

PrimaryTimes

KEEPING THE TEACHER INFORMED

Skills and competences: The new buzz words!

This issue is mostly dedicated to **learning and competences**, as a competence-based teaching and learning approach is now required by the recent *Indicazioni Nazionali per la scuola dell'infanzia e del primo ciclo*, issued in September 2012.

From this issue, the Pearson Italia editorial team will offer a "meeting point" through our magazine, to learn more about the three new magic words: **knowledge, skills, competences**.

Although we are all pretty sure of the definition of "knowledge", problems arise when we are asked to distinguish between skills and competences. The two terms are often used interchangeably, but they are not synonymous. Competences may refer to sets of skills, but "competence" is more of an umbrella term that also includes behaviours and knowledge, whereas skills are specific learned activities that may be part of a broader context.

For example, teachers are really competent when they sum up different skills like communication skills, presentation skills, expert knowledge in their area of specialization, together with understanding of their students and their social, emotional and intellectual needs.

In the same way, teachers will not only have to develop and test children's effective skills in English, but above all verify their level of personal development, as far as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship and responsible decision making are concerned.

Pearson Primary Times will make its contribution to this field: in this issue you will find an article introducing the theme, a double page on "*educazioni trasversali*", the Italian way to make competences more comprehensible for children – this specific issue is dedicated to **educazione alla salute** – and a useful article, full of photocopiable worksheets, on the importance of summer homework, because skills must be developed continuously.

Last but not least, a quick reminder of **What's new out there on the web**, as we know that today digital competence is extremely relevant not only for finding information, but also as a personal improvement tool.

Anna Fresco

Pearson Italia ELT Publishing Director



Lifelong learning... and more!

Giulia Abbiati

The new *Indicazioni Nazionali per la scuola dell'infanzia e del primo ciclo* issued in 2012 follow the path that had already been started in 2007 with the previous *Riforma*. There are, nevertheless, a few points that have been highlighted by the latest documents which need a closer look. There are basically four key words in the *Indicazioni Nazionali*:

- *competenze*, competences, which I would also translate with the word *expertise*
- *cittadinanza attiva*, which can be translated as active citizenship
- *nuove tecnologie*, i.e. new technology or digital literacy
- *scuola di tutti e di ciascuno*, i.e. inclusion of children with special needs or Specific Learning Difficulties.

The use of the term 'competenze' is nothing new in Italian schools: it was introduced in 2000 and used again in 2007, when the assessment of competences became required at the end of compulsory education.

The European framework for key competences for lifelong learning, released at the end of 2006, identifies and defines the key competences, skills and knowledge that everyone needs in order to achieve employment, personal fulfilment, social inclusion and active citizenship in today's rapidly-changing world.

“Key competences in the shape of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to each context are fundamental for each individual in a knowledge-based society. They provide added value for the labour market, social cohesion and active citizenship by offering flexibility and adaptability, satisfaction and motivation. Because they should be acquired by everyone, this recommendation proposes a reference tool for European Union (EU) countries to ensure that these key competences are fully integrated into their strategies and infrastructures, particularly in the context of lifelong learning.”

(Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning, Official Journal 2006)

The eight key competences for lifelong learning are:

1. communication in the mother tongue
2. communication in foreign languages
3. mathematical competence and basic competence in science and technology
4. digital competence
5. learning to learn
6. social and civic competences (to which *Educazione alla Cittadinanza Attiva* is clearly linked)
7. sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
8. cultural awareness and expression



Active citizenship and new technologies

As far as active citizenship and new technologies are concerned, we have no doubt that all our readers know exactly what we are talking about. These two key words aren't new for Italian Primary teachers, but both have been clearly defined as cross-targets for all subjects, including of course English.

The importance of a second language is, as far as active citizenship is concerned, relevant because of the cultural implications of learning a new language and the customs and traditions of the people who speak that language: being able to understand and appreciate differences is an important issue for a 'good citizen'. *Educazione alla Cittadinanza* was part of the previous *Riforma*, but it wasn't as clearly defined as it is now.

New technology is nothing new as a key word, but getting newer and newer as Interactive Whiteboards and digital materials are finally spreading around Italy and most schools are now equipped with at least one IWB. Nowadays all coursebooks are published with some kind of digital or interactive materials, not to mention the extra materials that can be downloaded from publishers websites (see, for example, www.digilibro.pearson.it).

Inclusion

Last, but not least, of our key words is inclusion. Integrating students with different backgrounds or disabilities is a duty for schools and teachers, and it has been for a while. What the *Nuove Indicazioni Nazionali* remind us is how important it is to create diverse learning paths, because diversity needs different teaching approaches.

Inclusion is about foreign students who have to learn Italian as L2 and English as L3, which means a big effort for both students and teachers, but it is also about pupils with DSA (*Disturbi Specifici dell'Apprendimento*, Specific Learning Difficulties in English) such as dyslexia and dysgraphia, and pupils with special needs (BES, *Bisogni Educativi Speciali* in Italian), such as disabled children.

In the perspective of lifelong learning, all pupils must have the chance to find a way of learning that really suits their needs.



Pearson Primary Project

So what is Pearson doing to meet the Ministry's requirements? As Pearson's motto is ALWAYS LEARNING, we could do not less than start learning about what we are "talking about", and then go deeper and further in the next issues.

The first step is to clarify terminology: according to the European Qualifications Framework, **knowledge** means the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of study. It is both theoretical AND factual, especially with children.

Skills means the ability to complete a specific task, and they are both cognitive (for example the use of intuitive and logical thinking to understand the "hidden message" in a reading text) and practical (for example the use of methods to interpret a chart or the use of tools and instruments).

Competence means the PROVEN capacity to use knowledge, skills and personal, social or methodological aptitudes to solve more or less complex problems, while showing responsibility and autonomy.

Summer exercises: a good way to keep in touch with English

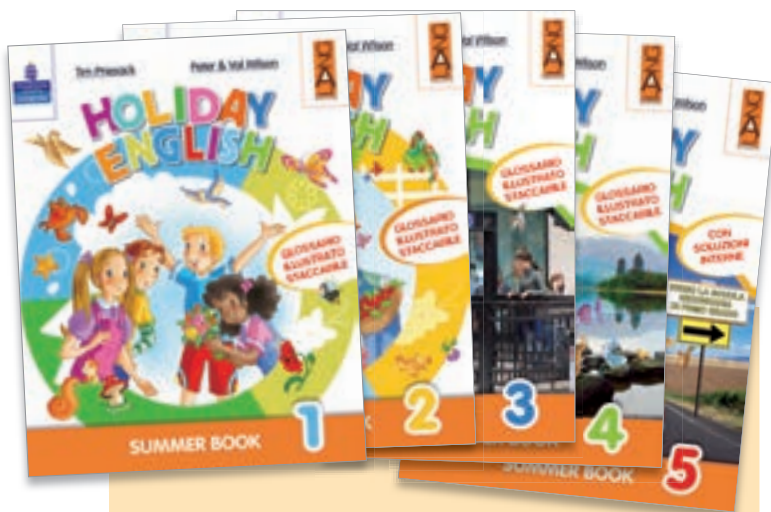
If a young learner's best friend is inquisitiveness, the need to discover the world, then the young learner's worst enemy is surely memory.

Children learn a second language (L2) in the classroom easily, but they forget it very quickly when they leave the room and are confronted with their 'normal' instrument of communication, the Italian language (L1). The problem becomes acute during the summer break, with two months away from school.

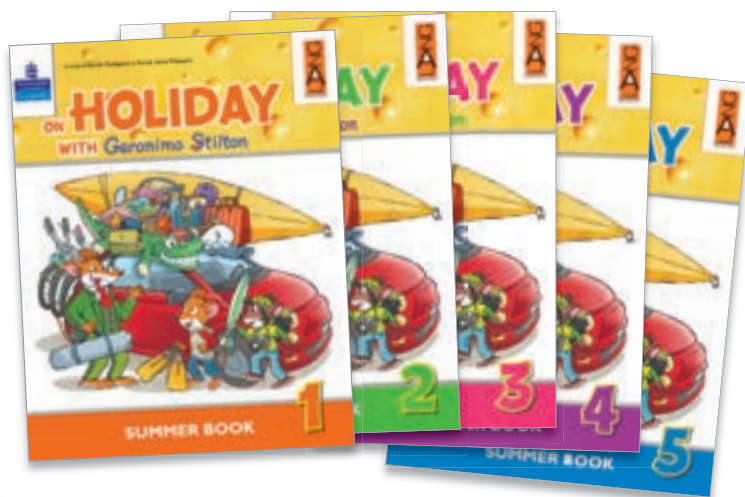
SUMMER BOOKS come to their rescue! These series of books are divided by year/level and are full of interesting and, above all, enjoyable exercises in L2 to help the children remember the main items that they have studied during the previous school year.

Pearson offers three series of **SUMMER BOOKS** and each of the series has different features.

HOLIDAY ENGLISH offers children a specific link to culture, with information on London, England, Scotland and the United States of America, as well as stimulating exercises and vocabulary linked to holidays. Each book is accompanied by an audio CD which contains all the recordings of the exercises and many fun songs. Books 1-4 also contain a pull-out illustrated glossary. Answers for all the exercises in books 1-4 can be found online at www.digilibro.pearson.it (no registration needed). Answers for book 5 are in a pull out section in the middle of the book.



ON HOLIDAY WITH GERONIMO STILTON Exciting stories with exercises, following the adventures of one of children's favourite characters. Levels 3, 4 and 5 are also focused on CLIL, each accompanied by a specifically designed English/Italian glossary in case children have not met the lexis before. Each book is accompanied by a CD-ROM which contains all the recordings of the exercises and songs and a PDF file with the answers to all the exercises.



NEW SUMMER FUN

The volumes for years one and two include many enjoyable language games which encourage children to complete the activities during the summer break and consequently consolidate the language they have learned during the scholastic year.

The volumes for years three, four and five also include a CD audio with the recordings of all the listening exercises and songs. There is also a karaoke version of

all the songs to give the children the opportunity to sing and enjoy the songs with their friends.

The volume for the fifth class is specifically designed to prepare the children for the move from the Primary to the Secondary school and includes a complete revision of the grammar and vocabulary listed in the national syllabus and taught in the five years of Primary education.



The importance of being... outside

Gabriella Ballarin and Morena Martignon

Life has changed a lot for children in just a few generations. It once was a habit to play outside, while today children spend less and less time in the open air. They spend long hours inside the house watching TV, using the computer, playing video games or they are kept busy in various activities after school; and when they are out of the house it's usually just to go from one place to another. In our towns it has become more and more difficult to find open spaces, woods or fields where children can meet and play freely in a natural environment. And on top of that, our streets are dangerous places as the traffic gets heavier every day.

Playing outside is very important for children. Just being outside can make children happy, healthy and connected to the world around them. Exploring the great outdoors can make children more resilient and confident. Never mind rain or bad weather! Parents and teachers should encourage children to spend time outside and have fun showing them places, teaching them games and letting them play with very simple things. Catching bugs, watching birds and riding bikes are all great fun for a child. Playing with leaves, mud, grass and flowers stimulate imagination and creativity. Trees, plants and small animals can be best friends for children.

Playing outside is the best way to keep children healthy. When they sit in front of the TV, they don't do any physical exercise and tend to eat more. It is a fact that the number of obese children is increasing, with serious damage to their health and to the economy of their country. What can we do? Parents and teachers can do a lot by allowing and encouraging children to spend time outdoors. The quality of their lives is improved and they develop a more responsible attitude towards nature.

What can school and parents do?

Teachers and parents should discuss these things and develop a shared approach during parent/teacher meetings. At school, teachers could do a survey in which children first talk about the outdoor games they know and tell their schoolmates about them. Children can then be asked to interview their grandparents and relatives about the outdoor games they used to play when they were the same age. Teachers can also create a vegetable garden where children will learn about seeds, plants and insects and experiment sowing and harvesting; they will also learn to wait and be patient. Spaces in the school garden, when there is one, can be created where children can play hopscotch, do jump rope competitions or simply build and play with earth, sticks, small stones and leaves. We all agree that visits to museums and art galleries are very interesting, but above all children need to explore and become familiar with nature.

Parents could take their children for walks in the woods, in the fields and on beaches and have fun with them, remembering the time when they used to do the same things. Nature parks are wonderful places for family days out: here you can see protected species of animals and plants and learn to respect them. Family holidays should be moments of relaxation, fun and a simple outdoor life. After all, children who learn to look after plants, animals and their environment will become adults who want to take care of the planet!



Activity 1 Stone painting

1. Collect the stones.
2. Wash the stones and leave them to dry.
3. Paint the stones with different colours and patterns.
4. When the paint is dry varnish the stones.

What you need:

- medium-sized stones
- brushes
- paint
- varnish

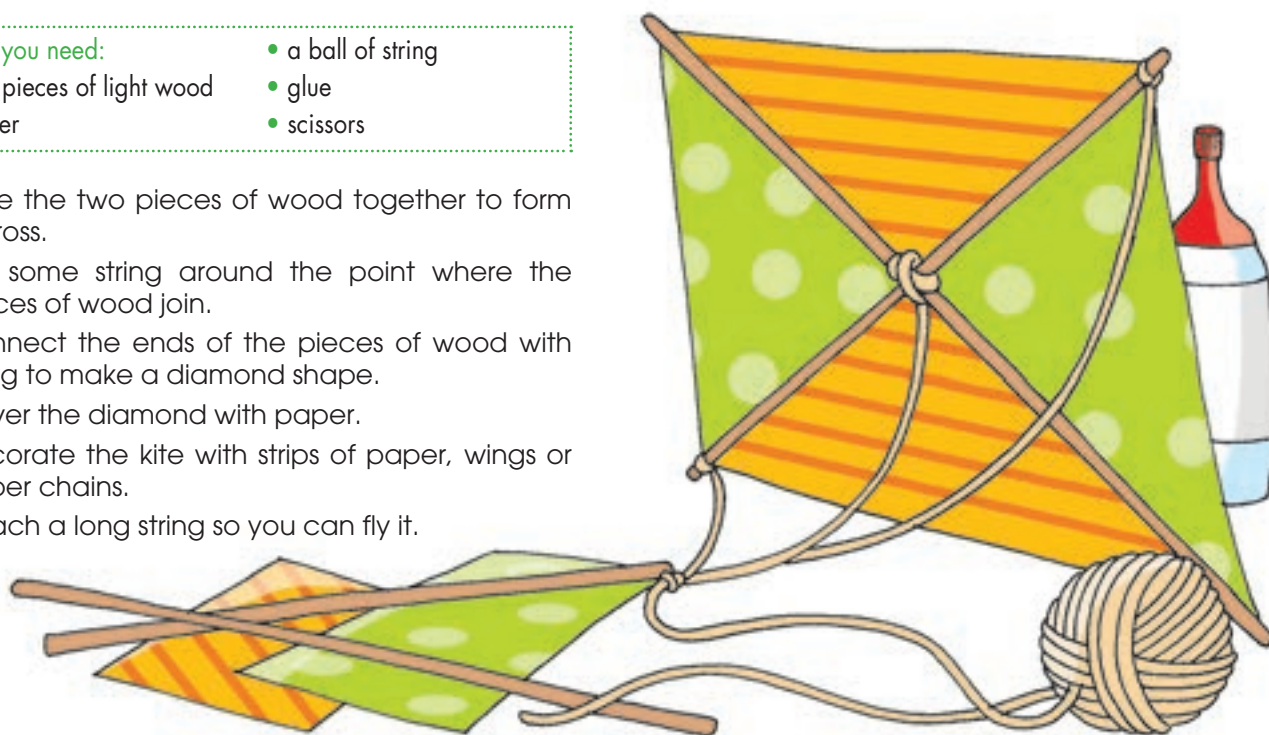


Activity 2 Make a kite

What you need:

- two pieces of light wood
- a ball of string
- glue
- paper
- scissors

1. Glue the two pieces of wood together to form a cross.
2. Put some string around the point where the pieces of wood join.
3. Connect the ends of the pieces of wood with string to make a diamond shape.
4. Cover the diamond with paper.
5. Decorate the kite with strips of paper, wings or paper chains.
6. Attach a long string so you can fly it.



Gabriella Ballarin is a primary school teacher in Mogliano Veneto (TV). She has worked as a teacher trainer at primary level. Morena Martignon is a primary school teacher in Mogliano

Veneto (TV). She has been teaching English since 2001. They are co-authors of CLIL materials published on the Pearson-Longman website.

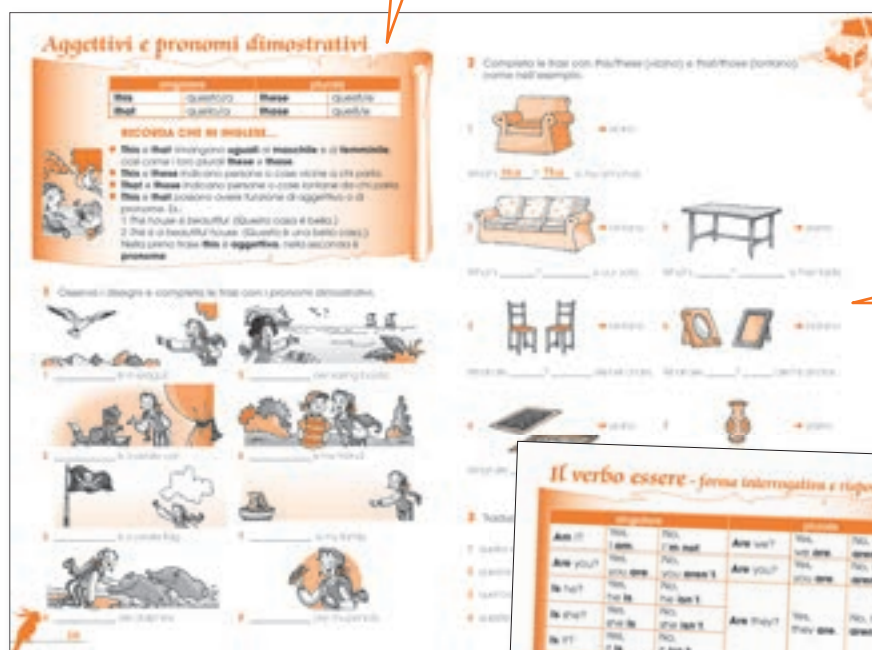
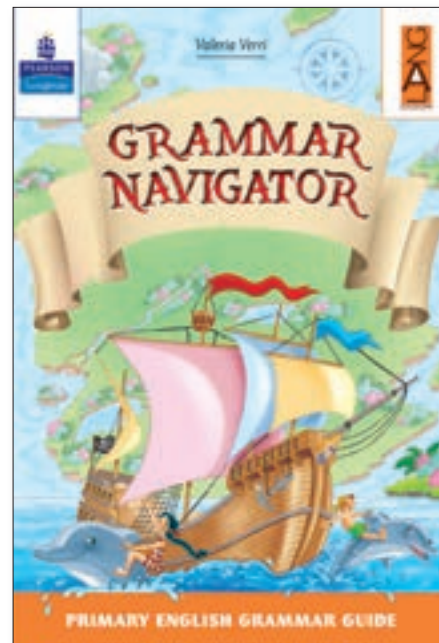
Grammar Navigator when a compass is what you need!

Grammar Navigator is a complete and **user-friendly grammar guide for young learners**. It includes all the language items and grammar covered by text books for Primary school.

Grammar Navigator is especially designed for those pupils who have acquired some language skills, but as its structure is very easy and it already recycles language and grammar throughout the whole book, it can also be used with very young learners, such as those in the second or third year of Primary school.

Grammar Navigator can be used throughout the school year as extra reinforcement material, or it can be used as a bridge between Primary and Secondary school.

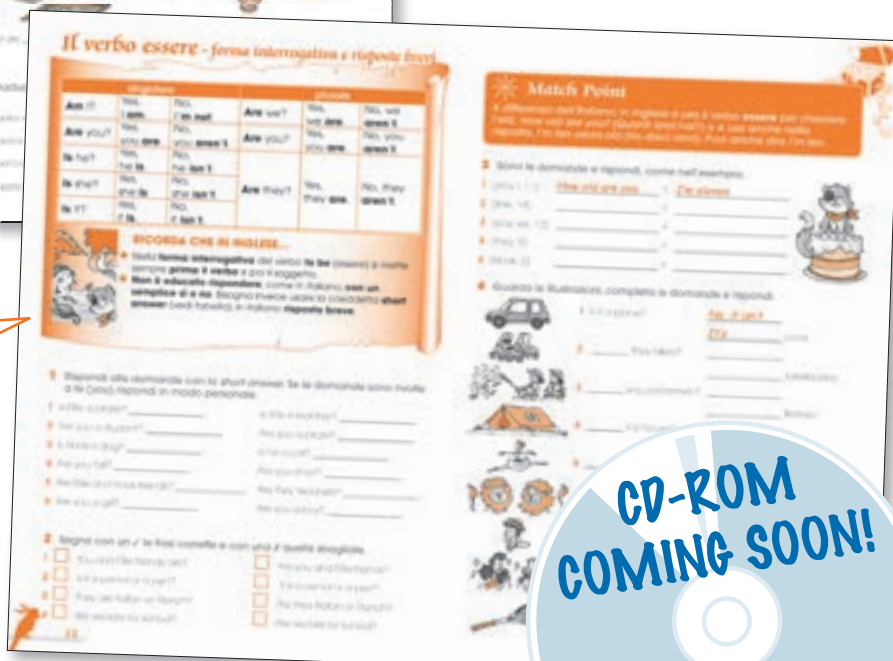
Each section of the book opens with an **explanation in Italian** of the uses of a grammar item and includes common errors and exceptions.



Stimulating **exercises** follow the opening chart, where children show that they have understood the explanation. All the instructions are in Italian, to make the book easier to understand and to use, even as a homework and/or a summer book.

The **Match Point** box gives further information when needed for better understanding of a grammar item or its use. The text in this box is always in Italian, to simplify understanding by the students.

Answers to all the exercises are included at the end of the book.



CD-ROM
COMING SOON!

Jump Ahead from Primary to Secondary

Jump Ahead is designed as a bridge from Primary to Secondary school. It prepares children for the different teaching and learning they will find when they move ahead with their education, as is advised by the new *Indicazioni Nazionali per la scuola dell'infanzia e del primo ciclo*.

The numerous exercises bring together the language items which children have learned during the last three years of Primary education, and include revision of lexical sets, grammar and language.

Jump Ahead is divided into six units and each unit includes these sections:

Words in action revises the vocabulary covered during previous school years.

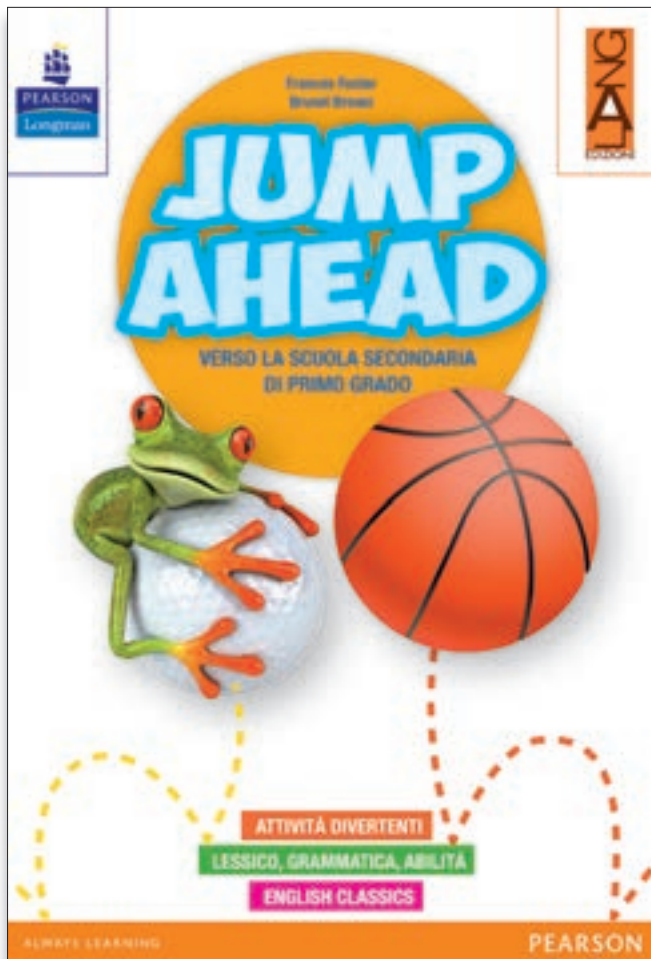
Grammar in action offers the student the opportunity to re-visit some of the rules of English grammar. In this section the learner will also find Look and think, where children are asked to complete the principal grammar rules, making learning a genuinely active experience.

Skills in action includes consolidation activities covering *writing, listening and reading*.

English classics are reading (and recorded) texts inspired by famous classics with linked language exercises. The texts encourage the children to become familiar with such classics as *The Canterville Ghost*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Tarzan of the Apes*, *Frankenstein* and *Gulliver's Travels*. Each text is accompanied by a **Help box**, a short glossary of new words.

The **Attenzione** box highlights important differences between the use of certain expressions in Italian and English.

The **Glossary** at the end of the book serves as a useful reference for children as they work through the exercises. The **Multi-ROM CD** which accompanies **Jump Ahead** includes all the recorded exercises, together with a text file with model answers to all the language tasks.



The importance of summer homework

Sarah Gudgeon

It's coming up to the end of the school year and you want to make sure that all the hard work you've done with your class doesn't go to waste over the long summer break. Learning English is a bit like building a wall; each brick is important to the end result and you don't want that solid foundation your students have built up over the months to suddenly crumble over the summer. If it does, then they'll have to start building all over again in September.

So, what can you do to stop this happening? The first thing is to do an end of course test. You should be able to find material in the Teacher's Book of the course book you are currently using. You can select questions from the various end of unit tests to come up with one new test or use some of those questions as a model and come up with a new test based on the same grammar and lexis. Seeing how the students perform on the tests will help you to evaluate their progress and identify any weaker areas that need addressing before the end of school. In this way you can be sure that everyone in your class is finishing at more or less the same level. At the end of this article you'll find some examples of end of year tests. These are just to give you an idea of how you could do your own. There is one for the end of year 2, when children are younger, then there's one for the end of year 4 and one for the end of year 5, when children are ready to move up to Secondary school.

Then, you need to set the summer homework. Summer homework gives children the opportunity to consolidate everything they've learnt and means that they are ready to add new bricks to their wall in September. Revision and recycling are key to good language learning. The more children see and use a word the better chance they have of

learning it as "No single encounter with a word, whether in instruction or in the course of reading or listening, can lead to any great depth of word knowledge" (Nagy 1997, p. 74). The change in the kind of exercises the children have to do is also of vital importance because "... as the student meets the word through a variety of activities and in different contexts, a more accurate understanding of its meaning and use will develop" (Anita Sökmon 1998, p. 241).

Choosing a fun summer book like *On Holiday with Geronimo Stilton* means that the children won't even feel like they're studying but they will be reviewing and using their English regularly and this is the main thing. It's a good idea to work out a study plan with the children so that they know how many pages they need to do per week to stay on track. It's better for them to do a little bit regularly rather than rushing it all at the beginning so they can say they've done it or cramming it all in at the end because they've run out of time.

Completing a summer book gives children a sense of achievement and usually means that they return to the classroom with renewed enthusiasm for English and extra confidence in their use of the language. This is particularly important for students in the fifth year of Primary school moving up to Secondary school. They need to do a complete grammar review (the Great Grammar Max at the end of *English Roundabout 5*, LANG-Longman, for example, is a great checklist) and be happy using all the language and vocabulary they've acquired so far. This will make the transition to Secondary school a little easier.

Sarah Gudgeon teaches both children and adults in a private language school in Milan. She is co-author of *On Holiday with Geronimo Stilton*, *English Roundabout* and *Primary Teaching Files 1, 2, 3 and 4, 5* LANG-Pearson Longman.

- www.cpr4esl.com/gerrys_vocab_teacher/why_use_it
- Nagy, P. (1997). *On the Role of Context in First and Second Language Vocabulary Learning*. In *Vocabulary: Description, Acquisition and Pedagogy*, edited by N. Schmitt and M. McCarthy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sökmon, A. (1998). *Current Trends in Teaching Second Language Vocabulary*. In *Vocabulary: Description, Acquisition and Pedagogy*, edited by N. Schmitt and M. McCarthy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press



WORKSHEET

End of year 2 revision

1. Match the pictures to the words.

a.



b.



c.



d.



e.



f.



jumper

elephant

pencil

potato

mouth

hamster

2. Use the words in the box to complete the sentences.

- a. I am _____ a blue skirt.
- b. Have you _____ a dog?
- c. What _____ your name?
- d. I'm sorry. I don't _____.
- e. Can you _____ that, please?
- f. Jane doesn't _____ apples.

is

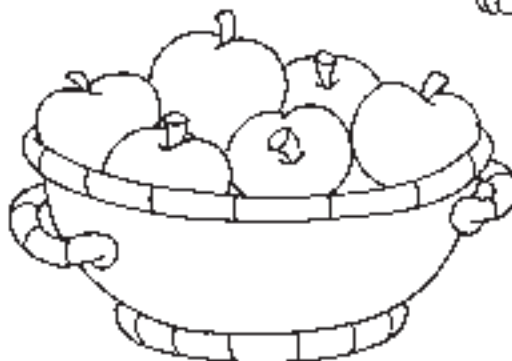
understand

wearing

like

got

spell





End of year 4 revision

1. Look at the pictures and label. Use the words in the box.

a.



whale

d.



roundabout

b.



baker's

e.



mountains

c.



guitar

f.



doctor

2. Use the words in the box to complete the questions.
Match the questions to the answers.

1. What's the _____ like today?
2. _____ is Milan?
3. What _____ is it?
4. What's _____ phone number?
5. What's _____?
6. Where can I _____ a comic?

- a. It's my red jumper.
- b. At the newsagent's.
- c. It's in the north of Italy.
- d. It's cold and rainy.
- e. It's 031 748 961.
- f. It's a quarter past five.

that

where

your

weather

buy

time



WORKSHEET

End of year 5 revision

1. Look at the pictures in Exercise 2. Put the words in the right order to make sentences.

a. am a wearing I T-shirt a and skirt

b. got she has hair short

c. fly kangaroos can't

d. not speak the must in you library

e. many cakes got how you have?

f. going you to New York are when ?

2. Write the sentences from Exercise 1 under the correct pictures.

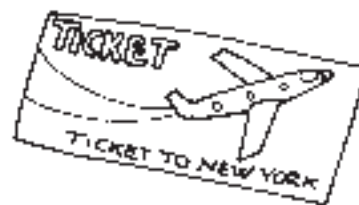
1.



2.



3.



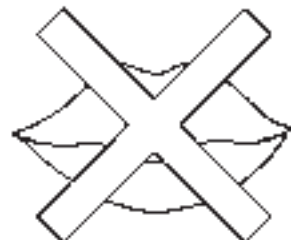
4.



5.



6.



3. Complete the letter.

Dear Lisa,

My name is _____. I am _____ years old.

I've got _____ hair and _____ eyes. I'm from _____.

I live with my _____ in a/ an _____.

I like _____. I don't like _____. I can _____.

I can't _____.

Write and tell me about yourself.

Love,

What's new out there on the web?

Giulia Abbiati

Today's students, and primary school kids are students too, although very young, are digital natives. We all know that we, the adults, will never catch up with them as far as new technology is concerned. Our kids will probably know better than us how to find anything on the web and they will always be faster

than us at searching and, most importantly, finding, anything they are looking for on the Internet. Does that mean that we should give up trying to be digital users? Of course not! This is the reason we want to keep you updated on the useful materials and websites you can find on the Internet.

Pearson iS

The website www.is.pearson.it is the new Always Learning laboratory which gives teachers information about many different subjects regarding school and teaching today, but with an eye on dyslexia and other linked learning disorders. The website offers a regular update on DSA (*Disturbi Specifici dell'Apprendimento*) and useful information on how to recognise and handle them, with both theoretical and practical approaches.



Dolch Sight Words

Dolch Sight Words are a list of 220 most frequently used words in children's literature and are a useful and important teaching tool for reading, writing and spelling. The list was prepared by Edward William Dolch in 1936 and was originally published in his book *Problems in reading* in 1948. The list is a good basis of common words for kids to learn. Of course, Italian children will not need all of them, as the list was originally prepared for English speaking children, but it can nevertheless be a valid tool for Italian teachers, above all with dyslexic children. Many of these words can't be 'sounded out', they have to be learned by sight (this is the reason for the name 'Sight Words'). This list

does not include nouns, which are part of a different list of 95 words.

You can google 'Dolch Sight Words' or 'Sight Words' and see what happens, but here's a short list of the websites we found most interesting:

- www.kidspot.com.au/schoolzone/Spelling-Dolch-sight-words+4114+306+article.htm
- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dolch_word_list
- www.quiz-tree.com/Sight-Words_main.html
- bogglesworldesl.com/dolch/flashcards.htm (printable flashcards)
- specialed.about.com/od/dolchwordswordfamilies/tp/Dolch-High-Frequency-Word-Cloze-Activities.htm (printable worksheets)

My healthy menu...

The Class project in this issue of Pearson Primary Times can be completed as small group work or as class work. It encourages the children to think about their tastes and to revise lexis linked to food and everyday habits. The teacher might want to link this project to an *Educazione alla Salute* lesson, when children can be asked to think about their habits and state if they are healthy or not.

The class project can be completed following these steps.

Step 1: children write different lists: their favourite fruit (no more than 5 items), their favourite vegetables (no more than 5 items), their favourite foods (no more than 5 items), their favourite drinks (no more than 3 items). Children can then be asked to illustrate the food/drinks they have listed.

With older children, the teacher might want to ask them to write simple sentences describing what they have drawn: 'My favourite vegetable are ..., ... , etc.'

Step 2: children create a healthy menu for an average day, which includes breakfast, lunch and dinner, plus an afternoon snack, based on their lists.

They will have to summarise the choices of all the children in their class (just counting how many times each item has been listed) and decide if theirs is a healthy class or not. Then they will have to pick the healthiest ingredients in their lists and agree a menu.

Step 3: children make posters illustrating the menu they have created. The teacher can decide whether to ask children to draw the food or to look for pictures in magazines and make a collage. Each picture/drawing must be accompanied by a caption with the name of the food.

Once the project is introduced to the class dedicate a little time each week to the preparation of the materials.

All the written language must be in English and physically written by the children. Teachers are asked not to correct or re-write the sentences produced by the children. The first 120 children who take part in this project will receive a small present as a token of our appreciation for the time and effort taken in the preparation of the materials. Send the project material together **with three copies** of the completed project form to:

Pearson Primary Times, Class Projects - Issue 44
Pearson Italia S.p.A. - Via Archimede, 51 - 20129 Milano

The material should arrive in our offices by **30th September 2013**. We may publish extracts from some of the projects in future issues of **Pearson Primary Times**. All the materials submitted become property of Pearson Italia S.p.A. and reproduction rights are reserved.



THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AND INSERTED IN THREE COPIES INTO THE PACK OF THE PROJECT MATERIALS.

44

Name of school _____

Address _____ CAP _____

City _____

E-mail _____ @ _____

Name and surname of teacher _____

Class/es presenting materials _____

Number of children presenting materials _____

Impegno di riservatezza e trattamento dei dati personali

Pearson Italia S.p.A., titolare del trattamento, la informa che i dati da lei forniti ci permetteranno di dare esecuzione alle sue richieste e di farla partecipare alle nostre attività. Con il suo consenso, Pearson potrà tenerla aggiornata periodicamente sulle proprie attività, inviarle saggi gratuiti, newsletter e materiale connesso alla attività didattica. Potrà inoltre invitarla a esprimere le sue valutazioni e opinioni partecipando alle ricerche di mercato realizzate per conto di Pearson. Il conferimento dei dati è facoltativo ma la mancanza delle informazioni potrà impedire l'accesso a tutti i servizi disponibili. I dati saranno trattati, anche con strumenti informatici e automatizzati, da responsabili e incaricati e non saranno comunicati a terzi né diffusi, ma potranno essere messi a disposizione delle altre società appartenenti al Gruppo Pearson per il perseguimento delle medesime finalità. Esercitando i diritti previsti dalla vigente normativa, ogni interessato può chiedere l'accesso ai dati o la loro integrazione, correzione, modifica e può opporsi al loro trattamento o chiederne, nei limiti previsti dalla vigente normativa, la cancellazione nonché prendere visione dell'elenco aggiornato dei responsabili nominati, scrivendo via e-mail a info@pearson.it oppure in forma cartacea a Pearson Italia S.p.A. via Archimede 51 - 20129 Milano tel. 02.74823.1 fax 02.74823.278 all'attenzione del responsabile del trattamento dati.

Presa visione dell'informativa, dichiarando di essere maggiorenne, consento al trattamento dei miei dati per le finalità descritte nell'informativa.

☐ SÌ ☐ NO

N.B. Se non barra la casella SÌ perde l'opportunità di partecipare alle nostre iniziative e ricevere il nostro materiale informativo.

Firma _____ Data _____

| | |
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Archivio iconografico Pearson Italia: p14;
Photos.com: p2 Hemera Technologies;
Shutterstock: p3 Pressmaster; p6 Mat Hayward.

Printed

Tipografia Gravinese, Torino

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