

Proficiency Level: Foundation (Level 1) Common European Framework (CEF) level A1.

Pre-requisite: None, students without a formal qualification will be given a placement test to determine the level of proficiency.

This course is designed for those who have no experience in learning English or totally no understanding of English, a real beginner, or for false beginners who need a slower, more supportive approach. The aim of the course is to get the students talking and Foundation is no exception.

Foundation students are at a level where their knowledge, skills and abilities are considered at the lower level of the tier-5 spectrum- Foundation to Elementary (low level), Pre-Intermediate (average), Intermediate to Upper-Intermediate (higher level). They have had no experience and rarely use English, acquired very little English instruction or never grasp the language and have very limited range of vocabulary. To achieve this, Foundation students need two things above all else: motivation and support. They need interesting topics and texts just as much as Elementary or Advanced students. Support is vital – they need clear aims, clear material and clear reference. At this starting level, much emphasis is given on the pronunciation and the main course book used in the class offers “*listen and repeat*” in the Grammar Banks and Vocabulary Banks so that the students get plenty of opportunity to pronounce new language. Their language level is low and they most of the time they respond non-verbally. Therefore, using more visual teaching materials is highly suggested since learners at this earliest stage primarily comprehend through the presenting of illustrations.

Students who complete this level could go on to study Elementary with real confidence, knowing that they have a solid grounding in the basics of English. To achieve this they need motivating materials and challenging tasks. They need to set clear course goals from day one in terms of both language knowledge and of fluency and accuracy in speaking. Finally, they need classes to be fun and dynamic as they were at lower levels: there is no reason why Foundation Level-Teaching should become dry and over-serious. Students still want to enjoy their English classes--role plays, language games, challenges, quizzes and songs are still as valuable pedagogically as they were, and can often be exploited even better at this level.

Grammar, Vocabulary, and Pronunciation

At Foundation Level, the basic tools students need to speak English with confidence are Grammar, Vocabulary, and Pronunciation (G,V,P). All these three elements are given equal importance. Each lesson has clearly stated grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation aims. This keeps lessons focused and gives students concrete learning objectives and a sense of progress.

Main Course book: New English File Third Edition

Supplementary Book: New Headway (Oxford)

Grammar

Foundation students need

- clear and memorable presentation of basic structures.
- plenty of regular and varied practice.
- student-friendly reference material.

The main course book begins with Grammar presentations in the **Grammar Bank** and it gives students a single, easy-to-access grammar reference section, with clear rules, examples sentences, and common errors. The example sentences are all on the class audio CDs so that students can listen and repeat, and practice the pronunciations of the new structures.

Vocabulary

Foundation students need

- to expand their knowledge of high-frequency words and phrases rapidly.
- to use new vocabulary in personalized contexts.
- Accessible reference material to help them review and consolidate their vocabulary.

At Foundation level, every lesson focuses on high frequency vocabulary and common lexical areas, but keeps the language load realistic. Many lessons are linked to the **Vocabulary Banks**, which contain pictures to help present and practice the vocabulary in class and provide a clear reference bank to enable students to revise and test themselves in their own time.

Pronunciation

Foundation students need

- to learn the English vowel and consonant sounds and practice them intensively.
- to see where there are rules and patterns in sounds-spelling relationship.
- Systematic practice of other aspects of pronunciation, e.g. stress and sentence rhythm.

The objective of Foundation is its own unique system of teaching the sounds of English, through simple memorable pictures of key words which illustrate the sound and also incorporate the phonetic symbol. Students visualize and remember the words and sounds together, and the word is then used as a reference point when learning the pronunciation of other words with the same sound.

Speaking

Foundation students need

- regular opportunities to use new language orally.
- topics that will arouse their interest and prompt them to express their own experiences and ideas in English.
- realistic and achievable tasks.

The ultimate aim of most students is to be able to communicate in English. Every lesson in Foundation Level has a carefully controlled speaking activity which activates new grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, giving students the chance to “personalize” the target language.

Listening

Foundation students need

- to be exposed to as much aural English as possible.
- to build their confidence by listening to short and simple utterances.
- to learn to get the gist of what is being said by focusing on the key words in an utterance.

Most students at Foundation Level need to start by listening with script in front of them and progress to listening to simple exchanges from which they can extract the key information. Most lessons have a listening comprehension task, and these become increasingly challenging as the course progresses. After students have listened two or three times without a script, they are sometimes asked to have a final listen with the listening script at the back of the Student’s Book. This helps build student’s confidence and shows them that they do not need to understand every word to get “the message” of what was said.

Reading

Foundation students need

- engaging topics and stimulating texts which will motivate them to read in English.
- manageable tasks that help them to read.
- To learn how to deal with unknown words in a text.

At Foundation Level, the students need to read in English for their work or studies, and reading is also important in helping students to build vocabulary and to consolidate grammar. The key to encouraging students to read is to give them motivating but accessible material and manageable tasks. The Foundation reading texts are staged so that they progress from on-line sentences to short articles adapted from a variety of real sources (the British press, magazines, and news websites). These articles have been chosen for their intrinsic interest. Students are frequently encouraged to guess the meaning of new words from their context.

Practical English

Foundation students need

- to learn high frequency functional phrases.
- to know what to say in common situations, e.g. buying a coffee

The Practical English lessons introduce students to areas like spelling their names, asking and answering personal questions, telling the time and saying dates, asking about prices, asking and giving opinions, and understanding simple directions. The lessons build up to a speaking activity where students practice the language learnt in the lesson and listen to authentic mini-interview.

Revision

Foundation students need

- regular recycling of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.
- motivating reference and practice material.
- a sense of progress.

However clearly structures or vocabulary are presented, students will usually only assimilate and remember new language if they have the chance to see it and use it several times. Grammar, Vocabulary, and Pronunciation are recycled throughout the New English File Beginner.

Assessment Structure

A comprehensive competency-based assessment focussing on Grammar, Reading, Writing, and Listening will be conducted twice each term on the 6th and the 12th week of the term. Speaking will be assessed in class as continuous assessment throughout the term to encourage more class participation.

Week 6	Mid-Term Assessment
Week 12	End of Term Assessment

Marks & Grade	
Grade	Description / Competency
A	Competent
B	Partially Achieved (Not Yet Competent)
C	Not Achieved (Not Yet Competent)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>To secure a passing grade to move up to the next level, students are required to be competent in all performance criteria in each component (Writing, Speaking, Grammar, Reading and Listening).</i> • <i>In addition, students are required to have a minimum of 80% attendance and/or have at least 80% attendance (accumulative) of 1 term (i.e. attended 45 days of classes) over his/her entire study duration for the level.</i> 	

- If the student fails to achieve a passing grade, he/she may be eligible for recovery or re-assessment depending on the number of competent performance criteria achieved. Students who are not eligible for either have to repeat the whole term and retake all the assessments again.
- Recovery eligibility criteria
 - Only 1-2 components and less than 25% of the component were not achieved.
 - At least 80% attendance (45 days of classes)
 - Recommended by teacher
 - Recommendation will be based on the professional judgement of the teacher
- Re-assessment eligibility criteria
 - Achieved at least 75% of the competency in all the individual components.
 - At least 80% attendance (45 days of classes)