B2 | UPPER-INTERMEDIATE

THINK BEYOND THE BASICS

Advanced grammar · Critical reading · Precise vocabulary · Academic writing

A challenging sample workbook for independent English learners

REAL ENGLISH. REAL PROGRESS.

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Welcome from Match

Your B2 learning challenge

Hi, I'm Match! I'm an English tutor from Canada with over eight years of tutoring experience.

This workbook is designed for learners who can already communicate confidently but want greater accuracy, range and control. The tasks are intentionally demanding: you will need to interpret meaning, justify choices and revise your own language.

How to use this workbook

1. Complete the tasks before checking the answer key.

2. For open responses, support your ideas with reasons and examples.

3. Notice patterns in your mistakes; write corrected versions in a separate notebook.

4. Use the final self-assessment to choose what to practice next.

Your B2 goals

By the end, you should be able to distinguish subtle grammar meanings, understand implied arguments, use precise collocations and organise a balanced written response.

A note about assessment

This is an independent practice resource, not an official CEFR assessment or certificate.

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Grammar Lab 1

Inversion, emphasis and conditionals

A. Rewrite without changing the meaning

1. I had barely arrived when the meeting began. (Begin: Hardly...)

2. If I had known about the delay, I would have left later. (Begin: Had...)

3. She rarely admits that she is wrong. (Begin: Rarely...)

4. We understood the implications only after the announcement. (Begin: Only after...)

5. If it were not for his support, I would have quit. (Begin: Were...)

B. Complete with an appropriate form

1. If the team _____ (consult) the clients earlier, it would not be facing complaints now.

2. No sooner _____ the results been published than questions arose.

3. Were the company _____ (reduce) its prices, demand might increase.

4. Not until she reread the contract _____ she notice the restriction.

Challenge: Explain the time relationship in sentence B1. Why is this a mixed conditional?

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Grammar Lab 2

Modality, deduction and stance

A. Choose the most defensible interpretation

1. “She must have overlooked the email.” Is this a strong deduction, an obligation or a confirmed fact?

2. “They needn’t have booked a taxi.” Did they book one? What does the speaker imply?

3. “He might have been exaggerating.” Does the speaker express certainty, possibility or criticism?

4. “You should have raised this earlier.” Does the speaker refer to present advice or past criticism?

B. Rewrite using the word in brackets

1. It is almost certain that the report was edited. (MUST)

2. It was unnecessary for us to print the documents, but we did. (NEEDN’T)

3. Perhaps the speaker misunderstood the question. (MAY)

4. I regret not asking for clarification. (SHOULD)

C. Precision task

Write two sentences that contrast must have and might have in the context of a missing document. Explain how your level of certainty changes.

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Use of English

Transformations and lexical precision

Complete each second sentence using the given word. Use three to six words, including the word provided. Do not change that word.

1. I regret agreeing to the proposal so quickly. (WISH) → I _____ to the proposal so quickly.

2. The lecture was so engaging that nobody checked the time. (SUCH) → It was _____ nobody checked the time.

3. She started working here five years ago. (BEEN) → She _____ five years.

4. It was only when the evidence emerged that they changed their position. (UNTIL) → They _____ the evidence emerged.

5. Despite being exhausted, he finished the presentation. (ALTHOUGH) → He finished the presentation _____ exhausted.

6. I am sure he did not write this alone. (CAN'T) → He _____ this alone.

7. We should consider the long-term consequences. (ACCOUNT) → We should _____ the long-term consequences.

8. They cancelled the event because too few people registered. (DUE) → The event was cancelled _____ registrations.

Extension

Choose two transformations and explain why a different grammatical structure is needed, even though the overall meaning stays similar.

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Reading: The Cost of Convenience

Read closely, then evaluate the argument

Convenience has become a defining promise of modern services. Groceries arrive within hours, entertainment begins at the touch of a screen, and algorithms offer suggestions before we have decided what we want. These innovations can save time, yet the time saved is not always spent in ways we value.

Consider the growing reliance on personalised recommendations. They reduce the effort of choosing, which can be genuinely helpful when options are overwhelming. However, recommendations are shaped by previous behaviour. The result may be a narrowing of our experiences: we encounter more of what is familiar and fewer ideas that challenge our assumptions.

The environmental costs are similarly difficult to see. A single delivery may appear efficient to a customer, but repeated small orders can increase packaging and transport. On the other hand, carefully organised delivery routes may be more efficient than numerous individual car journeys. The impact therefore depends on how a service operates, not simply on whether it is convenient.

The deeper question is not whether convenience is good or bad. It is whether we remain aware of the trade-offs. A useful service can become a habit so automatic that we stop asking what it costs us in money, attention or independence. The most valuable skill may be learning when to accept convenience and when to choose a slower, more deliberate approach.

Vocabulary in context

Infer the meaning of defining promise, narrowing, trade-offs and deliberate from the passage. Record your own definitions.

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Reading: Analyse and Infer

Use evidence rather than copying phrases

1. What is the writer’s central claim? Express it in one sentence.

2. Why does the writer mention personalised recommendations?

3. Identify one concession the writer makes about delivery services.

4. Does the writer believe convenience always increases environmental harm? Justify your answer.

5. What does “stop asking what it costs us” imply beyond financial cost?

6. Describe the tone of the passage. Give two linguistic clues.

7. Which statement would the writer most likely support: “Convenience should be rejected” or “Convenience should be evaluated critically”? Explain.

Critical thinking

Write 70–90 words responding to this claim: “More choice always leads to better decisions.” Refer to at least one idea from the article.

Reading Comprehension · Answer Space

Continued from page 7

Continue your answers from page 7. Use the lines below to complete the reading questions and your 70·90-word critical-thinking response.

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Vocabulary in Action

Collocations, register and nuance

A. Complete each collocation

1. _____ a conclusion (reach / arrive / make)

2. _____ an issue (raise / lift / grow)

3. _____ responsibility (take / carry / do)

4. _____ evidence (compelling / persuasive / loud)

5. _____ a compromise (reach / earn / collect)

6. _____ an assumption (challenge / break / deny)

B. Choose the more formal expression

1. “find out” or “determine” in a research report?

2. “a lot of” or “a substantial amount of” in a formal proposal?

3. “put off” or “postpone” in meeting minutes?

4. “get better” or “improve” in an evaluation?

C. Explain the difference

Compare credible and plausible; efficient and effective; imply and infer. Provide one original example for each pair.

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Vocabulary Detective

Advanced vocabulary word search

Solve the clues, then locate all 14 words. Words may run in any of eight directions, including diagonally and backwards. They may overlap. Ignore spaces and hyphens.

01 Uncertainty caused by more than one possible meaning

02 A result or effect of an action

03 Support a claim with evidence

04 Unintentional; not done on purpose

05 Ability to recover after difficulty

06 Examine very carefully

07 A difference between two things expected to agree

08 A possible meaning or effect not stated directly

09 Focused on practical results

10 Extremely careful about details

11 Certain to happen

12 Logical connection and clarity

13 The quality of being believable

14 Showing subtle distinctions rather than simple extremes

01 / 08 _____

02 / 09 _____

03 / 10 _____

04 / 11 _____

05 / 12 _____

06 / 13 _____

07 / 14 _____

VOCABULARY DETECTIVE / PUZZLE GRID

Find all 14 advanced words

A	Y	S	I	M	P	L	I	C	A	T	I	O	N	F	J	O	O	F	H
D	I	S	C	R	E	P	A	N	C	Y	F	W	I	V	E	B	H	B	Q
R	Z	B	S	E	C	N	E	R	E	H	O	C	N	A	X	M	F	Y	C
A	R	G	B	M	Y	T	I	U	G	I	B	M	A	C	M	C	C	G	M
K	D	D	T	S	T	P	J	K	L	F	E	R	D	Y	K	B	G	J	S
U	E	J	G	Z	U	Y	W	Y	D	G	K	G	V	O	M	C	P	C	G
S	C	R	E	D	I	B	I	L	I	T	Y	C	E	Y	M	G	R	R	T
I	N	P	C	V	J	J	E	U	R	U	W	S	R	Z	W	U	P	C	C
S	A	Q	N	T	U	E	S	T	Q	H	U	I	T	Z	T	D	O	I	S
Q	U	Y	E	X	T	P	Z	C	A	H	S	O	E	I	R	N	T	O	N
A	N	O	I	Y	Y	R	X	R	P	I	E	K	N	J	S	A	D	E	F
H	K	M	L	O	O	F	B	Z	Z	N	T	I	T	E	M	D	L	O	L
A	Z	U	I	U	W	D	O	N	H	F	S	N	Q	G	Y	B	E	W	T
H	L	R	S	C	C	P	K	Z	B	E	P	U	A	K	A	H	X	X	K
U	H	O	E	I	B	I	G	P	J	Z	E	R	H	T	C	Z	T	T	E
A	S	B	R	P	R	T	T	B	G	N	P	G	I	E	S	F	X	Y	N
S	X	Y	K	T	L	E	S	E	C	R	X	V	W	H	L	B	M	F	F
P	G	R	B	U	N	N	V	E	M	L	E	K	I	Y	L	N	U	O	A
N	C	Y	X	C	C	Z	T	Z	H	N	Q	O	I	K	E	Z	N	S	X
J	M	E	H	B	G	I	Q	X	I	N	T	U	P	W	T	G	R	L	G

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Writing Studio

A balanced argument: 180–220 words

Task: Some people believe that technology makes people more independent, while others argue that it creates new forms of dependence. Discuss both views and give your own opinion.

Plan before you write

1. Introduction: paraphrase the issue and state your position.

2. Body paragraph 1: explain one view with a specific example.

3. Body paragraph 2: explain the opposing view and evaluate its strength.

4. Conclusion: summarise your judgement without introducing a new argument.

Language targets

Use at least two concessive structures (although, while, nevertheless, despite), two precise collocations and one complex conditional. Avoid repeating the same linking phrase.

Writing space

You may continue on separate paper if you need more room.

Writing Studio · continuation

Continue your balanced argument here (180·220 words in total).

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Editing and Accuracy

Find and correct each problem

Each sentence contains one or two errors involving grammar, word choice, agreement or register. Rewrite the whole sentence correctly.

1. Despite of the evidence, the committee refused changing its decision.

2. Had I would known about the policy, I would act differently.

3. The data suggests that the results is not entirely reliable.

4. Not only the proposal is expensive, but it also lacks clarity.

5. She insisted to review the contract before signing it.

6. The report was comprised of five sections, each dealing about a separate issue.

7. There is less opportunities for applicants who lack relevant experience.

8. He denied to have disclosed the confidential information.

B2 / UPPER-INTERMEDIATE

Speaking and Reflection

Extend your ideas with precision

Discussion prompts

1. When is it reasonable to question an expert’s opinion?

2. Should employers prioritise practical experience over formal qualifications?

3. What are the risks of relying on information that seems credible but has not been verified?

4. Describe a decision you reconsidered after receiving new evidence.

For each response, aim for 45–60 seconds. State a view, support it with an example, acknowledge a limitation and finish with a clear conclusion.

Self-assessment

Rate your confidence from 1 (developing) to 5 (confident): complex grammar; reading inference; precise vocabulary; coherent writing; spoken argument.

Your next learning target

Choose one area above and write a realistic goal for your next two weeks of practice.

Speaking and reflection · notes

Plan your discussion answers and write your next learning goal.

Answer Key 1

Grammar, transformations and reading

Grammar Lab 1

A: 1 Hardly had I arrived when the meeting began. 2 Had I known about the delay, I would have left later. 3 Rarely does she admit that she is wrong. 4 Only after the announcement did we understand the implications. 5 Were it not for his support, I would have quit.

B: 1 had consulted; 2 had; 3 to reduce; 4 did. B1 is a mixed conditional: an unreal past action has a hypothetical present result.

Grammar Lab 2

A: 1 strong deduction; 2 yes, they booked one unnecessarily; 3 possibility; 4 past criticism.

B: 1 The report must have been edited. 2 We needn't have printed the documents. 3 The speaker may have misunderstood the question. 4 I should have asked for clarification. C: Answers vary; must have signals stronger certainty than might have.

Use of English

1 wish I had not agreed; 2 such an engaging lecture that; 3 has been working here for; 4 did not change their position until; 5 although he was; 6 can't have written; 7 take into account; 8 due to a lack of.

Reading

Main claim: convenience offers benefits but requires awareness of its hidden costs and trade-offs. Recommendations illustrate how convenience can narrow exposure to unfamiliar ideas. Delivery may be efficient when routes are well organised. Environmental harm is conditional, not inevitable. Costs also include attention and independence. Tone: balanced, analytical; clues include "on the other hand" and "depends on". The writer favours critical evaluation. Other justified answers are acceptable.

Vocabulary: defining promise = a central benefit offered; narrowing = reducing variety; trade-offs = benefits gained at the expense of something else; deliberate = thoughtful and intentional. Critical-thinking response: answers vary.

Answer Key 2

Vocabulary, editing and writing guidance

Vocabulary in Action

A: 1 reach; 2 raise; 3 take; 4 compelling; 5 reach; 6 challenge. B: determine; a substantial amount of; postpone; improve. C: credible = believable; plausible = seemingly reasonable; efficient = low waste of resources; effective = achieves the intended result; imply = suggest indirectly; infer = conclude from evidence. Original examples vary.

Vocabulary Detective

01 AMBIGUITY — row 4, column 14, left.

02 CONSEQUENCE — row 8, column 19, downleft.

03 SUBSTANTIATE — row 19, column 19, upleft.

04 INADVERTENT — row 2, column 14, down.

05 RESILIENCE — row 16, column 4, up.

06 SCRUTINISE — row 5, column 20, downleft.

07 DISCREPANCY — row 2, column 1, right.

08 IMPLICATION — row 1, column 4, right.

09 PRAGMATIC — row 16, column 12, upright.

10 METICULOUS — row 18, column 10, upleft.

11 INEVITABLE — row 20, column 10, upright.

12 COHERENCE — row 3, column 13, left.

13 CREDIBILITY — row 7, column 2, right.

14 NUANCED — row 11, column 2, up.

Coordinates give the starting letter; rows count from the top and columns from the left.

Writing, editing and reflection

Writing Studio

Responses vary. Look for a clear thesis, both viewpoints, relevant examples, a justified conclusion, logical paragraphing and accurate use of the target language. Aim for 180–220 words.

Editing and Accuracy

1 Despite the evidence, the committee refused to change its decision. 2 Had I known about the policy, I would have acted differently. 3 The data suggest that the results are not entirely reliable. 4 Not only is the proposal expensive, but it also lacks clarity. 5 She insisted on reviewing the contract before signing it. 6 The report consisted of five sections, each dealing with a separate issue. 7 There are fewer opportunities for applicants who lack relevant experience. 8 He denied having disclosed the confidential information.

Speaking and Reflection

Answers vary. Check for a clear main idea, connected supporting details, appropriate vocabulary and a reasoned conclusion.

Your next step

Great work! These activities are a small example of what we can practice together.

In personalised lessons, we can focus on the English you need most.

READY TO KEEP LEARNING?

Book a 30-minute trial lesson with Match.

www.englishwithmatch.com