

INTRODUCTION

TIẾNG ANH 8 is the third of the four levels of English language textbooks for Vietnamese students in lower secondary schools learning English as a foreign language (EFL). It follows the systematic, cyclical, and theme-based syllabus approved by the Ministry of Education and Training in January 2012, which focuses on the use of language (pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar) to develop the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

THE COMPONENTS OF THE TEXTBOOK

The complete learning set of **TIẾNG ANH 8** consists of **THE STUDENT'S BOOK, THE TEACHER'S BOOK, THE WORKBOOK, and THE CD.**

THE STUDENT'S BOOK

The Student's Book contains:

- Book map: Introducing the basics of each unit
- 12 topic-based Units, each covering seven sections to be taught in seven 45-minute lessons
- Four Reviews, each providing revision and further practice of the previous three units, to be dealt with in two periods
- Glossary: Giving meaning and phonetic transcription of the new words in the units

THE TEACHER'S BOOK

The Teacher's Book gives full procedural notes for teaching different parts of each unit. The answer keys to the exercises in the Student's Book and the transcriptions are also given in the Teacher's Book.

THE WORKBOOK

The Workbook mirrors and reinforces the content of the Student's Book. It offers:

- Further practice of the language and skills taught in class
- Four additional tests for students' self-assessment

THE CD

- The CD provides recorded scripts of all listening exercises and dialogues

THE COMPONENTS OF EACH UNIT

There are 12 main units in the Student's Book. Each unit has seven sections and provides language input for seven classroom lessons of 45 minutes each. These 12 richly illustrated, cross-curricular, and theme-based units focus on offering students motivation, memorable lessons, and a joyful learning experience. At the beginning of each unit there are explicit learning objectives that clearly state the main language and skills to be taught in the unit.

SECTION 1: GETTING STARTED

This section occupies two pages and is designed for one 45-minute lesson in class. It begins with a conversation followed by activities which introduce the topic of the unit. It then presents the vocabulary and the grammar items to be learnt and practised through the skills and activities of the unit.

SECTION 2: A CLOSER LOOK 1

A Closer Look 1 and *A Closer Look 2* are each designed to be taught in one 45-minute lesson.

A Closer Look 1 presents and practises the vocabulary and pronunciation of the unit. The active vocabulary of the unit is given in an interesting and illustrated way so that it is easy for students to memorise. Two or three sounds, which frequently appear in the unit, are targeted and practised in isolation and in context. There are different exercises focusing on intensive practice of vocabulary and pronunciation.

A grammar item may also be included in this section.

SECTION 3: A CLOSER LOOK 2

This section deals with the main grammar point(s) of the unit. The new language points are presented in a short text or a talk/interview. There are grammar tables and exercises which are well illustrated to help students remember and use the grammar items effectively. The 'Remember' boxes appear wherever necessary and help students to avoid common errors.

A Closer Look 1 and **A Closer Look 2** cover three pages and mainly give language focus and practice of receptive skills.

SECTION 4: COMMUNICATION

This section is designed to help students use the functional language in everyday life contexts and to consolidate what they have learnt in the previous sections. It also gives students opportunities to learn and apply the cultural aspects of the language learnt. The communication section provides cultural information about Viet Nam and other countries in the world. The vocabulary is clearly presented in boxes wherever it is needed.

SECTION 5: SKILLS 1

Skills 1 and **Skills 2**, each covers one page and is designed to be taught in one 45-minute lesson.

Skills 1 comprises reading (receptive skill) and speaking (productive skill).

Reading

This section aims to develop students' reading abilities. In order to make the activity achievable, the reading text is often based on the vocabulary and structures that students have previously acquired. The reading always links with the topic of the unit and is interesting and relevant to the students. Important new vocabulary is introduced in the text and practised in a follow-up activity.

The reading also provides input for the speaking that follows.

Speaking

This section aims to provide further practice which supports students in their production of spoken English. The section uses the recently introduced items in combination with previously learnt language in new contexts.

SECTION 6: SKILLS 2

Skills 2 is composed of listening (receptive skill) and writing (productive skill).

Listening

The listening section provides students with an opportunity to develop their listening skills. This section trains them to listen for general and specific information.

Writing

This section focuses on developing students' writing skills. There is a writing tip or a guideline which is very useful to help them to write effectively. The result of the writing section must be a complete piece of writing (which is ideally assessed by the group/class/teacher).

SECTION 7: LOOKING BACK & PROJECT

This section covers two pages and should be dealt with in one 45-minute lesson.

Looking Back recycles the language from the previous sections and links it with unit topics. Various activities and exercises are designed to help students consolidate and apply what they have learnt in the unit. Through the students' performance in this section, teachers can evaluate their study results and provide further practice if necessary.

The Project helps students to improve their ability to work by themselves and in a team. It extends their imagination in a field related to the unit topic. The teacher can use this as an extra-curricular activity (for groupwork) or as homework for students to do individually.

REFERENCE FOR SKILLS AND LANGUAGE TEACHING

1. TEACHING READING

Reading is the first of the four language skills that receives special attention in **Tiếng Anh 8**.

- The reading activities in **Tiếng Anh 8** aim to help students develop sub-skills such as skimming for gist and scanning for details.
- Explanations should be given to students when they do not understand the meaning of a word. Some reading strategies such as focusing on familiar words, guessing unfamiliar words in context, etc. should be taught to students.
- Before teaching the text, the teacher should encourage students to guess what the text is about, what new words may appear in the text, etc.

2. TEACHING SPEAKING

There are two forms of speaking in **Tiếng Anh 8**: spoken interaction and spoken production. The first refers to the ability to ask and answer questions and handle exchanges with others. The second refers to students' ability to produce language appropriately and correctly.

Speaking activities include:

- *Pronunciation*: dialogues and role-plays (games, rhymes, and songs). Through these forms, students practise the stress, rhythm, and intonation patterns of English in a natural way. It is crucial to provide students with a lot of models and to build up their confidence with acceptance of approximate correct pronunciation.
- *Repetition*: helps students to memorise vocabulary and 'chunks' language. Repetition and classroom routines build up an expanding repertoire of English that helps students understand and respond to a situation as a part of communicative interactions in class. One strategy is to provide a lot of opportunities for students to practise with a secure feeling through choral repetition of action rhymes and games. It is also important to establish classroom routines (such as greetings and saying goodbye) at the beginning and the end of the lessons. Asking for permission, using common classroom expressions (e.g. *I don't understand. Could you say it again, please? May I ask you a question?*), or answering a question (e.g. *I don't know. I think/guess..., Perhaps...*) are important language tasks for students to practise daily.
- *Pair work/group work* and *class presentations* help students to talk freely in a language situation related to the topic of the unit. They also make students feel secure and promote their confidence in speaking.

Error correction should be done cautiously by the teacher. When students are talking, the teacher should not stop them to correct their mistakes. Mistakes should be analysed and only common errors should be highlighted afterwards and corrected collectively.

3. TEACHING LISTENING

Through listening, students become familiar with the sounds, rhythms, and intonation of English. When listening to English, students are actively engaged in constructing meaning and making sense of what they hear, using their knowledge and the clues provided by the context. It is very important to teach students to be aware of the purpose, the content, and intonation of the listening text.

Before listening, teachers should motivate and engage students in the listening activity; encourage them to predict the listening content; and introduce the new language or vocabulary which occurs in the listening text.

The listening activities aim to help students understand spoken English and develop sub-listening skills such as listening for gist and listening for details.

4. TEACHING WRITING

The writing activities aim to develop students' basic writing skills in English. Its emphasis is on providing writing techniques for a particular genre (e.g. email, an informal letter, a webpage, etc.) as well as practising the spelling of familiar vocabulary and sentence patterns. Teaching writing can be divided into three stages: *before writing*, *while writing*, and *after writing*.

- *Before writing* helps students understand why they write and provides them with the language input to express their ideas in English.
- *While writing* helps students write independently under the teacher's guidance and supervision.
- *After writing* helps students perfect their writing. They share their writing with peers and teacher for comments. After that, they revise (i.e. re-reading the writing to improve the content and organisation of ideas) and edit (i.e. re-reading the writing to correct errors and mistakes in grammar, vocabulary, spelling, etc.) it. They then submit their writing to the teacher for evaluation.

5. TEACHING PRONUNCIATION

In this book, the pronunciation part focuses on sentence stress and intonation. The students will have chance to practise saying sentences with correct stress on content words. Also, they can identify in which situations to stress pronouns, the verb 'be', auxiliaries, and short words and say these sentences correctly. Besides, they will practise intonation patterns in English.

In teaching sentence stress and intonation, it is advisable that the teacher should engage the students by using varied techniques including:

- Visual aids (flashcards, pictures, etc.)
- Miming
- Syllable/word focus and repetition
- Line by line repetition and clapping
- Listening and marking the stressed words
- Pair/group practice and performance

6. TEACHING VOCABULARY

Teaching vocabulary helps students understand, memorise, and use words appropriately in their specific contexts. Students at lower secondary level still learn 'chunks' of English which combine vocabulary and grammatical patterns in an unanalysed way. Therefore, it is crucial to give students plenty of time to practise, memorise, recycle, and extend their vocabulary and grammar in meaningful contexts. Regular recycling of vocabulary helps students recognise the same words embedded in different contexts and activities again and again. When teaching vocabulary, it is important to help students recognise, practise, and memorise words. This can be done by using visual aids (e.g. pictures, flashcards), by allowing students to listen and repeat the words, by explaining their meanings, using definitions and translation if necessary, and finally, by getting students to practise using the words with a range of spoken or written activities, which can be done individually or in pairs.

7. TEACHING GRAMMAR

Teaching grammar helps students use correct grammatical patterns to express their ideas in specific contexts.

Grade 8 students of English already know some English grammar based on formulaic sequences and a lot of grammar points met in the context of dialogues, readings, chants, rhymes, stories, and songs they have learnt in primary schools, grade 6 and grade 7.

One way to raise students' language awareness is drawing their attention to specific language patterns or features of grammatical forms and, if necessary, comparing or contrasting these with corresponding patterns and forms in Vietnamese. The appropriate techniques to be used to teach students are:

- Focusing students' attention on the new grammatical patterns in the texts.
- Providing models for students to practise the new grammatical item in a spoken or written activity, using the cued pictures or prompts in their books.
- Reinforcing the new grammatical item with a variety of spoken and written activities.

SEQUENCING

Students should be given clear instructions about what they are expected to do and say. The following are some suggested teaching procedures.

- *Whole class.* Elicit/Teach the focus language (words, phrases, or structures). Then write them on the board.
- *Model.* Perform the focused materials yourself with a confident student or ask a pair to demonstrate in front of the class. Help and guide them to interact in a reasonably structured manner. This will enable the freer stage of independent pair work/group work that will follow.
- *Pairs/groups.* Students practise in pairs or groups. Monitor the activity and offer help if necessary.
- *Performance.* Ask a confident pair or some volunteers to perform the task for the rest of the class.
- *Whole class.* At the end of the activity, there should be some writing/speaking (productive) activities to reinforce or consolidate students' understanding.

It is noted that all of the procedures written in this book are only suggestions. Teachers may adapt these or design their own procedures to suit their students and real teaching contexts.