



The ABAX Workbook
for New Words and Expressions



Teacher's Book



To the Teacher:

Following is a brief explanation about what the ABAX Wordbook is, what it does, and how it does it. We invite you to have a quick look through.

To begin, we'd like to state very clearly that the ABAX Wordbook is **not** a textbook. Rather, it is designed to replace the notebook that most students bring (or don't bring!) to class to jot down newly encountered words and expressions and to make notes on these words and expressions. In our experience, as often as not, these notes consist of simple translations from English. Such simple enumeration of words and their translation equivalents seems due not so much to student preference as it is a method of default — students don't know other ways of looking at words.

The Wordbook is designed as it is to lead your students away from a simple translation approach to language learning and to try and help them apply some other methods of study to words and expressions your students themselves have compiled — words connected with your students' classes or words that they themselves have interest in and have gathered from outside the class.

In short, the ABAX Wordbook:

(i) is **student centered** Individual needs are addressed. Your students themselves collect the words and expressions (from their texts, their classroom, or even from outside) they are to learn and remember.

(ii) takes a **lexical approach** Words are considered as parts of larger 'chunks'. Language is viewed as grammaticalized lexis.

(iii) encourages the **study of words in context** The notebook is designed to encourage learners to consider meanings in context, to look at such aspects of word use as connotation, collocation and register.

(iv) encourages **deep processing** of lexical items. Students are asked to think about word context to decipher meaning. Learners are asked to pause and think about unknown 'words' before retreating to the safety of a dictionary. Later, in the sectional exercises, learners are asked to consider different aspects of use of their collected words. Such deep processing of material helps students in the acquisition and retention of target words.

(v) is **motivational** Your students can see concrete and measurable progress (*today I learned 10 new words!*).

(vi) helps work against the **myth of the one to one relationship** A main aim of the ABAX Wordbook is to put to rest the belief (usually unconsidered and unexamined) that to gain proficiency in a foreign language you need simply to study the L1 equivalencies of unknown L2 words. (Sounds rather silly, doesn't it! BUT have a look at how too many students study English vocabulary.)

(vii) is a **metacognitive awareness raising tool** Through showing your students some different ways of studying words, the wordbook should help lead your students into examination of their own learning processes.

(viii) is a **teacher's tool: a useful source of feedback on your lexical input** Is the lexis in your class challenging enough or is it too challenging? Looking at what words are being collected and at what rate will give you a quantifiable measure of how much new vocabulary you are exposing your students to.

The Exercises

aim at helping students with the following:

(i) collocation How do words go together? All words tend to appear alongside certain other words and not alongside others (we would side with those who argue that this is as important an organizing principle in language as is grammar).

(ii) word components The ABAX Wordbook includes exercises designed to have students look at how words are made up, helping them in their knowledge of how prefixes and suffixes affect meaning.

(iii) word families Word family exercises help expand the learner's vocabulary by having the student look at various forms of a word.

(iv) reinforcement The ABAX Wordbook asks students to look through their word lists at least 16 times in order to accomplish the various tasks set. Such repeated exposure is an essential component of vocabulary acquisition.

(v) activation Exercises are aimed at students not just passively gaining competency with new words but at having students incorporate these words into their active vocabulary.

Tips for the Teacher: Making the book a Seamless Addition to the Class

Move your students through the book by setting targets for collecting and recording new words and expressions. The ABAX Workbook for New Words and Expressions is a different style of book, because the students themselves are responsible for the content of the book and therefore the content of the course, to a certain extent. Often students are unaccustomed to such an approach however, once the students can see that the vocabulary notebook is an integral part of the class, using the book becomes more *automatic*.

The Wordbook needs to be given priority by the instructor We have found that the book can be used most effectively when its use is monitored by the instructor. Have students keep their books at hand always ready to have new words added in. Check on your learners' progress. If you place importance on the study of words, so too will your students.

The Wordbook's use needs to be checked Students will occasionally make spelling mistakes or mistakes in the recording of meanings or in the application of their words. A quick check through a student's book is usually enough to find and correct any such mistakes. After all, we don't want students reviewing something that is wrong! This also gives students a chance to ask any questions about any of their words.

There should be front loading of lexical input In order to quickly move students into the review exercise sections of the Wordbook so they can see for themselves how the exercises and templates work together, it is perhaps a good idea to consider front loading your course with vocabulary so students can quickly fill in words in the first section.

Possible conflicts with the aims of a reading course should be considered The teaching of vocabulary can conflict with some of the aims of the teaching of reading (such as not reading every word) That possibility considered, however, the Wordbook complements a reading course (a natural source of vocabulary) extremely well.

Recording of words should be after the fact

Unless the primary purpose of materials is as a source of vocabulary, the recording of words and expressions should not be allowed to interfere with other pedagogic tasks. Words and expressions can be recorded when a student goes through the source material a second or a third time. The first time through students might merely wish to make note of unfamiliar lexical items.

Using the Word Template

The word templates (in Sections A-D) are designed for the recording of words, compound nouns and phrasal verbs. Students themselves should be given responsibility for collecting words and filling in the templates. Apart from one introductory lesson where the instructor might want to work through the recording of some example lexis with the class as a group, class group time should **not** be given over to filling out the word and expression templates. Students finished other tasks might wish to use any free time they individually have filling out the templates. The bulk of such collecting of lexis can be given as homework.

Using the Expression Templates

The expression templates (in Section E) are designed for the recording of longer lexical strings. As with the word templates, students themselves should be given responsibility for collecting these longer expressions. It is probably useful in an introductory lesson to introduce some longer idiomatic expressions which cannot be recorded in the word templates and show students how these can be recorded in Section E.

Exercises

Section A

1. This activity looks at adjective-noun collocation, that is, what nouns *naturally* go with the adjectives gathered in the bubbles. After an initial presentation in class using a number of examples (for instance, thick hair, thick book, thick shake or dull knife, dull presentation, dull wit — the teacher might wish to elicit the answers from the students) this can be done as a homework activity. As this is usually the first exercise to be done it needs to be emphasized that any adjectives used should be gathered from the students' own books — it is this sort of review, after all, that is largely the point of the exercise. When teaching collocation, remember that often the student's answers are not all 'right' or 'wrong', rather 'common and natural sounding' or 'uncommon', or just plain old 'wrong'. The point here is to raise student awareness that language is not always right or wrong etc...

The second part of the exercise, involves personalization of some of the adjectives collected. If this activity is done in class, it allows the teacher a chance to walk around and look at the students' adjective-noun pairs and to point out any unnatural collocations without having to collect in the books. This pointing out needs to be done! It is almost certain that some of the student pairings will be pairings that no native speaker would make.

2. This activity looks at different verb forms. It is most useful with lower to lower-intermediate students and might be passed over or adapted for higher level students. This is especially so as regards a look at past and past participle forms as this are overwhelmingly likely to be regular with the lower frequency verbs so you might have students simply indicate whether the verbs gathered are transitive or intransitive.

The activation exercise — Have you _____ today? — can easily be expanded to allow the making of any questions using any or all verb forms, and in fact we might recommend that this exercise be expanded in any way that goes along with what is being taught in the class.

3. This activity is fairly straightforward. It looks at students' ability to spell some of their collected words. It is a good activity to fill any odd five minute space in the class. Students are themselves placed in the position of being mentors. You can do this exercise anytime and it is a good way to close out a class.
4. This activity is similar to exercise 3 and can be used at any time. A variation is to go not from definition to word but from word to definition, or to ask students given a word to produce a sentence using that word. In this case, the other student acts as judge.
5. This activity is usefully given as a homework assignment. Teachers should check to see that the meanings of the prefixes or suffixes described by the student are correct. An expansion is to have the student find three or four more words using each prefix or suffix found.
6. This activity works best when the drawing of the picture is given as a homework assignment. It needs to be stressed that the drawing should not be a series of little drawings based on different words in Section A, but a single drawing incorporating as many different words as is possible.

The pairwork portion of this exercise is of course best done in class. This is the most time-consuming of all the activities in the Wordbook — at least 20 to 25 minutes of classroom time should be set aside for this activity.

The final part of this activity seeks to have students analyze why any big differences in their two drawings appeared — what was deficient in the initial explanation? The teacher might want to walk around the classroom at this point and help to show students how they might have more accurately described their drawings. It is perhaps best to stick to two or three points per student.

Section B

1. This activity looks at adverb-verb, adverb-adjective and adverb-adverb collocation, that is, what other words *naturally* go with the adverbs gathered in the bubbles. After an initial presentation in class using a number of examples (for instance, extremely hot extremely difficult, extremely stubborn, or think quickly, move quickly, answer quickly — the teacher might wish to elicit the answers from the students) this can be done as a homework activity.

The second part of the exercise, involves personalization of some of the adverbs collected. If this activity is done in class, it allows the teacher a chance to walk around and look at the students' adverb-verb, adverb-adjective and adverb-adverb pairs and to point out any unnatural collocations without having to collect in the books. Once again, this pointing out needs to be done! It is almost certain that some of the student pairings will be pairings that no native speaker would make.

2. This activity looks at countable and uncountable. It is most useful with lower to lower-intermediate students and might be passed over or adapted for higher level students. Higher level students might simply exchange books and given a noun by a partner, produce a question using this noun which the partner then has to answer. Alternatively, higher level students might be asked to talk on topic for 30 seconds when given a noun by their partner.
3. A more difficult variation to exercise 3a) is to have students choose words from their book that they feel are somehow related to their lives or personalities.
4. This activity can be used at any time. A variation is to go not from definition to word but from word to definition, or to ask students given a word to produce a sentence using that word. In this case, the other student acts as judge.
5. This activity can be given as homework and the pairwork portion done in class.
6. It is best to work through the example given in the book before having students make their own word fields. This activity can be done in class over 10 to 15 minutes. A variation is to have students then copy out their word fields, leaving out half the words. This version they give to their partners. Students then describe the missing words. Their partners have to guess at these and fill in the empty bubbles.

Section C

1. This activity looks at adjective-noun collocation, that is, what nouns *naturally* go with the adjectives gathered in the bubbles. After an initial presentation in class using a number of examples (for instance, thick hair, thick book, thick shake or dull knife, dull presentation, dull wit — the teacher might wish to elicit the answers from the students) this can be done as a homework activity.

The second part of the exercise, involves personalization of some of the adjectives collected. If this activity is done in class, it allows the teacher a chance to walk around and look at the students' adjective-noun pairs and to point out any unnatural collocations without having to collect in the books. This pointing out needs to be done! It is almost certain that some of the student pairings will be pairings that no native speaker would make.

2. With more advanced students, this activity might be adapted as follows. Students exchange books and randomly choose verbs from each others books. They say these verbs to each other. Given a verb in either passive or active form, a student has to produce and say out loud a sentence in the other form if possible. If this is not possible, the student should produce a sentence using the form given.

3. This activity is fairly straightforward. It looks at students' ability to spell some of their collected words. It is a good activity to fill any odd five minute space in the class. Students are themselves placed in the position of being mentors.
4. This activity is similar to exercise 3 and can be used at any time. A variation is to go not from definition to word but from word to definition, or to ask students given a word to produce a sentence using that word. In this case, the other student acts as judge.
5. This activity is usefully given as a homework assignment. Teachers should check to see that the meanings of the prefixes or suffixes described by the student are correct. An expansion is to have the student find three or four more words using each prefix or suffix found.
6. This activity works best when the drawing of the picture is given as a homework assignment. It needs to be stressed that the drawing should not be a series of little drawings based on different words in Section A, but a single drawing incorporating as many different words as is possible.

The pairwork portion of this exercise is of course best done in class. This is the most time-consuming of all the activities in the Wordbook — at least 20 to 25 minutes of classroom time should be set aside for this activity.

The final part of this activity seeks to have students analyze why any big differences in their two drawings appeared — what was deficient in the initial explanation? The teacher might want to walk around the classroom at this point and help to show students how they might have more accurately described their drawings. It is perhaps best to stick to two or three points per student.

Section D

1. This activity looks at adverb-verb, adverb-adjective and adverb-adverb collocation, that is, what other words *naturally* go with the adverbs gathered in the bubbles. After an initial presentation in class using a number of examples (for instance, extremely hot, extremely difficult, extremely stubborn, or think quickly, move quickly, answer quickly — the teacher might wish to elicit the answers from the students) this can be done as a homework activity.

The second part of the exercise, involves personalization of some of the adverbs collected. If this activity is done in class, it allows the teacher a chance to walk around and look at the students' adverb-verb, adverb-adjective and adverb-adverb pairs and to point out any unnatural collocations without having to collect in the books. Once again, this pointing out needs to be done! It is almost certain that some of the student pairings will be pairings that no native speaker would make.

2. This activity looks at countable and uncountable. It is most useful with lower to lower-intermediate students and might be passed over or adapted for higher level students. Higher level students might simply exchange books and given a noun by a partner, produce a question using this noun which the partner then has to answer. Alternatively, higher level students might be asked to talk on topic for 30 seconds when given a noun by their partner.
3. This can be varied for length of staircase.
4. This activity can be used at any time. A variation is to go not from definition to word but from word to definition, or to ask students given a word to produce a sentence using that word. In this case, the other student acts as judge.

5. You might — if you dare! — try eliciting eight pairs of words from your students and then on the board produce your own poem using the rhyming scheme described and then give this activity as a homework assignment.
6. This activity can be given as homework and the pairwork portion done in class.

Section E

1. This activity need be done in class. With a more advanced class an extension might be to consider marked and unmarked stress patterns.
2. This activity can be given as homework. It aims at having students apply personally some of the expressions they have gathered.
3. The portion of this activity which sets up the pairwork is perhaps best done at home. Be sure students understand that the expressions they choose to illustrate should be in random order. The pairwork portion does not take more than a few minutes.
4. This activity can be used at any time. A variation is to go not from definition to expression but from expression to definition, or to ask students given an expression to produce a sentence using that expression. In this case, the other student acts as judge.
5. This activity can be given as homework. The teacher should if possible check student answers. This can possibly be done during the course of another activity in class.
6. Designed to have students look at some of the pragmatics of language use, this activity can be given as homework. The teacher should if possible check student answers. This can possibly be done during the course of another activity in class.

Review Activities You Can Do Anytime

- **Reviewing nouns:** Elicit nouns from the words that the students have written down in their wordbooks and board them up on a blackboard. Go over any unknown words as necessary. Next students take turns defining or describing a word on the board. The other students must listen to the description and guess which noun is being described.
 eg. It is usually round. It usually hangs on the wall. When people want to know what time it is, they look at it.
 Answer: Clock
- **Reviewing verbs:** Similar to the game “coffee pot”, let’s call this one “verb buzz”. Elicit verbs from the words that the students have written down in their wordbooks and board them up on a black board. Go over any unknown words as necessary. Put the students into groups. Next students take turns making up sentences appropriate to one of the verbs. They read out this sentence to the group, but instead of saying the verb itself the student giving the sentence says “Buzz” instead of the verb. The other students must try and guess what verb the student wants to use.
 eg. Yesterday it was raining so I ‘buzzed’ the bus to work.
 Answer: Rode. (of course other answers are possible so it’s a good idea to check the blackboard for any other verbs that might be appropriate to the sentence and review these as well.)
- **Pairwork Verb Buzz:** Same as above but this time the students work in pairs and read aloud the example sentences from their partner’s book, substituting the word buzz for the verb in the example sentence. Although the verbs are not limited by any list on a blackboard, the student, having written the sentence himself ought to be able to have a reasonable stab at it.

- Direct Pairwork Review: Put the students in pairs. Have them exchange books and ask each other to select words from their partner's book and ask "What does 'xxx' mean?" If the student isn't sure he or she can ask for a hint. Whereupon the first student reads out the example sentence. This is a good short filler to end a class with.

Anyway these are just a few more activities that you might find useful. If you have any great activities that you'd like to share with us, give us a shout!

Suggested Further Readings in Vocabulary Acquisition

J.C. Alderson & A.H. Urquhart (Eds.) 1984 *Reading in a Foreign Language*. London: Longman

R. Carter & M. McCarthy (Eds.) 1988 *Vocabulary and Language Teaching*. London: Longman

Ellis, Nick. 1995 'Vocabulary Acquisition: Psychological Perspectives and Pedagogical Implications.' *The Language Teacher*, 2, 12 - 16

Lewis, Michael. 1993 *The Lexical Approach — The State of ELT and a Way Forward*. Hove, England: Language Teaching Publications

McCarthy, Michael. 1990 *Vocabulary*. Oxford U.K.: Oxford University Press

Sinclair, John. 1991 *Corpus, Concordance, Collocation* Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press

Sternberg, R.J. 1987 Most Vocabulary is Learned From Context. In M.G. McKeown & M.E. Curtis (Eds.) *The Nature of Vocabulary Acquisition*. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum

Stevick, Earl 1976 *Memory, Meaning and Method*. Rowley, Mass: Newbury House

Willis, J.D. 1990 *The Lexical Syllabus*. London: Collins