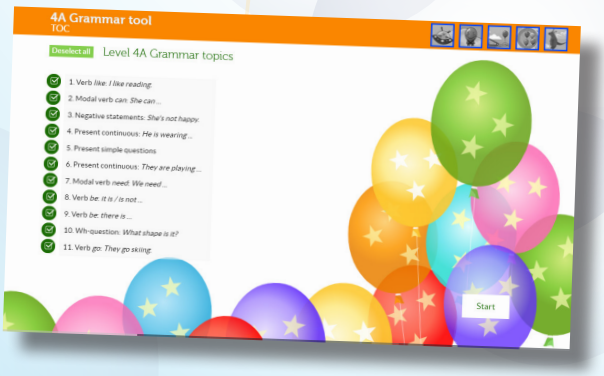
This motivating approach is strengthened with instant and specific feedback which is displayed on giving incorrect answers. Textual hints help weaker students to solve difficult activities. Most often these are quotes from the Presentation texts. They guide students to the right solution instead of giving them a simple answer.

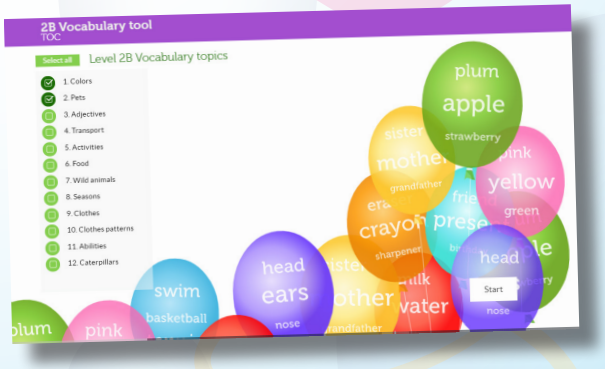
When you go to the report screen you can see the result presented in %, the number of hints used and the number of errors made by the student.



7. Tools

AI-aided Grammar and Vocabulary tools are a perfect way to verify students' knowledge. Easy to use as a pre-test, end-test or unit-tests. They cover the grammar and vocabulary topics used in a given level.





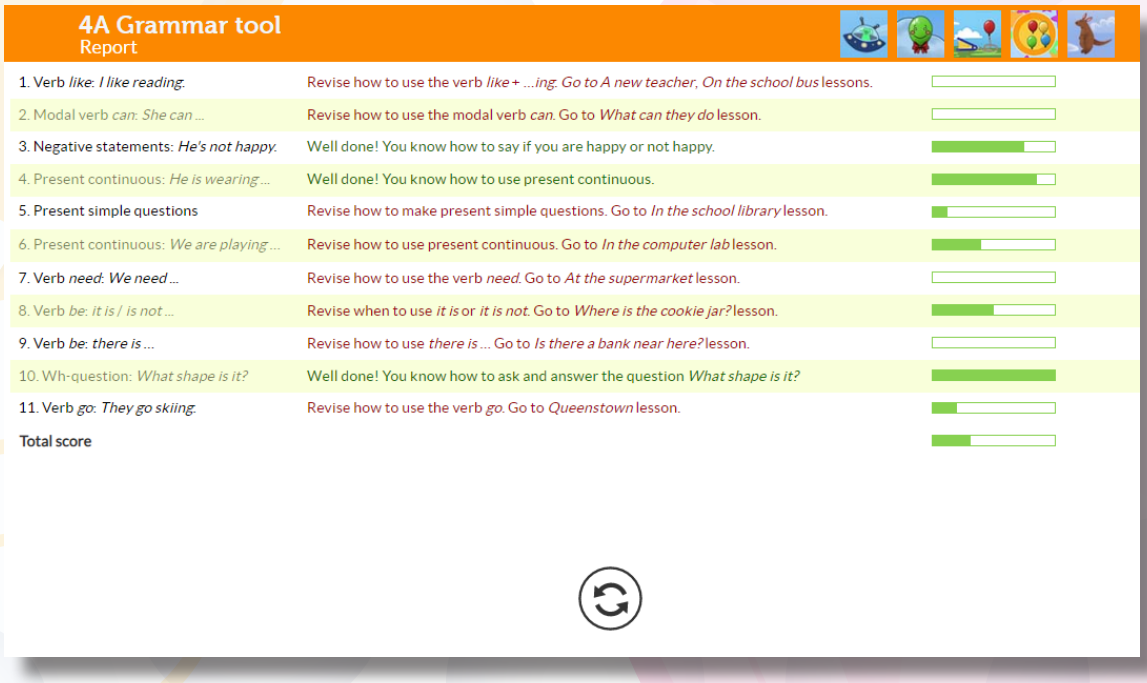
Artificial Intelligence

AI interwoven into the tools brings many benefits:

- Real-time feedback on student progress, at individual and group level;
- A clear view of students' knowledge gaps, with support to fill them;
- Personalized Learning Paths adapt in real-time as a student progresses (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;
- Optimizes student and teacher performance.

Test mode

Both tools include a test mode – where there are no hints or check buttons, the Submit button moves you to the next screen but you cannot go back.
The Grammar tool provides suggestions for individual learning paths on the basis of students' results.



4A Grammar tool
Report

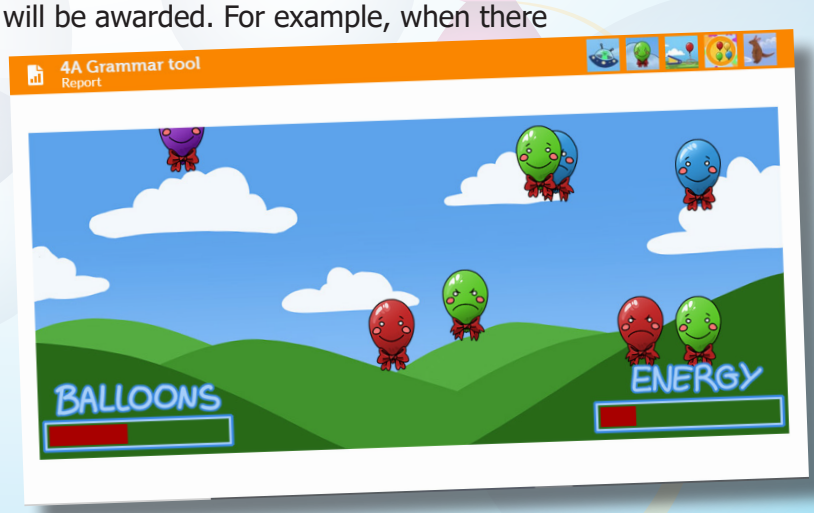
1. Verb *like*: *I like reading.*	Revise how to use the verb *like* + ...*ing*. Go to *A new teacher*, *On the school bus* lessons.
2. Modal verb *can*: *She can ...*	Revise how to use the modal verb *can*. Go to *What can they do* lesson.
3. Negative statements: *He's not happy.*	Well done! You know how to say if you are happy or not happy.
4. Present continuous: *He is wearing ...*	Well done! You know how to use present continuous.
5. Present simple questions	Revise how to make present simple questions. Go to *In the school library* lesson.
6. Present continuous: *We are playing ...*	Revise how to use present continuous. Go to *In the computer lab* lesson.
7. Verb *need*: *We need ...*	Revise how to use the verb *need*. Go to *At the supermarket* lesson.
8. Verb *be*: *it is / is not ...*	Revise when to use *it is* or *it is not*. Go to *Where is the cookie jar?* lesson.
9. Verb *be*: *there is ...*	Revise how to use *there is ...* Go to *Is there a bank near here?* lesson.
10. Wh-question: *What shape is it?*	Well done! You know how to ask and answer the question *What shape is it?*
11. Verb *go*: *They go skiing.*	Revise how to use the verb *go*. Go to *Queenstown* lesson.
Total score	

(All grammar activities can be easily incorporated in core lessons if there is such a demand.)

The Vocabulary tool 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 difficutly set at medium level).
You can view each screen of both tools in read-only mode when you move to it from the report page. In this mode you will see what is correct or wrong (green or red colour).

Games

Games are a perfect way to grab the students' attention and boost their motivation. There are five games in each tool. They function as a reward for those whose choose to work with the tool's topics. The more topics you choose and work with, the more games will be awarded. For example, when there are ten topics, you have to choose at least two to get one game; and so on. You can see how many games are available on the TOC screen and they become activated as soon as you reach the report screen.



There you can not only see the results and feedback but you can finally enjoy playing the games. Simply click on a game's icon. The games are easy to play. You have catch or pop balloons, or you have to pump up or sort balloons.

For more information go to www.msmstudio.eu.