

Methodology module: The preschool to primary transition



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Myriam Monterrubio De Sierra studied Psychology at the *Universidad Iberoamericana* in Mexico City, where she specialised in Child Psychology. She has been involved in teacher training since 1987 and has given numerous seminars in Latin America, the Caribbean and the USA. She is the co-author of four very successful Macmillan preschool series: *Small talk*, *Animal Crackers*, *Jigsaw* and *Squeeze*.

Myriam is now owner and director of a teacher training school, *Centro de Capacitación a Maestros de Inglés*, S.C. She also works as an academic consultant and previously she was the preschool English coordinator at the school *Instituto Kipling Esmeralda* in Mexico City.

“Knowledge of child growth and development enables the teacher to know what behaviour and characteristics to expect in children at different ages. An understanding of child development will also improve teachers’ confidence and will enable them to adjust their teaching programme to the individual needs of the pupils in their classroom.”

The preschool to primary transition

School readiness has often been defined as the developmental stage at which children are ready to engage in and benefit from school. Although this term is more frequently used for preschoolers, the importance of school readiness is being recognised more and more in primary education, too, and so it is essential that children are prepared for the transition from preschool to primary.

The reason for this is very simple: in most parts of the world eligibility for primary school entry is determined by age rather than ability. At the start of a new school year, English teachers are faced with the reality that the children arriving in their primary classrooms for the first time may all be the same age, but will vary greatly in their maturity or developmental levels as well as their English language levels.

Schools and, more importantly, teachers, need to be ready to receive children who have different knowledge, skills and understanding. So often, teachers feel pressure to make progress with the course syllabus as soon as classes begin, but taking time in the first few weeks to assess children can provide essential information about their developmental stage and their individual areas of need. This information can then be used by the teacher to help plan and adapt the learning programme to meet the needs of each child.

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Assessing whether children are ready for the transition

The *English World Starter Pack* provides ten optional lesson plans to be used in the first two weeks of the school year. The lessons have been developed to help teachers identify key indicators of whether pupils are ready for primary school, as well as to gain an understanding of pupils' English language skills.

To show teachers *what* to measure, as well as *how* to measure it, activities within the lessons offer tips on various assessment focus areas. These are centred on the following:

- Language skills
- Literacy skills
- Social skills
- Attitudes to learning
- Cognitive skills
- Motor skills

Lesson 5
How many?

STARTER PACK
PUPIL'S WORKSHEET

1 ● Point and say.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2 ● Point, count and say.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3 ● Listen, point and say.
m n o

4 ● Match.
m

English World 1

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LESSON 5
How many?

STARTER PACK
TEACHER'S NOTES

Lesson aims
Children:
• learn and practise the numbers 1 to 10
• learn letter sounds and words for m, n and o
• develop cooperative skills: working together as a team

Key language
one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, how many?

Materials
Flashcards 2-12, 77 (bag, pen, pencil, book, ruler, desk, chair) for Warm-up, Flashcards 21-30 (numbers 1-10 classroom objects) Flashcards 31-41 (m, n, o, orange) (optional) Flashcards 53-61 (m, n, o) (optional)

Warm-up
Assessment focus
• reviewing classroom objects from Lesson 4
• cognitive skills: ability to remember which card is held by which child

1 Line up several children at the front of the class. Give each a flashcard with a classroom object.
2 Each child shows their flashcard to the class and says the name of the object clearly.
3 The children turn their flashcards around so that the class cannot see them. They change positions in the line.
4 Children in the class take it in turns to try to remember which card each child is holding. When one child remembers correctly, choose another group to line up at the front.

Teaching Tip: Encourage the children to work together as a team.

Extra activity
○ Game: What's missing?
Assessment focus
• literacy skills: print awareness (number)
• cognitive skills: ability to work out the missing item

Write the numbers 1-10 on the board or use Flashcards 21-30. Encourage children to say them. Remove or rub out a number and ask 'What's missing?'
Teaching Tip: Try to identify children who have problems relating the sound of the numbers and their written forms.

Worksheet Activity 1
Assessment focus
• count objects up to ten
• ask and answer 'How many?'
1 Hold up the worksheet and say the numbers as you point to them.
2 Children point to the numbers and say them. Ask children to come to the front of the class and count the numbers on your worksheet.

Worksheet Activity 2
Assessment focus
• count objects up to ten
• ask and answer 'How many?'
1 Ask 'How many dogs?' Children count and say one.
2 Pairs: children take turns to ask and answer 'How many...?' following the pictures.
Teaching Tip: Encourage the children to point as they count. Ask different pairs of children to do part of the activity for the whole class.

Letters and sounds
Worksheet Activity 3
Assessment focus
• listening to letter sounds and words for m, n and o
• repeating letter sounds with correct pronunciation
• understanding connections between letters and sounds

1 Play the letter sounds and words on track 7. Children listen and point to the letter as they hear the sound and then to the picture as they hear the word. They repeat in the pause.

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LESSON 5
How many?

STARTER PACK
TEACHER'S NOTES

2 Play the track again for children to point to the letter and say the letter aloud.
3 Write the letter m on the board and say 'm'. Children write m in the air. Repeat for n and o. See **Writing Worksheet 6** for the correct letter formation.

Note: You may use Flashcards 31-33 (m, n, o), nut, orange) and letter Flashcards 42-44 (m, n, o) to teach or revise the sounds and words before you play the track.

Audioscript
m/m/ m
n/n/ n
o/o/ o

Teaching Tip: Give tips to encourage good pronunciation.
• m is a continuous sound.
• n is also a continuous sound.
• o is pronounced with an open mouth. Make an 'o' shape with your lips.

Pupil's Worksheet Activity 4
Assessment focus
• motor skills: holding a pencil correctly, tracing a pattern from left to right
Children draw the line matching the letter m to the m.

Practice
Assessment focus
• reviewing words for classroom objects
• asking and answering 'How many?'
Pairs: children put their classroom objects on their desks. They hold up a number of items (5 pens, 2 rulers, etc.) and ask 'How many pens?' They take turns asking and answering.
Teaching Tip: Do the children follow your instruction to take turns? Remind them that they will have more fun if they do.

Round-up
1 Shuffle the number flashcards and put them on your desk or on the board. Say a number. Invite a child to come to the front of the class and to find it.
2 Write the number 1 on the board and say one. Children write 1 in the air. Repeat for numbers 2 to 10. See **Writing Worksheet 8** for the correct formation.
Teaching Tip: Monitor how children respond to the cognitive skills part of the task. Do they match the spoken word to the number?

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Starter Pack, Lesson 5

Teachers can use these lessons to get a clear idea of the starting level of their pupils, they can accurately assess whether each pupil is ready for the transition and they can use the information to guide the way they teach the pupils in subsequent lessons.

The activities are organised in a way that allows teachers to observe pupils interacting with each other as they collect information about pupils' knowledge, abilities and skills.

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Supporting progress

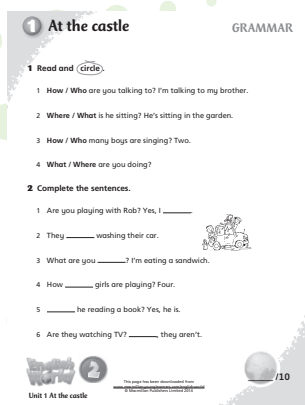
Assessing whether children are ready for the transition from preschool to primary at the start of the school year only provides temporary information about a child's progress and level. Children are excited to learn and learn quickly. Teachers should therefore be prepared to use a variety of instructional resources to help their pupils achieve the required standards.

English World provides a variety of materials as a follow-up to the initial assessment in the *Starter Pack*. The resources support teachers in structuring their learning environment, and cater for pupils' different learning styles, interests, skills and abilities. These materials offer differentiated instruction strategies and techniques, which address children's diverse needs.

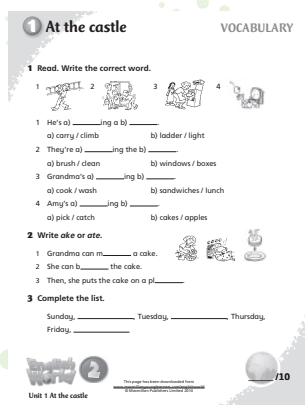
Ongoing assessment

Teachers should continually reassess pupils at regular intervals during the course to measure their continuing progress. *English World* offers a range of assessment materials including grammar and vocabulary worksheets, revision worksheets, check-ups and a test builder tool where teachers can create tailor-made tests.

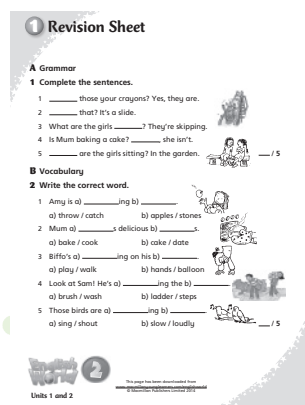
The *English World Portfolio* and *Diploma* pages at the back of the workbook allow pupils to self-assess, become aware of themselves as learners and measure their own progress.



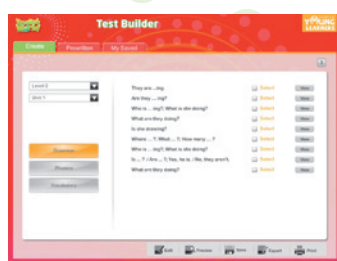
Grammar Worksheets 2



Vocabulary Worksheets 2



Revision Worksheets 2



Test Builder



Workbook 2, Diploma 2



Workbook 2, Stickers

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Child development

songs + games + movement = healthy child development

Teachers will find that some children develop more quickly in some areas than others. There are stages of development at every age, and these cannot be taught or hurried. If a child is forced to perform beyond their abilities, it may damage their self-image or create negative attitudes about school.

There is a tendency these days to do too much, too soon, too fast.

Children have a lifetime to be adults, so it is vital to allow them to enjoy their childhood with playful, interesting and developmentally appropriate activities:

Play fosters total development and should be integrated into everything they do.

Sensory learning emphasises the need for a variety of media and materials to stimulate children's senses.

Movement is important in helping children learn. They cannot learn sitting quietly and using a pencil for long periods.

The *English World Starter Pack*, as well as the course material for Level 1, has been carefully designed to promote learning through games, songs, multimedia and a variety of kinaesthetic activities that stimulate children's creativity and senses, and ensure that their learning experience is engaging and positive.

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Action points: Tips for a successful transition

Starting a new school year is exciting for children; they are eager to use their new books and school materials and show enthusiasm in everything they do. The challenge for the teacher is to maintain that enthusiasm.

What happens in the first weeks of school can determine the atmosphere for future lessons. On the first day, teachers can help the pupils establish their own personal work area by showing them where they can keep their books and materials. Helping pupils build pride in their work starts with simple steps like assisting them in writing their names on their worksheets and displaying these worksheets in the classroom.

Teachers can help pupils build self-esteem by using praise and encouragement whenever possible, but children also need rules and procedures. Rules promote a work-orientated atmosphere and create a clear expectation of the things that are important, but they should also be simple, fair, enforceable and consistent. Pupils should be involved in setting these rules for the classroom in order to establish a productive and cooperative working environment. A good example could be setting the rules as a mind map as follows. This discipline mind map should be displayed in a visible place and pupils could start each lesson by remembering the classroom rules.



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CLICK HERE

to watch a recording of Myriam
talking about School Readiness.



Future planning

Before the school year ends, preschool children are often invited to spend a fun day at 'big school' to meet the primary school children, visit the classroom and learn what to expect. This experience can help the transition because children become less fearful of the move to their new school and it helps them feel comfortable, secure and confident as they get ready to grow.

comfortable



secure
environment



confident
children

Teacher observation and reflection notes:

- What are the emotions that teachers, parents and pupils experience at the start of the school year?
- What problems have you identified with pupils at the beginning of their first school year?
- What classroom techniques can be introduced to help pupils interact effectively?
- What approaches establish or maintain classroom rules and procedures?
- What can teachers do to create and maintain effective relationships with pupils?
- What methods and classroom activities can establish and communicate learning goals, track pupil progress and celebrate success?