

INTRODUCTION

As indicated in the Introduction in the Teacher's Book, "assessment refers to the process of gathering information about our students' learning process and progress." (p. 12, Corradi & Rosetti, 2018).

In this section, teachers will find the following:

- Unit tests
- Progress tests every two units
- Suggestions for differentiated instruction
- Ideas to assess production skills (speaking and writing)
- Further possibilities to assess listening
- Keys for tests
- Audio files for the listening activities in the progress tests
- Audioscripts for the listening texts in the progress tests

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

Differentiated instruction is a way to approach teaching so that individual student's needs are met. This means that teachers need to know their learners so that they can provide experiences and tasks that can boost and enhance learning. Differentiated instruction is about giving students the possibility to learn starting from where they are.

In the case of English, this is essential since some students may have learned or may be learning English outside school, whereas others may have started learning English at school later than the rest of their classmates. This has nothing to do with learners' intelligence or aptitude. One way to differentiate learning is through assessment. In this section, ideas are provided to differentiate tests. Differentiation does not necessarily mean making tests simpler. It means adapting them to cater to students' differences.

UNIT TESTS

Vocabulary activities

There are different types of vocabulary activities. They can be modified to make the activity more or less demanding.

Less demanding: In the case of categorising words, the first letter or couple of letters can be included for each of the words. When students have to match two parts, instead of providing them with all the parts in B, they can be organised one by one, so that there are only two possible Bs for each A. The same thing can be done for an activity which is similar to the *odd one out*: instead of circling the items that belong in the category, students can be given two options to decide which one belongs in the category. If there is a word they do not know, they can add a word of their own choice to each of the categories to 'replace' that word.

More challenging: In the case of categorisations, students can be told to organise the words in a certain number of categories. They can also be given the words to categorise incomplete, i.e. only some of the letters can be included, e.g. c _ _ p _ t (*carpet*). Students have to complete the words first, and then categorise them. For the *odd one out*, they can be asked to write one more lexical item that does not belong, or one more that does belong in the category, e.g. *Bedroom: fridge wall poster*, they can add *shower* (does not belong in a bedroom) and *floor* (it does belong). In the case of the matching activity, they can be given some of the parts in B and they have to provide the ones which are missing.

Grammar activities

Less demanding: If students have to complete blanks, they can be given two options per blank, e.g. Tom *is / has got* short hair, instead of Tom _____ *short hair*. They can also be given all the options in a box, plus an extra option. This is a bit more demanding than the previous possibility.

If the options are already provided, the activity can be made a bit longer so that each item is worth fewer points. It is also possible to ask students to circle half the items, and they will circle those which they are sure about.

More demanding: When the activity is about choosing options, they can be turned into blanks and all the options provided below. In some cases, some blanks may have no options at all, but teachers should make sure the word that belongs there is quite transparent, e.g. _____ *tennis*.

Reading activities

Students can read at their own speed, and they can go back to the text as many times as they want. It is advisable to make sure students have plenty of time to complete the activities, especially those students who may take longer.

Less demanding: Students can be asked to complete only one of the two exercises provided (the one they consider easier for them), or half the items in each exercise. They can also be asked to do half the exercises in ink and the other half – the ones they are not sure about – in pencil or in a different colour. This is a way of motivating them to accept an extra challenge, yet at their level.

More demanding: Students can be asked to write a short summary of the text they have read. In this case, the grammar will not count, but their ability to summarise the main ideas will.

Students can also be asked to correct the false statements – without using a negative form of the verb – or to mark in the text where they can find the information for each of the statements.

PROGRESS TESTS

The same thing as before applies to progress tests. There is only one exercise which includes both grammar and lexis. The same techniques suggested can be used for this exercise, as well as for reading. In the case of listening, students who can find it more demanding than the rest can be played the recording at least once more than the rest. If this is the case, the suggestion is to ask these students to sit together. They can also be asked to answer fewer statements or the ones they feel sure about.

In all the cases, the paper with differentiated activities can be signalled as C, or C and D depending on whether the demand is higher or lower.

ADMINISTERING TESTS

Before students start doing the tests, there are several points to take into account.

To make sure everybody has the same time to complete the test, as you give them out, ask Ss to put them down on their desks. Once you have distributed all of them, they should turn them over and start reading with you.

Check they know what to do in each of the activities proposed. If there is a word they do not know and it is a crucial part of an activity, e.g. a lexical item in the vocabulary exercise, tell them not to worry and leave it aside.

If the text includes listening, make sure the technical conditions are met. The files are .mp3 files, which can be played in the teacher's mobile phone. Teachers can use computer speakers to make sure everybody can hear. Alternatively, the files can be downloaded onto a pendrive, which can be inserted in a CD player (if they have a USB port). If this is not the case, they can be recorded onto a CD and played in a CD player. If there is a computer available in the classroom, the .mp3 files can be played without any difficulty.

Before playing the recording, remind students of the rules for listening: never interrupt, if there is something they do not understand they have to wait till the end, among other rules. Tell them how many times you will play the recording. Remind Ss to read all the statements in the exercise before you play the recording. As they read them, check they understand them.

If the test includes drawing, tell Ss pin figures will do provided the main characteristics are shown. If colouring is included, check they have coloured pencils before they start the test.

Check that students write their name on each sheet, if there is more than one. Remind them to check before handing in.

FURTHER ASSESSING SKILLS

Listening and Speaking: There are plenty of opportunities to assess listening, e.g. as teachers deliver the lessons, there are numerous opportunities for students to listen and for teachers to check they have understood without having to resort to a test. A checklist can be used to keep a record of students' performance in this area.

The same principle applies to speaking. When doing group work or pair work, when playing and when interacting in different ways, teachers can assess students' speaking and interaction. Again, a checklist can be used to keep a record of their performance.

Different activities can also be assigned to assess speaking, with different levels of challenge for students:

- Students can be asked to role play one of the conversations in the book.
- They can use one of the conversations in the book, change a few parts and role play the conversation.
- Students can be asked to use certain questions, phrases, tenses, among other options, and create a conversation, which they will then role play.
- The teacher can decide to role play a conversation with some of the students. In this case, corrective feedback can provide teachers with valuable information about students' learning process.
- The oral projects in the series can be used as a basis for assessment as well.

Writing: Writing requires time, feedback, editing, and a second or further drafts till the final version is produced. This is why it has not been included in the tests, either Unit or Progress. However, this does not mean that writing should not be assessed. Teachers can pay close attention to how students approach writing, what type of feedback they give their classmates when they are asked to do so, how they improve on their previous version(s) among other ideas. What is more, teachers should check to what degree the message is conveyed in writing, rather than focusing solely on grammar mistakes. Risk taking should also be taken into account.

There are various writing activities along the series, and teachers can focus on these ones to assess writing. They can also give students similar activities if they want to further assess writing or assess it differently. As indicated before, writing activities can be differentiated to cater to students' different levels and stages in their learning process. As a rule, writing is made less challenging when giving more guidance. For instance, if students are asked to write an email, those who need more guidance can be given part of it, e.g. the beginning of sentences, or the topics in each of the blanks. The following shows this last point:

I'm _____.
(nationality)

The same email can be made more challenging by asking students to include more topics or more information, to make it longer, among other ideas.