The Big Ideas behind Big English Plus

Big English Plus reflects the most up-to-date and best practices of teaching and learning English. It is supported by research carried out by the authors and other professionals in the classroom and reinforced by internationally recognised educational standards, including the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and the Global Scale of English.

Let's take a look behind the scenes, and explore the big ideas that laid the foundation for *Big English Plus* ...

Learning happens in context, not in isolation.

Core to our belief is the notion that human learning is a process of constructing meaning through interaction in social contexts. Our minds – whether we are children or adults – seek to make sense of our surroundings and our experiences.

There are many cutting-edge and well-researched ideas in the world of education.

Three of the central principles of the *Big English Plus* course philosophy are **Assessment for Learning (AFL)** techniques, a focus on **21st Century Skills** and an approach supported by **Content** and **Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)**.

Children learn best when they engage with the language in a variety of ways.

Big English Plus provides multiple and varied opportunities for success, including:

singing thinking critically

role playing participating in meaningful play discussing reading fiction and nonfiction texts creating journals viewing and responding to video doing research conducting interviews and surveys

reflecting on values producing and presenting projects of different types

Language learners need support to meet their goals.

Young learners learn about their world within their personal, social and educational domains. *Big English Plus* provides opportunities to explore and personalize new language in these domains and helps develop pupils' communicative language competence.

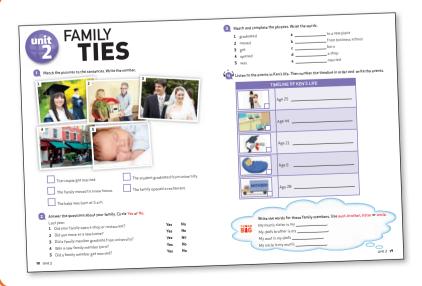
It's a digital world.

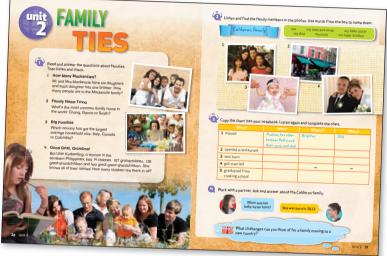
Today's pupils are digital natives, who have never known a world without computers and the internet. *Big English Plus* provides digital learning tools, the use of which reflects learners' reality and expectations.

Big English Plus is a new, seven-level primary course that engages pupils with fun, exciting material and prepares them to succeed both in the classroom and the outside world. In addition to a balanced integrated-skills approach to instruction, the course includes a CLIL strand and an emphasis on 21st Century Skills, challenging pupils to be creative, to think critically and to collaborate with their classmates. Teachers can pinpoint areas where pupils require extra practice and encourage pupils to become independent, effective learners with the Assessment for Learning techniques.

Pupil's Book/eText

- Activities present language in context, motivating learners not only to understand key language but also to acquire it. Activities include fun facts, stories, phonics, content language and writing lessons.
- Think Big activities help pupils develop 21st Century Skills.
- Content Connection lessons integrate use of learning strategies into contentbased learning.
- Culture Connection lessons give pupils an insight into different cultures and countries around the world.
- Life Skills lessons and Projects help build character through creative and collaborative activities.
- Three 4-page Checkpoints focus on Assessment for Learning and provide opportunities for pupils to assess their own progress.
- YLE preparation every three units helps familiarise pupils with exam task types.



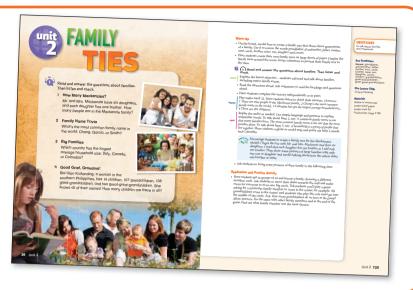


Activity Book

- The Activity Book provides engaging additional practice for each lesson in the Pupil's Book.
- The Activity Book is designed for independent study at home, but can be used for reinforcement in the classroom as well.

Teacher's Book

- This comprehensive overview of each unit includes step-by-step Lesson Plans, activities and ideas, a Game Bank, Pupil's Book and Activity Book audioscript, Activity Book Answer Key and notes and audioscript for using the YLE Practice Materials found at the end of the Pupil's Book.
- Assessment for Learning techniques and ideas for developing 21st Century Skills are incorporated into each Lesson Plan.





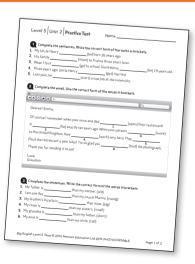
Teacher's eText for IWB

This digital tool includes helpful resources, such as:

- Interactive versions of the Pupil's Book activities for use on a whiteboard or a computer and projector. Includes audio, flexible zoom-ins and vocabulary pop-ups.
- Theme-based CLIL related video with questions.
- Teacher Resources, which include supplementary materials such as games, activities and worksheets, a Grammar Handbook for pupils and interactive classroom games.

Assessment Pack

• The Assessment Pack is found on the Teacher's eText for IWB and includes an overview of language assessment for young children and a comprehensive range of tests. These include a placement test, practice tests and unit tests for each unit, review tests (after every three units), a final exam and materials for oral assessment.



Class Audio CD

- Listening activities for the Pupil's Book and Activity Book
- Unit stories and CLIL readings



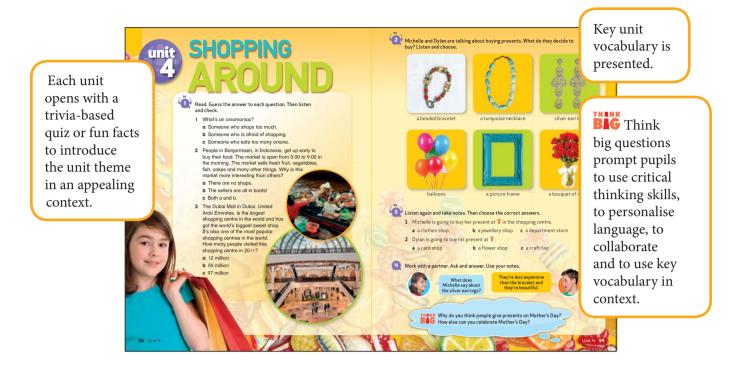
MyEnglishLab

This optional online learning tool includes:

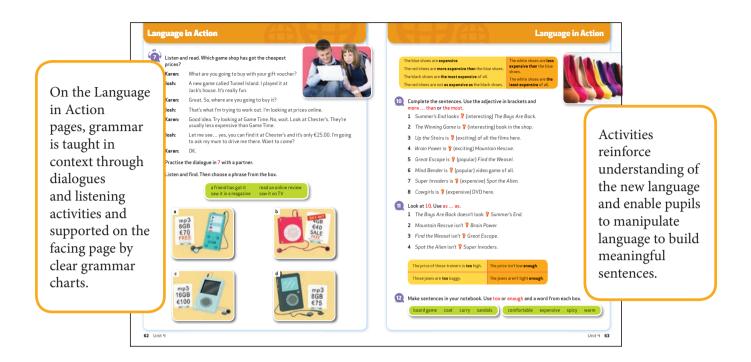
- An interactive *Big English Plus* Activity Book
- CLIL videos
- Assignable tests
- Easy course management and record-keeping for teachers

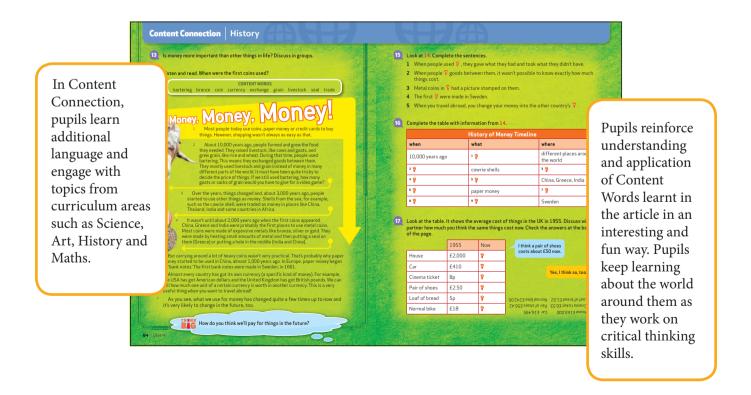


A Pupil's Book Unit

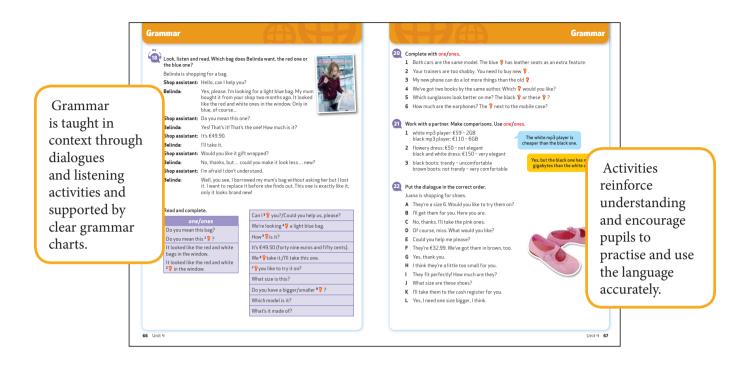




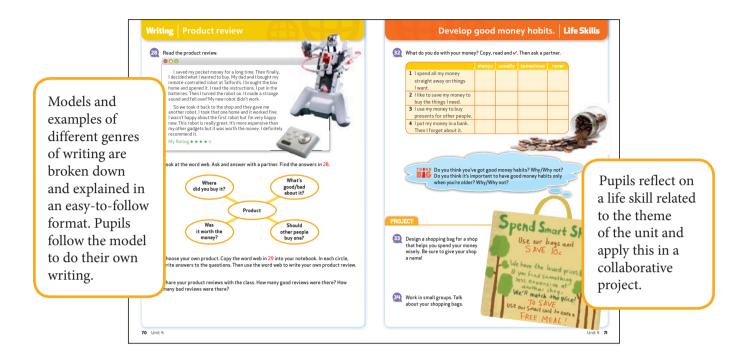




A Pupil's Book Unit (continued)









A Pupil's Book Unit (continued)

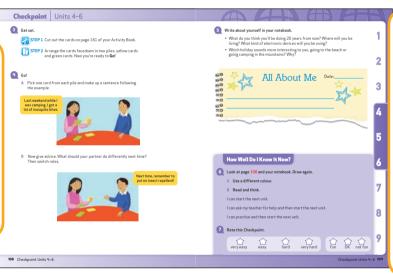
Checkpoint lessons consolidate material from the three previous units and help train learners to use Assessment for Learning techniques (see page xiii).

Pupils review key language from the units and consider their current knowledge of that language.



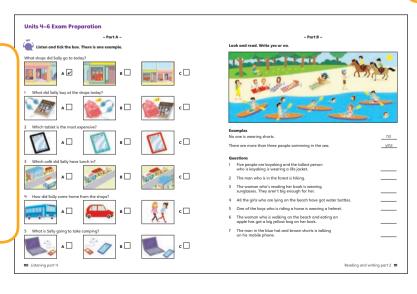
The 'Get ready' task helps identify any gaps in learners' knowledge of key language points so that teachers can review as needed.

The 'Get set' and 'Go' tasks allow learners to consolidate and use the new language in pair and group activities featuring cut-out materials.



Pupils have fun with a mini-portfolio section and then reassess their understanding of the key language points from the previous group of units in the 'How Well Do I Know It Now?' section.

With Exam Preparation spreads every three units, *Big English Plus* provides lots of opportunities to help familiarise your pupils with the YLE exams.



Learner-Centered Approach

The *Big English Plus* course ensures that all learners become active participants in every lesson by activating prior knowledge of topics and concepts and by encouraging them to share and express their personal experiences, ideas and opinions in English.

Big English Plus also incorporates activities that appeal to pupils having a variety of learning styles. Attention has been paid to visual, auditory and tactile/kinesthetic learners through the inclusion of illustrations, photos, graphic organisers (visual learners); opportunities to hear and repeat key learning targets (auditory learners); and routines and games using touch and movement (tactile/kinesthetic learners).

Furthermore, care has been taken to provide activities that capitalize on Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences: logical-mathematical, linguistic, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, naturalistic, existential, interpersonal and intrapersonal.

Big English Plus also considers classes with pupils of different abilities by providing differentiated instruction suggestions throughout the Teacher's Book.

Assessment for Learning in Big English Plus

While all assessment is used to measure pupils' progress and to motivate pupils to learn, the *Big English Plus* Teacher's Book offers opportunities for teachers to train pupils in a more dynamic type of assessment. As opposed to traditional, summative assessment tools that measure what is known or what has been learnt (assessment *of* learning), Assessment *for* Learning is based on the following three main principles: having pupils participate in setting goals, performing ongoing assessment and helping pupils learn how to set goals and self-assess.

Principles of Assessment for Learning				
Set Goals	Perform Ongoing Assessment	Help Pupils Learn How to Set Goals and Self-Assess		
Make sure each pupil has a clear understanding from the beginning of each unit what exactly the learning target is and what the expected outcomes are.	With the individual pupil's participation, informally and frequently assess where he or she is on the path to achieving those outcomes, usually during the course of a lesson.	Help pupils understand where the gaps are between what they have learnt and the expected outcome so they can address whatever areas are still lacking to achieve their goals.		

Assessment for Learning in Big English Plus

The Teacher's Book integrates and signposts the Assessment for Learning process throughout each lesson, as applied to all activities in the Pupil's Book.

INVOLVE	Make sure pupils know what the lesson objectives are, so they feel ownership of their own learning.
MONITOR	Build in opportunities to assess how well the pupils are learning the material and try to work out where the gaps are. Whenever possible, help pupils learn how to assess their own learning at this stage, too.

Course Features (continued)

ASSIST

Once you've determined where the gaps are, present the material again in another context or modality so pupils have another opportunity to learn the material.

CHALLENGE

Go beyond the page and get pupils to internalise the material by personalising it, applying it to new contexts, analysing it critically, etc.

These Assessment for Learning techniques, used in combination with the *Big English Plus* Assessment Package, provide teachers and pupils with a unique set of tools to achieve both personal and course goals.

21st Century Skills

The term 21st Century Skills refers to the knowledge and skills that learners need to be successful in the increasingly complex life and work environment of today's rapidly changing, digital world. These skills are divided into three key areas: learning and innovation, digital literacy and career/life skills. The Big English Plus course combines rich content, a wide variety of tasks and specific teaching suggestions to ensure ample coverage and opportunities for development of these important skills.

21st Century Skills are reflected throughout the course.

21st Century Skills in Big English Plus				
Learning and Innovation `The 4 C's'	Critical thinking and problem solving Creativity and innovation Communication Collaboration	→	Think Big tasks Personalization tasks Communicative tasks Collaborative tasks Activity extension ideas	
Digital Literacy	Information literacy Media literacy ICT literacy	→	Print/Digital reading genres Content-based research tasks Activity extension ideas	
Career and Life Career and Life Career and Life Flexibility and adaptability Initiative and self-direction Social and cross-cultural interaction Productivity and accountability Leadership and responsibility		→	Think Big tasks Content-based research tasks Values instruction Individual and group projects Content-based discussion tasks	

The *Big English Plus* classroom creates authentic learning experiences for pupils. Pupils are encouraged and motivated to think deeply about issues, to develop critical thinking skills and to work together to solve problems creatively. It brings the world into the classroom and takes pupils beyond the classroom out into the world.

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

The content-based materials in *Big English Plus* provide countless benefits to young learners of English. *Big English Plus* implements CLIL by using the target language – English – as the medium for teaching school content areas – for example, Science, Maths and History – as well as to raise learners' awareness of cultural similarities and differences.

Learning content language through the medium of English helps pupils deepen their comprehension of both the subject curriculum and English. This enhanced comprehension places them far beyond where they would be by studying only non-academic, everyday English.

The content-based materials in *Big English Plus* improve pupils' language competence and oral communication skills. They help diversify classroom practices and increase learners' motivation and confidence in both their acquisition of key language and development of content knowledge.

Content Connection

In *Big English Plus*, the content that learners are studying in their first language provides scaffolding for their learning of content-area English. CLIL also promotes learners' application of learning strategies. As these learning strategies become part of a pupil's repertoire of behaviours for learning, they transfer to other content areas and encourage greater pupil autonomy.

Culture Connection

Big English Plus also integrates another important category of CLIL in the Culture Connection lessons, which provide insights into how people all over the world have similarities as well as differences that enrich all of our lives. Big English Plus content materials broaden pupils' real-world knowledge and understanding, develop intercultural communication skills and multilingual attitudes and provide opportunities to study content through different perspectives.

Theme-Based Units

Big English Plus provides a basis for English language learning through a variety of content areas and high-interest topics. Theme-related language and concepts are presented as a tightly integrated whole. All parts of a unit present, apply, review and/or expand upon the unit theme from a variety of perspectives, from the opening quiz/fun facts or activities through to the review. Everything in the unit encourages a deeper understanding of the language, knowledge of the content and better communication.

Integrated Skills

Big English Plus provides a balanced approach to developing the four skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing. This approach strengthens communicative competency with presentation of language in a meaningful context. Pupils learn to listen and speak in a multiplicity of ways – through singing, dialogues, asking and answering questions, role playing, games, summarising and presenting their own work. Reading and writing are developed through fiction and several types of nonfiction, dialogues, informational texts, maps, graphic organisers and other reading materials, in both print and digital formats. Younger learners are also given opportunities to practise their skills in a developmentally appropriate manner.

Systematic Vocabulary Development

In *Big English Plus*, presentation of new language is done first in context, allowing pupils to develop important learning strategies that they will be able to apply to other learning areas. Vocabulary is then individually presented to make sure that pupils are able to understand each vocabulary item on its own. Pupils practise the new vocabulary in a variety of activities, including categorisation, providing multiple exposures in a variety of contexts. Each time they encounter a word in a new context, they increase their knowledge of the word, linking the new piece of information to other information in mental networks of meaning.

Course Features (continued)

Big English Plus also takes care to target vocabulary appropriate to the developmental age of children. Very young learners focus on concrete vocabulary items that relate to objects they can see and touch in the world around them. Older children are better able to handle abstract words and themes that are more removed from their immediate world and tend to learn the words in categories. The vocabulary is also systematically recycled many times.

Conceptually and Developmentally Appropriate Grammar Training

In addition to the four skills and vocabulary development, *Big English Plus* recognises that learners need systematic and repeated exposure over time to language structures if they are to make the new language their own. For younger children, due to their level of cognitive development, it is not conceptually appropriate for teachers to present grammar as a set of rules that require analysis and manipulation of the new structure in order to use it properly. Instead, young learners become aware of structures by learning them as 'chunks', which they see and hear again and again until they start using them in a natural way, as do infants learning their first language.

As children become older and begin to think more analytically, they are able to elicit and apply rules to language structures. *Big English Plus* gives pupils the opportunity to consider structures in such devices as grammar boxes in their books. But *Big English Plus* never abandons the necessity of presenting language structures in meaningful contexts and highlights differences and similarities in language use to encourage pupils to work out the grammatical principle. This makes the grammatical 'rule' more meaningful and memorable.

YLE Practice Materials

Pupils who plan to take the YLE (Young Learners English) Flyers test gain exposure to the YLE exam format in combination with language they have learnt in *Big English Plus* in two ways.

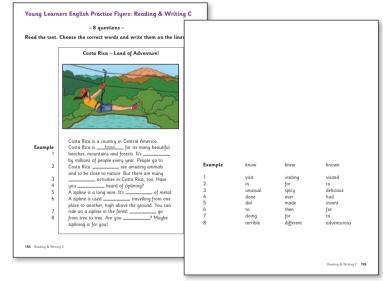
Exam Preparation spreads

Firstly, each Pupil's Book provides exam preparation spreads every three units, so pupils gain experience of YLE exam task types, in the context of the unit topic.

Exam Practice materials

This is consolidated through exam practice materials for the three sections found in the YLE Flyers exam: Listening; Reading and Writing; and Speaking.

Notes for the *Big English Plus* YLE Flyers Practice Material are provided in the Teacher's Book.



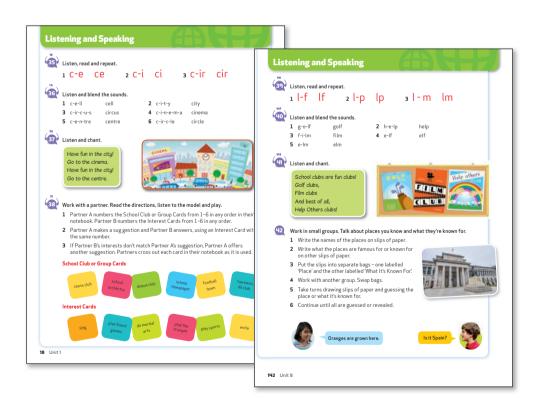
Projects

Big English Plus includes a pupil-centered project linked to the life skill presented in each unit. The project stimulates creative thinking and pupil collaboration. It encourages pupils to use new language in meaningful contexts and also helps pupils to personalise the life skill being taught in the lesson.

Unit projects further aid the process of language acquisition through the exploration and development of the senses and sensory modalities. At the lower levels, they help pupils develop their small-muscle and hand-to-eye coordination, sensory discrimination and concentration. At upper levels, creativity and self-expression are cultivated. Individuals or groups of pupils present their projects to the class, which gives them the opportunity to build on their presentation skills.

Games and Activities

Big English Plus includes a variety of games and activities to sustain pupils' interest and motivation in the language classroom. They help sustain learners' interest through the hard work of understanding, reproducing and manipulating newly learnt language. Games and/or activities provide enjoyable contexts for communication and the same density of practice as exercises while motivating learners to use their language capabilities to the fullest. Using new language in fun contexts intensifies the experience and helps pupils acquire it.



The First Day

Class Atmosphere

It is very important to put your pupils at ease as soon as possible, and to let them know that their English classroom is a fun, comfortable and exciting place to be. Structure your first class in such a way that pupils get acquainted or reacquaint themselves with their classmates, review some of the English they know, gain some familiarity with their new textbook and set some learning goals and classroom rules for the year, with your help. End with a rousing version of the *Big English Song* (see page xix).

Getting Acquainted Activities

A fun and simple way to begin is to tell pupils you're going to find out what kinds of things they have in common with one another. Tell them you're going to ask them to do something (like stand up or raise a hand) based on a series of sentences. Here are some examples:

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Raise your hand/Stand up if ...
your first name starts with a(n) __.
you [walk/take a bus/ride a bike] to school.
you've got a pet [cat/dog/bird].
you like to eat [apples/spicy food/pizza].
you like to play [basketball/chess/the piano].
you've got more than one brother or sister.
your favourite subject is [Maths/Art/English].
```

You may wish to vary the content depending on the level of comfort of the class and the age of the pupils. Another variation is to change the command from *raise your hand/stand up* to things like: *shake your hands in the air, hop on one foot, shake your head* and so on.

Classroom Language Brainstorm

List on the board key classroom expressions that pupils may hear or need to use frequently in their English class, such as the following:

- 1. Open your Pupil's Book to page ___.
- 2. Who can tell me the answer to number ___?
- 3. For this exercise, I want you to work with a partner/in a small group.
- 4. Has anybody got any questions?
- 5. Can you please say that again?
- 6. What are we supposed to do for this activity?
- 7. I'll be Pupil A.
- 8. What's our homework for the next lesson?

Have the pupils listen and repeat all of the classroom language so they can get used to saying each line. Here are some ideas for practising the lines:

- Have pupils work in pairs or groups. Ask them to take turns miming or acting out each line
 of classroom language. Their partners have to guess the line.
- Photocopy the lines onto a large sheet of paper. Cut each sentence in half and mix up all the pieces. Have pupils work in pairs to put the lines back together.