

## TKT: Module 2 – Choosing coursebooks

**Overview:** These practice materials by Russell Whitehead are designed to help with the Module 2 exam, in particular with the 'Selection and use of resources' section. These materials focus on how to select and how to use coursebooks. Please note that these materials do not focus on using teaching aids and supplementary materials.

**Part of exam:** Module 2 (Lesson planning and use of resources for language teaching): Selection and use of resources

**Materials:** one copy of the worksheet per student, a selection of different coursebooks for reference

**Time:** 30–60 mins

### Notes for teacher trainers

- Before focusing on ELT books, have trainees discuss coursebooks and textbooks for other subjects they have studied in the past. What was the role of those books in their learning and in the teaching they received?
- Bring in a collection – as varied as you like – of coursebooks, and encourage a free and informal chat about them among trainees in groups.
- Give trainees a questionnaire (if possible, this would be at least partly devised by them) to fill out for each book (distribute according to numbers/ time, etc.). The results can be collated, displayed and reported on in presentations or written articles, etc.
- If appropriate, a formal debate could be organised on the value or future of the coursebook.

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### Stage 1: Considering

- a) *Trainee's own answers*
- b) 1 +  
2 –  
3 –  
4 +  
5 –  
6 +  
7 –  
8 –  
9 –

- c) *Trainee's own answers*

### Stage 2: Experimenting

- d) *Main aims: 1, 5, 8 & 11*  
*Subsidiary aims: 4, 7 & 9*  
*Activity aims: 3, 10, & 13*  
*Instructions: 2, 6 & 12*
- e) 1. C – *This instruction in the coursebook is getting learners to group words together by topic = to form lexical sets (e.g. weather: snow, cold, breeze, etc)*  
2. B – *This instruction in the coursebook is getting learners to identify the main idea or situation described in the text = the gist meaning*  
3. A – *This instruction in the coursebook is getting learners to observe closely how certain word partnerships – collocations – are formed (e.g. make a mistake, do a test, etc)*

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### Think about:

Coursebooks can sometimes look as if they are the complete solution to all teaching issues. You could easily think that if you just go through the book with your class, page by page, activity by activity, then they will be learning English. This, however, is unlikely to be the case. If all you do is follow the coursebook, then you are not really 'teaching' in the true sense of the word.

Worksheet

### Stage 1: Considering

- a) **Look at a variety of coursebooks and think about others that you have used or know about. Then fill in the table below with all the advantages and disadvantages you can think of for using coursebooks.**

Advantages of using coursebooks	Disadvantages of using coursebooks

- b) **Now look at the following comments. Are they showing advantages (+) or disadvantages (-) of using coursebooks?**

1. *This book's full of varied illustrations, including lots of colour photos.*
2. *My job as a teacher is to deal with my students' needs, not to follow a course designed by people who have never met my students.*
3. *My students are very young, and are often bored by the content of articles and so on in the book.*
4. *Everyone in the class has to take the same exam, and there's a lot of practice in this book.*
5. *The order of the class activities and exercises in this book doesn't seem very logical to me.*
6. *My job is rather stressful, and I have very little time to prepare for each class.*
7. *This coursebook doesn't have enough detailed information about grammar, which is what my students have to know about for their exam.*
8. *A lot of students in my class simply can't afford that kind of coursebook.*
9. *There's the student's book, the teacher's book, online resources, some practice tests, smartboard resources ... There just aren't enough hours in the year for all of this.*

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c) **Read these questions about ways of choosing whether to use a particular coursebook. Think about their answers in relation to the coursebooks you have with you.**

- What level is the book designed for? What levels will it work well for?
- How many hours of class and self-study time does the book seem to require?
- Will my students feel that the book's content is accessible to them culturally?
- What age range is the book suitable for?
- What is the balance of skills work in the book?
- Are the explanations about language clear enough for my students?
- How much active practice is included in the book?
- How is the book organised? Is there a clear 'map' of the contents?
- Is the book relevant to any exam requirements my students have?
- Are there opportunities for me to add in some extra activities to target my students' interest?
- Would it be easy to miss out certain sections?
- Does the teacher's book look like the sort of book I would be happy to use?



### Think about:

You can ...

- adapt activities in a coursebook to suit your class.
- miss boring/difficult/easy things out.
- add more relevant activities.
- change the order of activities.
- make things more interactive for learners.

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### Stage 2: Experimenting

d) Look at the list that follows. It is a mixture of learning and teaching aims, and of instructions from coursebooks. The aims include main teaching aims, subsidiary teaching aims and activity aims. In the table, put the aims into their three groups and decide which things on the list are instructions.

1. to practise skimming
2. form two teams and prepare questions for the quiz
3. to explain the meanings of words needed to understand the article
4. to focus on forming passive sentences
5. to develop spoken fluency
6. listen again and check your answers with your partner
7. to raise awareness of intonation in questions
8. to increase accuracy in writing
9. to practise creating words with affixes
10. to recycle vocabulary from the previous section
11. to encourage learner autonomy
12. match the words for the objects with their definitions
13. to revise recently studied grammar through a game

Main aims	Subsidiary aims	Activity aims	Instructions

Now check your answers.

e) Now try this part of a sample TKT exam task. For questions 1–3, match the coursebook instructions with the teaching aims listed A–D. There is one extra option which you do not need to use.

Teaching aims:

- A to focus on collocations
- B to practise reading for gist
- C to focus on lexical sets
- D to practise reading extensively

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### Coursebook instructions:

- 1 Identify words in the article that relate to the same topic.
- 2 Go through the article quickly and decide which picture shows the situation.
- 3 Find words in the article that go with *make* and *do*, and put them into two lists.

### Now check your answers.

### Stage 3: Reflecting

#### What have you learnt from these materials? You have been thinking about the following:

- the advantages of using coursebooks in your teaching
- the possible disadvantages of relying too heavily on a coursebook
- choosing which coursebook to use
- understanding what coursebooks are trying to achieve
- adapting coursebooks to suit your particular class(es) and situations

#### Set yourself a target

Try to have discussions with a teacher or teachers of other subjects about their coursebooks and the issues they feel are important. What common ideas seem to be consistent across subjects?

#### Suggestions for independent learning

- Really try to adapt or add to coursebooks if you're using one, either as a teacher or as a learner.
- If possible, talk to staff in a bookshop that sells ELT coursebooks, and see what they have to say about why some books seem to be more popular than others.
- Read some reviews of coursebooks in magazines, on websites, etc or talk to some more experienced teachers to find out why they prefer some coursebooks to others.
- More information about teaching with coursebooks can be found on onestopenglish.

[www.onestopenglish.com/methodology/minimal-resources/grammar/minimal-resources-modifying-coursebooks/146554.article](http://www.onestopenglish.com/methodology/minimal-resources/grammar/minimal-resources-modifying-coursebooks/146554.article)

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#### Don't forget:

A coursebook is only as good as how it is taught and used.