

General English

A1

Vysoká škola ekonomie a managementu

2012

General English

A1 textbook

Course of General English

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Vydání první. Všechna práva vyhrazena.

ISBN: 978-80-86730-85-1

Vysoká škola ekonomie a managementu

www.vsem.cz

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Preface

This book is intended to be a preparation course for the A1 exam of general English at College of Economics and Management (VŠEM). It contains plenty of exercises and other activities mainly for practising English grammar. In the same time, you will acquire a wide range of essential general English vocabulary. The introductory texts and other parts of each chapter enable you to acquire and further develop your reading and writing skills. Other activities are more interactive and will make it possible for the students to practice listening and speaking.

The textbook contains ten chapters, each of them consisting of two major parts – theory and practice. At the beginning of each chapter you are led to realize what you already know about the topic from your previous studies of English. The introductory text, which is a piece of authentic material, taken either from newspaper or classical English literature, will help you discover the grammar principles yourself. The rules are then summarized and the structure is described in detail in the subsequent part.

The practical part of each chapter contains exercises divided into three levels: elementary, intermediate and advanced. You can thus either start from the elementary level, or, if you feel you are strong enough and do not need to practise the basic principles, you can skip the easiest exercises and start with those that are more challenging for you.

As repetition is the mother of wisdom, you will find a revision exercise in each chapter of the textbook, focussing on a grammar area covered in the previous units. Five sample test questions then conclude every chapter.

To successfully complete the course, your competences in English should correspond to the level B1 – B2 of Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, meaning you can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. You can also produce a simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest and you are able to interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers.

The textbook can be used in class, but it is also suitable for self-study and includes a comprehensive answer key. Students should find their own way of coping with the workload and discover those learning styles and strategies that best fit their personality and level of English. Every student has different abilities and needs and needs a different approach. Our aim is to form autonomous learners of the English language, who realize they are responsible for their progress. Especially the initial chapter (Chapter 0) will be helpful with this. Your success is in your hands.

CHAPTER 0: AUTONOMOUS LEARNER TRAINING

Discover your personal approach to language learning and to foreign languages in general
– do a short self-diagnostic test!

How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Choose the options that best express your feelings (totally agree – partly agree – don't know - rather disagree – totally disagree). When you are ready with your answers, read the comments that follow and discuss it with your partner.

▪ Statements:

1. Whether or not I make progress with my English depends more on **me** than on my teacher.

totally agree – partly agree – don't know - rather disagree – totally disagree

2. Working in pairs or groups is waste of time, it is better to do things individually.

totally agree – partly agree – don't know - rather disagree – totally disagree

3. When I am asked to say something, I often say I don't know or I answer in one word.

totally agree – partly agree – don't know - rather disagree – totally disagree

4. Trying to pronounce the English sounds is embarrassing.

totally agree – partly agree – don't know - rather disagree – totally disagree

5. I am so worried about making mistakes that I try to speak English as little as possible.

totally agree – partly agree – don't know - rather disagree – totally disagree

6. I take notes during lessons and review them after class.

totally agree – partly agree – don't know - rather disagree – totally disagree

7. I am too old to learn foreign languages now. I should have started as a child.

totally agree – partly agree – don't know - rather disagree – totally disagree

▪ Comments:

1. Having an educated and experienced teacher helps. But no teacher can work miracles. To make progress, you must take responsibility for your own learning. When you were learning to ride a bicycle, your parents told you what to do and perhaps showed you how. But you had to do it yourself. It is the same principle in case of foreign languages.
2. Two heads are better than one. Working in pairs or groups is an occasion to use your English, to share what you know, to learn from the others ... and ... to make friends and thus enjoy the lessons more!
3. If you are asked whether you had a good weekend, try to say more than just "yes" or "no". It will gradually help you become more confident in English.
4. Absolutely not.
5. No one has ever learned a foreign language without making many mistakes at the beginning and fewer later. There is no other way of learning anything except for learning through mistakes and thanks to them. So you should not worry about every little mistake. Identify the big ones that make your speech hard to understand and work on those. Your teacher can help you with this.
6. Great! Make time outside class to review your notes, read, listen or even think in English! Doing homework is extremely helpful in making progress.
7. It is never too late to start. Adult learners, knowing why foreign languages are important and being thus able to set their goals, can progress more easily than children. Moreover, recent studies¹ show that early foreign language education is not that efficient as some language schools try to pretend.

¹ NAJVAR, P. *Raná výuka cizích jazyků v České republice na konci 20. století*. Brno : Paido, 2010

CHAPTER 1: PRESENT TENSE

Theory:

Check what you already know

Match the two following sentences with the adverbs of time.

Discuss in pairs the difference in meaning of these sentences.

Stephen wears jeans.

Today

Stephen is wearing jeans.

Usually

Sarah is ironing her dress.

Every day

Sarah irons her dress.

At the moment

Discuss with your partner which of these sentences are correct and why.

The kids are wanting ice-cream now.

The kids want ice-cream now.

The train leaves at 19.30.

The train is leaving at 19:30.

Spelling quiz:

Decide what is correct:

Plaing x playing

watches x watchs

Running x running

gos x goes

Loveing x loving

laughs x laughes

Introductory text

Study the following extract and find all examples of present tenses. How is a question and a negative sentence formed? Try to come up with rules about present tenses and also exceptions.

Like food, air, and water, energy is essential to human existence. The hopes of billions for a better life depend on plentiful and accessible sources of energy. But with the world's population fast approaching seven billion, how do we meet the growing demand for energy in a responsible, equitable, and sustainable way? It's a question we must ask ourselves as a society and as individuals. That's why National Geographic, in partnership* with Shell, is launching The Great Energy Challenge. The Great Energy Challenge is an important three-

year National Geographic initiative designed to help all of us better understand the breadth and depth of our current energy situation.²

Your notes:

Form and use

Form

Present simple

Verb to be:

Subject	Verb form		
	+	-	?
I	am ('m)	am not	Am I
you/we/they	are ('re)	are not (aren't)	Are you/we/they
he/she/it	is ('s)	is not (isn't)	Is he/she/it

Other verbs:

Subject	Verb form		
	+	-	?
I/ you/we/they	work	Do not (don't) work	Do you work
he/she/it	Works	Does not (doesn't) work	Does he work

+ See appendix no. 1: Exceptions when adding -ing.

² Available at: <http://environment.nationalgeographic.com/environment/energy/great-energy-challenge/about/> (October 2011)

Present continuous

form of 'be' + -ing (present participle)

Subject	Verb form		
	+	-	?
I	Am ('m) working	Am not working	Am I working
You/we/they	Are ('re) working	Are not (aren't) working	Are you working
He/she/it	Is ('s) working	Is not (isn't) working	Is he working

+ See appendix no. 2: Exceptions when adding -s.

Use

PERMANENT ACTION	TEMPORARY ACTION
=	=
PRESENT SIMPLE	PRESENT CONTINUOUS
Colin plays football every Tuesday . (= in general, always)	Look! Colin is playing football now . (= right now, temporarily)
Bob works in a restaurant. (= it is his job)	Jenny is working in a restaurant this week. (= only for a limited period of time)

Signal Words

PRESENT SIMPLE	PRESENT CONTINUOUS
always, every ..., often, normally, usually, sometimes, seldom, never, first, then	at the moment, at this moment, today, now, right now, Listen!, Look!

+ See appendix no.4: **State verbs**

Practice:

Level 1 (elementary)

1.1 Write the short form (she's).

- | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1. it is <i>it's</i> | 3. we are | 5. you are not |
| 2. he is not | 4. they are | 6. I am |

1.2 Make questions with the words.

1. (is/ at school/ your brother) *Is your brother at school?*
2. (your friends/ are/ here)
3. (are/ from/ where/ you)
4. (is/ near here / the bank)
5. (are/ open today/ the shops)

1.3 Complete the sentences. Use:

open teach meet close like cost ~~speak~~

1. He *speaks* four languages.
2. My mother is a teacher. She history.
3. The shop at 9 a.m. and at 6 p.m.
4. These shoes are expensive. They a lot of money.
5. My children chocolate.

1.4 Write the negative.

1. They play the piano well. *They don't play the piano well.*
2. I know your phone number.
3. He drinks coffee.
4. It happens very often.
5. You work very hard.

1.5 Write questions with Do ... ? and Does ... ?

1. I like chocolate. How about you? *Do you like chocolate?*
2. Jim plays tennis. How about his friends?
3. Sue works hard. How about her sister?

4. You live near here. How about Tom?
5. She speaks three languages. How about you?

1.6 Write true sentences, positive or negative.

1. (it/ cold today) *It's cold* OR *It isn't cold.*
2. (diamonds/ expensive)
3. (I/ tired)
4. (my hands/ cold)
5. (Paris/ in the UK)

1.7 What's happening now? Write the true sentences.

1. (it/ rain) *It is snowing* OR *It isn't snowing.*
2. (I/ eat)
3. (I/ listen/ to music)
4. (the sun/ shine)
5. (I/ wear/ shoes)

Level 2 (intermediate)

1.8 Put the following sentences into categories according to the kind of action they express:

1. The company employs over 1,000 people.
2. I am working on this project while my boss is away.
3. Prices are going up.
4. He is welcoming a client at this moment.
5. I usually take two weeks' holiday in August.
6. I don't often receive letters in English.
7. We make important decisions at the annual meeting.

8. My company is having problems with its subsidiary.
9. In Europe, more people retire at 65 or earlier.
10. The phone is ringing. Can you answer it?
11. The R&D Director is waiting in Reception.
12. We seldom stay at five-star hotels.

Permanent or long-term situations	Routine activities
Activities happening at the time of speaking	Temporary situations or events in progress

1.9 Put the verbs in the present continuous or the present simple.

1. Look! He (leave) the house.
2. Quiet please! I (write) a test.
3. She usually (walk) to school.
4. But look! Today she (go) by bike.
5. Every Sunday we (go) to see my grandparents.

1.10 Some of these sentences are grammatically incorrect. Find the mistake, then write the correct sentence. If the sentence is correct, write "OK".

Example:

Jane has a shower now. incorrect

Jane is having a shower now. _____

1. Why do you leave so early? Do you enjoy the party?

2. I don't believe anything he says. He always tells lies.

3. He is working as a teacher.

4. I am thinking you need a new haircut.

5. He is not understanding my questions.

Level 3 (advanced)

1.11 Speaking (pair work)

Think about a person of your family/friends. Describe his/her jobs and his/her likes and dislikes to your partner. Then try to imagine what the person is doing at the moment. Does he/she usually do it? Tell your partner about his/her daily routine.

Your notes:

+ See appendix no. 6: **Useful speaking strategies.**

1.12 Speaking

Prepare your answers to these questions:

- What is happening in your life these days?
 - At work:
 - Are there any changes or developments in your organization / job / career plans?
 - Outside work:
 - Is anything happening in your town / in your social/private life?
 - Are you making plans for the next holiday / saving money for something important / making any changes in your home?

Your notes:

Work in pairs: Ask and answer the questions in the first part of the activity. Tell the class about two of your partner's current activities.

+ See appendix no. 6: **Useful speaking strategies.**

Sample test questions

1. The train _____ the station at 3 o'clock.
 - a) leaving
 - b) leaves
 - c) leave
 - d) will have left
 - e) will left

2. I usually _____ at home on Sundays.
 - a) am staying

- b) stays
 - c) stay
 - d) will stay
 - e) am stay
3. Silence, please. I _____ to sleep.
- a) try
 - b) tries
 - c) am tring
 - d) am trying
 - e) am tried
4. She usually wears glasses but today she _____ contact lenses.
- a) is wearing
 - b) wears
 - c) wear
 - d) wearing
 - e) is worn
5. Sue _____ only one clean pair of jeans at the moment.
- a) is having
 - b) have
 - c) is hasing
 - d) is having
 - e) has