



Aviation English training and testing:

A Blended Approach



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A Blended Approach

- 2008 is a big challenge for all stakeholders
- Huge numbers of people to train and test
- Variety of locations
- Shift patterns
- Different people need different solutions



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A Blended Approach

Mayflower College offers...

- The Test of English for Aviation
- Benchmark TEA
- Courses for language raters
- Online language courses
- Realtime classroom courses



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Mayflower College

- was founded in 1988
- approximately 1000 learners per year from 50+ countries.
- has been involved in Aviation English since 1992, providing general and aviation-specific courses to air traffic controllers and pilots
- trains native-English-speakers to become Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (Trinity College Cert TESOL).
- is an IELTS examination centre and many of its teachers are also IELTS examiners. Mayflower College also provides examiner training.



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Test of English for Aviation (TEA)



Main Objectives:

Validity

Reliability

9835

Standard format

Flexible delivery methods



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T.E.A



- is based on the recommendations of ICAO Document 9835
- tests plain English in a work-related context (Section 2.7.3, ICAO Doc 9835)
- tests language proficiency in unexpected situations (Section 2.7.4, ICAO Doc 9835)
- is not a test of radio-telephony phraseology
- assesses appropriacy of language use, not procedure



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T.E.A



- is conducted in the form of a direct and semi-direct one-to-one (candidate:examiner) interview
- consists of three sections and approximately 20 minutes
- is suitable for both pilots and controllers



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T.E.A



**TEST OF ENGLISH
FOR AVIATION**

- Part 1 - Interview
- Part 2 - Interactive comprehension
- Part 3 - Description and discussion

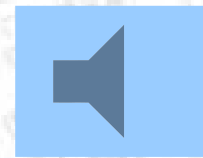


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Part 1: Interview

- Direct
- Common, concrete and work-related topics
- Set questions on familiar topics, based on aviation background
- 3-4 minutes
- Warmer
- Initial impressions



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Part 2: Interactive comprehension

- Semi-direct
- Candidates respond to international speakers
- Simulated real-life communication
- 5-6 minutes
- limited examiner role



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Part 2: Interactive comprehension



‘Live’ Comprehension allows for:

- demonstration of discourse management strategies
- demonstration of proficiency across all six language profiles



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Part 2a

- Aviation-specific recordings
- Non-routine and emergency situations
- Candidates report back to the examiner on what they hear
- Authentic text based on key lexical areas:
health, technical, weather, unlawful interference, ATC and ground, fire and smoke
- Time limit



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Part 2b

- Recordings in a general situation
- Problem-solving
- Non-routine and emergency situations
- Candidate is required to ask questions and give advice
- Time limit
- Avoids reference to operational procedure
- Example (unrated)



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Part 2a: example statements

- *“It’s possible we won’t have brakes on touchdown. Can we have the longest runway possible?”*
- *“We’ve lost hydraulic pressure. We’ve got limited control of the aircraft”*



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Part 2b: example statements

*“There’s a woman crying
She says she’s lost her passport”* (human)

*“I can’t steer the vehicle
The ice is too thick”* (environmental)

*“Ahh, this really hurts
I think I’ve broken my ankle”* (health)

*“I can’t reach the controls
I can’t open the door”* (technical)



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Part 3: Description and discussion

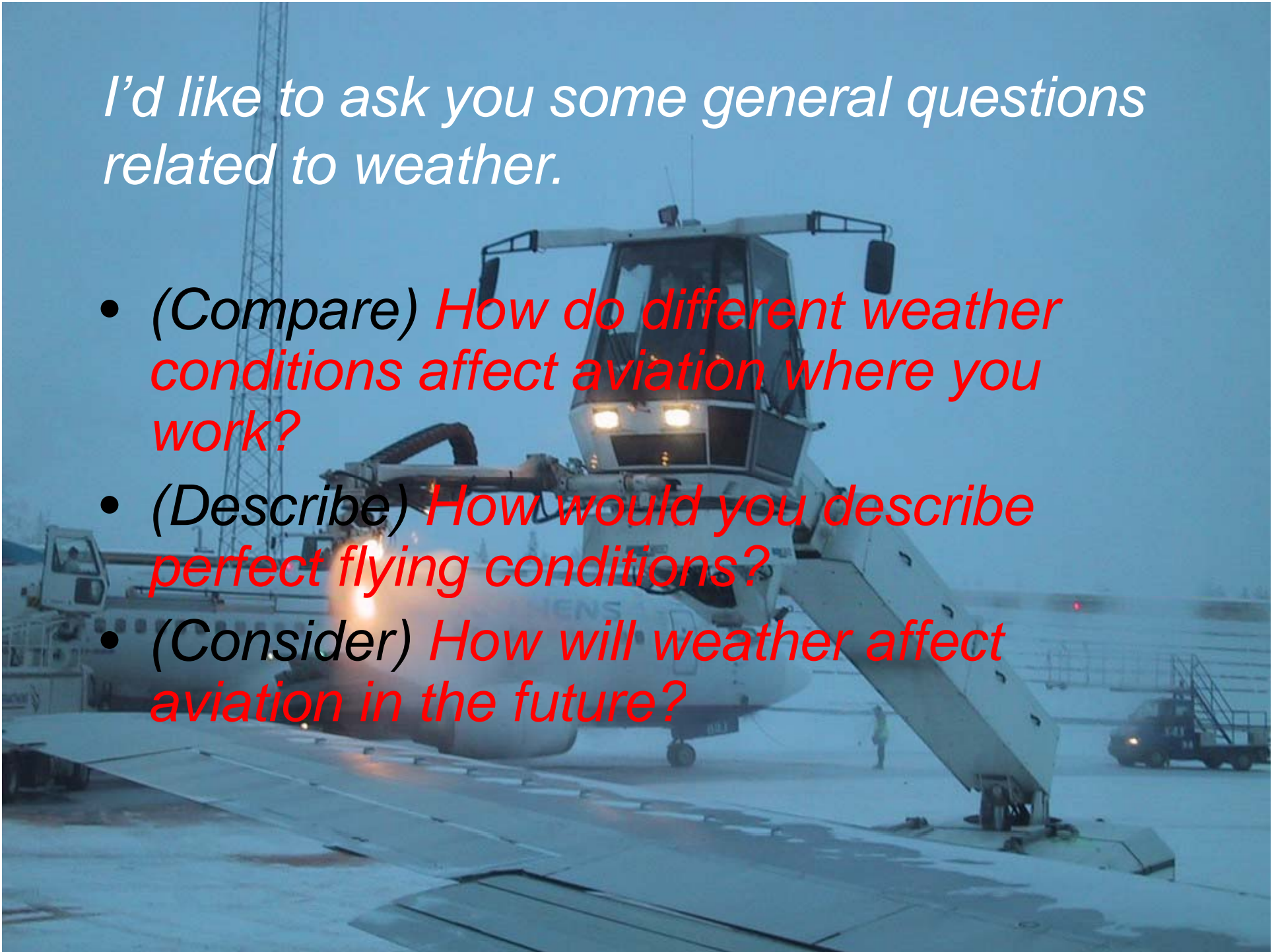
- Direct
- Candidate is given aviation-related pictures
- Pictures depict routine and emergency situations
- Candidates describe the image and then respond to graded follow-up prompts delivered by the examiner
- Examiner flexibility - 'high-end' discriminators



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I'd like to ask you some general questions related to weather.

- (Compare) *How do different weather conditions affect aviation where you work?*
- (Describe) *How would you describe perfect flying conditions?*
- (Consider) *How will weather affect aviation in the future?*



I'd like to ask you some general questions related to the problems associated with fire.

- *(Explain) What problems can fire cause for aircraft?*
- *(Describe) What equipment or methods can be used to control fire?*
- *(Suggest) Why is fire so dangerous for humans?*



Photo by Robert Camilleri



Language assessment

- Candidates are awarded a band score most appropriate to performance in each of the 6 language profiles
- Candidates must demonstrate proficiency level 4 in all language profiles (*Section 2.9, ICAO manual*)
- Rating - Lowest band score (*Section 2.8.4, ICAO manual*)



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Test administration

- There is no previous contact between examiners and candidates
- All examinations are recorded and archived for future reference
- A sample of test recordings are assessed by a second examiner to ensure reliability of results



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Test Delivery

An examiner from Mayflower flies out to the client

Mayflower trains local examiners to conduct and rate the test

Mayflower trains local interlocutors to conduct the test and Mayflower examiners rate the audio file



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Test security

Test materials are kept under lock and key

Confidentiality of speech samples and results

Identification is checked before the start of the test



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Test security

All candidates are photographed

Certificates include the photograph with the time it was taken and biographical data of the candidates

Counterfeit-proof certificates

Centralised certification



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**TEST OF ENGLISH
FOR AVIATION**

THE TEST OF ENGLISH FOR AVIATION (TEA) IS A STANDARDIZED TEST OF ENGLISH PROFICIENCY FOR AVIATION PURPOSES. IT IS DESIGNED TO ASSESS THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS OF PILOTS, AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL, AND OTHER AVIATION PROFESSIONALS. THE TEST IS BASED ON THE ICAO LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY REQUIREMENTS AND IS USED BY AIRLINES AND AVIATION AUTHORITIES AROUND THE WORLD. THE TEST IS DIVIDED INTO SIX SECTIONS: LISTENING, READING, WRITING, SPEAKING, STRUCTURE, AND VOCABULARY. THE TEST IS TAKEN AT A TEST CENTER AND THE RESULTS ARE VALID FOR TWO YEARS. THE TEST IS A REQUIREMENT FOR OBTAINING AN ICAO LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY RATING (LPR) OF 4 OR HIGHER, WHICH IS NECESSARY FOR OBTAINING A TYPE RATING FOR COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT. THE TEST IS ALSO USED BY AIRLINES TO ASSESS THE ENGLISH PROFICIENCY OF PILOTS AND AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL. THE TEST IS A CHALLENGING BUT FAIR TEST THAT ASSESSES THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS OF AVIATION PROFESSIONALS. THE TEST IS TAKEN AT A TEST CENTER AND THE RESULTS ARE VALID FOR TWO YEARS. THE TEST IS A REQUIREMENT FOR OBTAINING AN ICAO LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY RATING (LPR) OF 4 OR HIGHER, WHICH IS NECESSARY FOR OBTAINING A TYPE RATING FOR COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT. THE TEST IS ALSO USED BY AIRLINES TO ASSESS THE ENGLISH PROFICIENCY OF PILOTS AND AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL. THE TEST IS A CHALLENGING BUT FAIR TEST THAT ASSESSES THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS OF AVIATION PROFESSIONALS.

KEY according to ICAO language
proficiency requirements

- 1 PRE-ELEMENTARY
- 2 ELEMENTARY
- 3 PRE-OPERATIONAL
- 4 OPERATIONAL
- 5 EXTENDED
- 6 EXPERT

This is to Certify that

FAMILY NAME

Ariphkodjayev

FIRST NAME(S)

Sergei

PASSPORT/ID NUMBER

40521594

NATIONALITY

Russian

DATE OF BIRTH

3 May 1963

SEX Male

has achieved the following

OVERALL TEST RESULT

4

PRONUNCIATION 4

STRUCTURE 4

VOCABULARY 4

FLUENCY 4

COMPREHENSION 4

INTERACTIONS 4

EXAMINER NUMBER

009

CENTRE NUMBER 481

CERTIFICATE NUMBER: an009481150

DATE OF TEST: 15 Mar 05



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Test Development and Maintenance

Academic consultation with language testing researchers

Operational (pilot/ATC instructors) consultation to ensure test validity

Practical consultation from experienced examiners and teachers

Feedback from examiners and candidates



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Test Development and Maintenance

- On-going validation using Observation Checklists and comparative analysis
- Pre-testing
- Pre-tested items introduced into live test material
- College Rater Support and Monitoring Programme to maintain reliability of results



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Courses for Raters

- Applying the ICAO Scale to speech samples
- Group rating (practice)
- Individual certification
- Key issues in language testing



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Courses for Raters

Suitable for native and non-native speakers

IELTS score of 5.5: benchmarking

IELTS score of 7 (with at least 7 in speaking and listening): licensing



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b-TEA

- internet-based
- multiple-choice
- benchmarking / diagnostic
- structure
- vocabulary
- listening comprehension
- NOT spoken English
- simple, cheap and fast



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b-TEA

- Valid and reliable
- Correlation between b-tea and TEA
- Priority lexical domains
- Limited structure needed to reach level 4
- Authentic texts used for audio



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b-TEA Delivery

- 70 questions, 45 minutes
- A computer with internet access
- Headphones
- Software to play mp3 files (for example, Windows Media Player, Real Player, etc)
- A password issued by Mayflower College
- Client should ensure security
- Results are sent by email



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B-TEA Examples

Grammar:

Visibility is good and we have a slight tailwind.

I _____ this weather.

- a) am liking
- b) will like
- c) like
- d) would like



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B-TEA Examples

What is the wind direction?

- a) 208 degrees
- b) 280 degrees
- c) 218 degrees
- d) 180 degrees



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Online Aviation English course

Online Course: www.study-english-online.com

Grammar Book – explanations and exercises

Exercise Book – 1000+ exercises

Text-To-Speech – highlight text and “speaking pilot” speaks it back

Personal Dictionary

Tracking – results and usage

50 weekly **modules**: grammar, vocab., audio and video based exercises



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Realtime Courses

- Delivered at Mayflower College, Plymouth
- Partner organisations
- 4-weeks, 100 hours classroom time
- Between twenty and sixty hours homework and self-study
- Aims to raise students' level from 3 to 4
- Suitable for pilots and controllers at all levels of experience



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Suitable for all levels of experience

- The course does not require extensive knowledge of procedure
- Willingness to communicate is more important than operational experience
- Previous learners have included ab initio pilots and controllers as well as supervisors and instructors
- There is a strong emphasis on learner training and revision throughout the course



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Real-time courses

The course:

- is based on the communicative functions and lexical domains detailed in 9835 (Chapter 7)
- sets plain English in an aviation context (Chapter 4, 3.5)
- aims to achieve language proficiency not the memorisation of phraseology (Chapter 4, 4.4)



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Helps students achieve Operational Level 4

- The target language of each lesson focuses on the description of a level 4 user - and no more
- Lessons help students to practise strategies for communication rather than achieve perfection
- The majority of students who started the course at level 3 achieved level 4 at the end



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Vocabulary

- Priority lexical domains from appendix B-10 are covered
- Aviation topics such as behaviour, activities, transport, weather are included
- Students communicate on common, concrete and work related topics and in unfamiliar situations
- Students are given MP3 players to download vocabulary recorded by teachers in class



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Structure

- “Basic structures are used creatively and are usually well-controlled” (ICAO Rating Scale)
- Simple structures are taught and revised
- Complex structures are not
- Grammar is often taught as lexical / functional chunks rather than a separate topic
- Reading and writing practice is minimal



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Pronunciation

- The emphasis is on clear pronunciation comprehensible to a range of international listeners
- Native-speaker pronunciation is not the model used
- Stress patterns, consonant and vowel production are taught for pronunciation
- Other features of pronunciation are taught to aid comprehension not production



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Fluency

- Spontaneous communication
- Fast response time
- Familiar and unfamiliar situations
- Strategies for discourse management



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Comprehension

- A variety of accents
- Background noise or unclear statements
- Familiar and unfamiliar listening scenarios



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Interactions

- Questioning, checking, clarifying and acknowledging are required throughout the course
- Strategies for declaring misunderstanding and negotiating meaning
- Role play, group and pair work



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Self-Study

- Students use computer assisted learning
- Tutors assign lessons to students according to the ICAO rating scale
- Homework focuses on comprehension and vocabulary
- Students are given an MP3 player to listen to the homework exercises
- Podcasts are available for students to download
- Students can download new vocabulary from each lesson



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