



**Escuela de Doctorado  
y Estudios de Posgrado**  
Universidad de La Laguna

The value of published English  
Language Teaching (ELT) materials:  
An case study of their use in Compulsory  
Secondary Education

*Trabajo Final del Máster Universitario en Formación del Profesorado  
de Educación Secundaria Obligatoria, Bachillerato, Formación  
Profesional y Enseñanza de Idiomas*

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**Course 2021-2022**



**“Education is not a preparation for life,  
education is life itself”**  
(John Dewey, 1916)



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>0. Abstract</b>	
<b>1. Introduction</b>	1
<b>2. Theoretical framework</b>	5
2.1 Common European Framework	5
2.1.1 Competencies	6
2.1.2 Common Reference Levels	6
2.1.3 Curricular design	9
2.2 Spanish Educational System	10
2.2.1 Ley Canaria de Educación no Universitaria	10
2.2.2 LOMCE	11
2.2.2.1 Contents	12
2.2.2.2 Key competencies	13
2.2.2.3 Assessment criteria and learning standards	14
2.3 Agustín de Betancourt Secondary School	17
<b>3. Course components analysis</b>	18
3.1 Components	18
3.1.1 Components for the student	19
3.1.2 Components for the teacher	23
3.2 Contents	25
3.2.1 Digital resources	30
3.2.2 Other content aspects	32
3.2.3 Portfolio tasks	33
3.3 Assessment and evaluation	35
3.3.1 Test Factory	36
<b>4. Discussion</b>	36
4.1 Published materials deficiencies	36
4.2 A better choice of assessment	39
4.3 ESL level progression	40
4.4 A real application scenario	41
4.5 Resource adaptation	42



<b>5. A proposal to boost the published materials</b>	43
5.1 Activating new vocabulary	43
5.2 Functional exponents teaching	45
5.3 Creativity and writing	46
<b>6. Limitations</b>	47
6.1 Limitation of my analysis	47
6.2 Limitation of my proposal	48
<b>7. Conclusion</b>	49
<b>8. References</b>	52
<b>9. Appendices</b>	56
9.1 English Department's Programme Year 1	57
9.2 English Department's Programme Year 2	59
9.3 English Department's Programme Year 3	61
9.4 English Department's Programme Year 4	63
9.5 Vocabulary and grammar content of the Burlington Books	65
9.6 List of portfolio tasks and projects	68
9.7 Formative Record Sheet	71
9.8 Summative Assessment	72



## **ABSTRACT**

This Master's Thesis (TFM) seeks to call into question published ELT learning materials with a view to examining their potential when used with adolescents. Such materials are undeniably one of the most prevalent resources employed by teachers at many institutions owing to the convenience they offer in planning and assessing foreign language skills. For this reason, a series of queries arise: Do these published materials reflect the current educational legislation? Does a careful progression in terms of the language level of the learners take place? Do these materials lend themselves to being adapted to the students' needs? With the purpose of addressing these concerns, a detailed analysis of the materials currently in use at the high school in which I completed my Master's internship will be proposed, followed by a subsequent discussion on suggestions to optimise the use of foreign language learning resources.

**Keywords:** English as a Second Language, coursebook, Language teaching, Secondary Education, materials, language progression, and teaching resources.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

Over time there has been a great deal of heated debate about what a suitable teaching praxis must contain. Harmer and Thornbury (2013) are among many that state the process of learning a new language should adopt an action-oriented approach in which students learn when they are actively engaged in a task. The authors declared that the fundamental characteristics of any communicative activity imply that any linguistic intervention should always aim at meaningful communication with a focus on content –as opposed to formal precision– and with little teacher involvement and material control.

Thereby one can conclude that communicative activities concern learning how to communicate in a language and thus in no way refers to the exclusive study of grammatical structures. For instance, if one wishes to learn to speak Japanese, not only does one have to acquire vocabulary and grammar, but also cultural elements, such as how to address a person, have to be taken into consideration. In this regard, other factors are equally crucial to the learning process along with the lexicon and grammar language. I refer here to communicative functions the language performs when used in context. Consequently, artificial situations should be avoided.

For this reason, it is desirable for teachers to provide the appropriate contexts for their students to engage in a concrete situation in the foreign language. Through problem-solving in the target language, students will internalise that language. To illustrate this idea that highlights the importance of putting new knowledge into practice, Jeremy Harmer and Scott Thornbury (2013) use the example of the two different ways of learning how to swim: watching someone swimming or getting into a pool. This is referred to as task-based learning and involves an action-oriented approach in which language is acquired through learning situations that students have to complete.

Regarding materials, Harmer and Thornbury (2013) remark that language functions have fairly recently been incorporated into language learning materials: one can learn how to order in a restaurant, ask for directions, or buy public transport tickets. It is also interesting to point out the use of the information gap activity, a kind of activity in which students are obliged to communicate with each other in order to obtain information necessary for task completion. This is often done in the context of games that reinforce



comprehension. One such game is “Describe and Draw”, where one student describes a picture and the other draws what they understand.

This is related to Vygotsky's (1978) developmental theory on children's ability to learn socially relevant tools and culture-based cues. This theory emphasises how development cannot be separated from its social context. Consequently, tasks must incorporate a practical use in which learners become agents of action and teachers play the role of guides during the learning process. According to this theory, low-level functions such as simple perception, associative learning and voluntary attention are first developed by children; nevertheless, through social interactions with more literate others, children gradually acquire higher-level functions such as language, counting, problem-solving, voluntary attention and memory schemes. For this reason, teachers may focus their attention on the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978), which is the zone between independent and assisted performance: whatever a child is able to do in cooperation today, will be done independently.

Furthermore, the cooperative learning approach (Slavin, 1991) could complement the language learning process, as learners rely on each other to complete tasks that they would not otherwise be able to complete individually while developing higher-level thinking, oral communication, self-management and leadership skills. Positive interdependence, the first component of cooperative learning, is accomplished when each group member appreciates and recognises the cooperation of the group to meet their own personal goals, those of other group members and those of the group as a whole. Therefore the zone of maximum development provides a theoretical foundation for the understanding of cooperative learning.

By the same token, Dewey (1938) conducted research on the matter and concluded that teaching should adopt an experiential learning approach with interactive, interdisciplinary classes that prepare learners to form part of a democratic society by boosting discussions on different topics. Dewey holds the view that any learning is an experience subjected to continuous change - in other words, learning only happens through involvement - which is why students write down their observations and form rich, memorable learning experiences regardless of the outcome.



The conclusions of all these scholars are similar to those reported by the Common European Framework of Reference (henceforth CEFR) which conceives learners of a language as “members of society who have tasks (not exclusively language-related) to accomplish in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of action” (CEFR, 2001, P. 9).

On top of that, the theory of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983) should be taken into consideration when the issue of adequate teaching practice is raised. According to Gardner, the human being possesses eight parts of the brain in which, to varying degrees, different independent intelligence remain: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinaesthetic, musical, naturalistic, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence. This theory suggests that, as opposed to a standardised curriculum, schools should pursue individual-centred education, with curricula tailored to the needs of each student, and that includes assisting students to develop the intelligence in which they are weakest. Consequently, it is of utmost importance to motivate students to explore and practise all intelligences, as this will function both as a tool to identify and understand students as well as to facilitate the teaching praxis. Such ideas are embodied in the Common European Framework and the current Spanish educational law with regard to the acquisition of competence.

If I were to reflect on my personal language-learning experience, I would conclude that a practice-to-theory method is the best option in consideration of how a native language is acquired. Consequently, it seems to fly in the face of common sense to put emphasis on grammatical structures and artificial contexts whereas the language functions are neglected. Hence, when designing effective foreign language learning activities based on a practical context, we can draw inspiration from ideas provided by practitioners in the field, yet original ideas could also be incorporated. Along with this, it is a widely held view that technology can be used as a language learning tool that would offer the opportunity to communicate with native speakers or other second language users of English.

As a result of the aforementioned, some studies are rather equivocal when it comes to the advisability or otherwise of making use of published materials, especially the extent to which they should be adapted. Strategies to





enhance the language learning process might involve authentic materials or even no materials at all (Thornbury, 2013).

Since myriad ELT preparatory classes have been introduced for a multitude of institutions, the use of published materials is now more pervasive than it has ever been, increasingly emerging as the most ubiquitous methodological tool for language teaching, since heavy schedules and correction burdens frequently lead teachers to rely on published materials. Such books often constitute the foundation of much of the linguistic input received by students, as they are focused on providing their users with information about language features and helping them practise these features. In this respect, published materials are viewed as a useful tool (Ur, 1996) owing to the following arguments: provision of a clear framework, use of tasks at an appropriate adapted level, and a sense of system, coherence, progression, consistency and continuity. Conversely, others (Richards & Renandya, 2002) identify the drawbacks of these materials by stating that they are unavoidably superficial, fail to contextualise language activities, promote inadequate cultural understanding and do not address discursive skills, among other disadvantages.

In view of the relevance of language learning materials, it is striking to note the scant attention they have attracted until quite recently in the applied linguistics literature. Literature on materials research has certainly progressed, with the emphasis less on the forms of materials selection and more on the application of theory to practice and practice to theory (Tomlison, 2012).

To my mind, published materials play an essential role in the English learning process of most adolescent students and, in view of the poor rate of English proficiency in the Canarian society, I am interested in exploring whether these materials may be suitable as a means of obtaining more successful results. Taking into account that this foreign language starts to be taught from a very early age, making it a compulsory subject during the basic education phase, the current teaching methods invite critical appraisal. Thereupon this research aims to compile comprehensive data on the English subject published materials in use in the Compulsory Secondary Education levels of a Canarian high school and to examine the language progression in terms of the level that



students are expected to have acquired by the end of this educational stage. Suggestions for improving these resources will also be provided.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The materials to be thoroughly examined in this study shall constitute *New Action! 1, 2, 3 and 4* (McDonald & Devlin, 2019) released by Burlington Books. I have deliberately chosen these published materials because they are currently being used in the high school where I undertook an internship, the Agustín de Betancourt Secondary School. Such books have been released in 2019 under the *LOMCE*<sup>1</sup> law in accordance with levels A1, A2 and A2+ of the Common European Framework. The present theoretical framework covers detailed aspects of the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR), the Spanish educational system, the Agustín de Betancourt Secondary School, and the Burlington Books publishing house.

### **2.1 Common European Framework of Reference for Languages**

The CEFR clearly constitutes an indispensable source for the elaboration of foreign language curricula and text materials, among which figure the Spanish educational system. Consideration of this report is imperative in view of the fact that it is the first link in the chain of foreign language learning design. It is suggested by the CEFR (2001) to adopt an action-oriented approach concerning language learning taking into account that:

Language use, embracing language learning, comprises the actions performed by persons who as individuals and as social agents develop a range of competencies at their disposal in various contexts under various conditions and under various constraints to engage in language activities ( p. 9).

According to the CEFR, practitioners are expected to anticipate the communicative needs of the learners for whom they are responsible, as it is not possible to specify all the communicative tasks which might be required in real-life situations, and thereafter to exploit any resources in the CEFR model to target the communicative tasks which they should be prepared to perform.

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<sup>1</sup> Spanish acronym for Organic Law for the Improvement of the Quality of Education



Moreover, the CEFR specifies a series of strategies, together with illustrative scales for each skill assessed, for production, reception and interaction in a second language.

### **2.1.1 Competencies**

To perform tasks and activities related to the communicative situations in which they are engaged, language users and learners build on a set of competencies which have been developed in the course of their previous experience. The CEFR (2001) declares that:

in order to participate with full effectiveness in communicative events, learners must have learnt or acquired: the necessary competencies, the ability to put these competencies into action, and the ability to employ the strategies necessary to bring the competence into action (p. 131).

It is also worth mentioning that the CEFR highlights plurilingual and pluricultural competence, described as an uneven competence due to the imbalance it produces when learning a new language: one always attains a greater proficiency in one of the languages. It consists of the acquisition of curricular content through a foreign language in the belief that languages are mastered through their use (García, 2009). This approach is implemented in Spain through the CLIL programme in school settings, where it creates a stimulating environment for students to improve their language skills in a foreign language within a controlled linguistic context (Pérez Cañado, 2020).

### **2.1.2 Common Reference Levels**

An objective of the CEFR is to facilitate comparisons between different qualification systems by providing a description of the levels of proficiency required by existing standards, tests and examinations. Thus, six common reference levels have been established at which two sub-levels within the classic division between basic, intermediate and advanced can be distinguished. Therefore, A1 and A2 levels refer to a basic user of the language, B1 and B2 correspond to an independent user and C1 and C2 represent a



proficient user. Outlined in the table below is a global overview of the levels relevant to this research (A1 to A2):

Table 1<sup>2</sup>. Common Reference Levels: global scale (CEFR, 2001, p. 24)

Basic User	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

Such a simplified holistic representation is not only aimed to facilitate reporting of the scheme to non-specialist users but also guides teachers and curriculum planners in their approach (CEFR, 2001, p. 24). A second table is followed in which the different skills assessed in a language are presented. It is structured into three main learning components: understanding, speaking and writing. Contained within them are the skills to be acquired: listening and writing within understanding, spoken interaction and spoken production within speaking, and writing.

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<sup>2</sup> *Note.* From "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment", by Council of Europe, 2001, *Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge*, p. 24. Copyright 2001 by the Council of Europe.



Table 2<sup>3</sup>. Common Reference Levels: self-assessment grid (CEFR, 2001, p. 26)

		A1	A2
U n d e r s t a n d i n g	Listening	I can recognise familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local areas, employment).  I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.
	Reading	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.
S p e a k i n g	Spoken Interaction	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.

<sup>3</sup> Note. From "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment", by Council of Europe, 2001, *Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge*, p. 26. Copyright 2001 by the Council of Europe.



		of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	
	Spoken Production	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.
Writing	Writing	I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.	I can write short, simple notes and messages relating to matters in areas of immediate need. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.

Additionally, the CEFR also adopts a branching approach to the possible existence of narrower levels. A benefit of a branching approach may be that a common set of levels and/or descriptors can be split at practical local levels in different places by different users to suit local needs and yet still relate to a common system. In that matter, more active participation in the conversation, given some assistance and certain constraints, is what is appreciated in an A2+ performance (CEFR, 2001, pp. 31-34).

### 2.1.3 Curricular design

With regard to curricular design in the language domain, the CEFR suggests that it may appear to be more appropriate to concentrate on the development of strategies which enable one or another type of task with a linguistic dimension to be performed. As a consequence, the objective is to upgrade the strategies conventionally adopted by the learner by improving them



by making them more complex, more extensive and more conscious, and by trying to adapt them to tasks for which they were not originally used.

## **2.2 The Spanish Educational System**

It is first of all imperative to familiarise oneself with the *LOMCE* law and the *Ley Canaria de Educación no Universitaria*<sup>4</sup> (BOC, 152, 2014) regarding the legal context of the publication of the materials to be analysed in the following section for the reason that these materials were published in 2019.

### **2.2.1 Ley Canaria de Educación no Universitaria**

The *Ley 6/2014, de 25 de julio, Canaria de Educación no Universitaria* (BOC, 152, 2014) points out that the high rates of underdevelopment and illiteracy that the Canary Islands have been experiencing for decades have led to a starting point of education for the Canarian population that is below the national average. Notwithstanding the economic efforts made by Canarian society, the desirable levels of education have not yet been fully achieved given the significant numbers of students falling behind, dropping out and failing at school. This is evidenced in the PISA report published by the OECD (2015).

Furthermore, this law suggests that the Canary Islands need a globalised educational system receptive to new realities and connected to state and international networks to support research, innovation and educational development while promoting lifelong learning. It also encourages innovative and high-quality learning methods and approaches through the use of e-content technologies.

According to *Ley 6/2014, de 25 de julio, Canaria de Educación no Universitaria* (BOC, 152, 2014), basic education comprises Primary and Compulsory Secondary School from ages six to sixteen which should be oriented toward the acquisition of essential skills and basic competencies. Likewise, emphasis is placed on the paramount importance of incorporating ICT into the learning process.

At the same time, coherence is highly sought after at all levels of education as well as an effective curricular diversification to address students with special needs and special educational support. To this end, the learning

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<sup>4</sup> Canarian Law on Non-University Education



and performance improvement programme *PMAR* and *POSTPMAR* (*Orden de 5 de febrero*, 2018) and the *esTEla* programme (*Resolución 1009/2021*, 2021) has been set up, the first one to support students with learning difficulties and latter with the aim of facilitating the transition between Pre-primary, Primary and Secondary education.

The Compulsory Secondary Education stage encompasses four academic years, to be followed ordinarily between the ages of twelve and sixteen. As regards secondary schools, they will be empowered to integrate subjects in accordance with what is established in the regulations.

It is also mentioned in *Ley 6/2014, de 25 de julio, Canaria de Educación no Universitaria* (BOC, 152, 2014) how the assessment of students' learning in Compulsory Secondary Education must be continuous and differentiated according to the subjects in the curriculum. On top of this, the plurilingual competence that was previously mentioned by the CEFR (2001) is also introduced here through CLIL (*Resolución 1260/2021*, 2021) and other linguistic immersion programmes as the regional education administration is to facilitate the teaching of certain subjects in a foreign language and the learning of a second foreign language. The aim of teaching, learning and assessment of foreign languages is to achieve the A2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages by the end of this stage.

### **2.2.2 LOMCE**

The current national law on education *LOMCE* (BOE, 3. 2015) establishes the basic curriculum of Compulsory Secondary Education in *Real Decreto 1105/2014, de 26 de diciembre* and in it can be seen subjects grouped into three blocks: basic subjects, specific subjects and subjects established by the regional level<sup>5</sup>. The *Decreto 315/2105, de 28 de agosto* (BOC, 169, 2015), sets out the organisation and teaching corresponding to the educational stages of Compulsory Secondary Education and Upper Secondary Education, incorporating the regulations of autonomous regional competence. Compulsory Secondary Education consists of two cycles: the first corresponds to years 1, 2 and 3; the second to year 4. The First Foreign Language –equivalently, English– is part of the block of basic subjects at all levels, covering 4 sessions

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<sup>5</sup> Translated from the Spanish term “*asignaturas de libre configuración autonómica*”.





per week, and must therefore be studied by all students. It is expected in *Decreto 83/2016, de 4 de julio* (BOC, 136, p. 18238) that students progressively advance towards proficiency in the language which will enable them to cope adequately in less common contexts by the end of this stage. To this end, it is recommended, to adopt innovative teaching resources adapted to the needs of the group and to accommodate in the design of the English sessions different teaching models (direct, non-directive, role-play, etc.), varied groupings (individual, paired, small groups, etc.), as well as different learning styles and the multiple intelligence approach.

It should also be stated that the Canary Islands (BOC, 136, p. 18234) underlines the importance of information and communication technologies, ICTs, in its educational curriculum, as they provide learning autonomy, shape the manner of relating to others and access to information, and if used correctly, increase cognitive capacities and learning expectations. The presence of ICTs in the design of learning situations is essential because, by virtue of their characteristics, they can provide an unlimited variety of resources for the classroom, allow immediate and real approximation to different languages and distant cultures, and foster the adoption of self-learning strategies. In this regard, secure platforms such as e-Twinning (n.d.) are available within the school context, enabling European networking opportunities as well as flexible projects with other schools, or virtual learning environments.

### **2.2.2.1 Contents**

Furthermore, contents established in the current curriculum cover broad topics such as media, family, education, transportation, environment, and others; in this regard, teachers can freely address these issues as they consider most effective; nonetheless, a division of 5 content blocks have been established by *Decreto 83/2016, de 4 de julio* (BOC, 136, pp. 18240-18241).

Firstly, content blocks 1 and 2 are dedicated to oral comprehension and production; in other words, speaking and listening skills. They involve spoken expression and interaction as well as the understanding of oral messages and linguistic models from different sources, on the other hand, strategies to support oral comprehension and production are proposed.



Secondly, content blocks 3 and 4 refer to written comprehension and production; also known as writing and reading skills. They provide students with procedures and tools to develop their understanding of written texts and, consequently, their ability to create their own texts. It should also be noted that the previous knowledge of the reading and writing strategies that students already hold in their mother tongue is taken as a starting point.

Finally, content block 5 corresponds to socio-linguistic, socio-cultural and emotional aspects and its purpose is to ensure students are aware of and value the customs and characteristics of the countries where the foreign language is spoken and to identify the similarities and differences between different cultures and to reflect on the influence of these on their own environment. On the other hand, it seeks to generate in students skills such as impulse control, self-awareness, motivation, enthusiasm, perseverance, empathy, and so forth in order for them to have a positive influence on their learning.

However, in spite of the distribution in these five blocks, all learning must always be conceived as complementary, constituting an integrated whole.

### **2.2.2.2 Key competencies**

Competencies concern the ability to activate and apply in an integrated manner the contents of each teaching and educational stage so as to achieve the effective resolution of complex problems (BOC, 136, p. 17055). The following is the list of the seven competencies active in the field of education (BOC, 169, p. 25294):

- 1) Competence in Linguistic Communication.
- 2) Competence in Mathematics, Science and Technology.
- 3) Digital Competence.
- 4) Learning to Learn.
- 5) Social and Civic Competence.
- 6) Sense of Initiative and Entrepreneurship.
- 7) Cultural Awareness and Expression.

As one can infer from *Decreto 83/2016, de 4 de julio* (BOC, 136, pp. 18238-18239), the subject of First Foreign Language builds on six of the seven



key competencies, being the competence in Mathematics, Science and Technology the one which is not applicable.

Firstly, it directly contributes to the acquisition of competence in Linguistic Communication through the use of language as a tool to achieve oral and written comprehension and production skills. Digital competence is also enhanced by using ICT to establish social interaction and to develop assignments and projects, indirectly promoting the realisation of basic notions of safety, as well as the risks associated with the use of online technologies and resources. Similarly, this subject contributes to the achievement of the Learning to Learn competence, as its content, assessment criteria and standards incorporate both direct and indirect comprehension and production strategies. Likewise, students are encouraged to reinforce Social and Civic competence by using social conventions, courtesy rules, verbal and non-verbal language appropriate to the different registers, and awareness of aspects related to the group work organisation. Through the creation of projects based on their proactive capacity, their effort and their innate innovative abilities and creativity, the competence of Sense of Initiative and Entrepreneurship is consolidated. Lastly, students systematically deal with artistic and cultural graphic and audio documents specific to the countries in which the foreign language they are studying is spoken, thus stimulating the development of competence in Cultural Awareness and Expression.

### **2.2.2.3 Assessment criteria and learning standards**

The assessment criteria are the referential elements in the structure of the curriculum, playing, therefore, a central role, given that they connect all the elements that make it up: stage objectives, competencies, contents, assessable learning standards and methodology (BOC, 136, p. 18239). Due to their synthesised nature, the criteria facilitate the visualisation of the most relevant aspects of the learning process in students to provide teachers with a solid and common baseline when planning the teaching process, designing learning situations and their evaluation. In *Decreto 83/2016, de 4 de julio* (BOC, 136, pp. 18246-18358), the assessment criteria are separated by course. At the same time, each criterion, along with its specific objective, includes the learning block, the dimension of the learner (as a social agent or as an autonomous



learner), the competencies, the learning standards and the contents to be treated. As mentioned above, the subject of First Foreign Language is conceived as a continuous learning process in which one must gradually improve, for which reason why the evaluation criteria are essentially the same in all the courses; the main variations correspond to the linguistic domains, which will increasingly broaden, and to the demands regarding the marks, which will be progressively demanding. The following is a brief description of each of the ten criteria:

- 1) Understand the general meaning of simple and well-structured oral texts dealing with common and familiar matters (listening skills).
- 2) Apply the most appropriate strategies to understand the general meaning of short and simple messages transmitted orally or by technical means (listening strategies).
- 3) Produce short and simple oral texts with simple structure, appropriate to the receiver and the context, and deal with everyday and familiar topics (speaking skills).
- 4) Interact in a simple and coherent way in short oral exchanges clearly structured on daily and known topics, adapting the register to the interlocutor and the context and showing respect for the ideas and opinions of others (spoken interaction skill).
- 5) Apply the most appropriate strategies to elaborate short and clear monologic or dialogic oral productions, transmitted orally or by technical means (speaking strategies).
- 6) Understand the essential information and identify the main points in short written texts dealing with familiar, everyday topics (reading skills).
- 7) Apply the most appropriate strategies to understand the general meaning or main points of short texts (reading strategies).
- 8) Write short and simple texts, appropriate to the receiver and the context, and deal with daily and familiar topics, respecting the most basic spelling conventions (writing skill).
- 9) Apply the appropriate strategies to write short texts with a simple structure (writing strategies).



10) Apply the basic and significant sociocultural and ~~OBJ~~ sociolinguistic knowledge of the ~~OBJ~~ countries where the foreign language is spoken to the comprehension and production of ~~OBJ~~ texts (socio-linguistic, socio-cultural and emotional aspects).

Furthermore, the learning standards are defined as the means to specify what students must know, understand and be able to do by the end of a stage and they are two sets of them according to the educational cycle: the first cycle (the first three years) contains 24 standards while the second cycle (the fourth year) is composed of 25.

In Compulsory Secondary Education, the results of the assessment will be expressed by means of a numerical grade, without using decimals, on a scale of one to ten, which will be accompanied by the terms Insufficient (IN), Sufficient (SU), Good (BI), Remarkable (NT), Outstanding (SB)<sup>6</sup>, applying the following correspondences (BOC, 169, pp. 25299-25300):

- Insufficient: 1, 2, 3 or 4.
- Sufficient: 5.
- Good: 6.
- Remarkable: 7 or 8.
- Outstanding: 9 or 10.

When students do not attend the extraordinary exams of the subjects they have not passed, they will be marked "Not Presented" (NP). The academic record will include the student's details together with the centre's identification data as well as information relating to the assessment process. It will be opened as soon as the student is admitted to the centre and will include, at least, the results of the assessment of each year with the grades obtained, the decisions on promotion to the next year, the educational support measures, and the curricular adaptations that have been adopted for the student.

For this purpose, rubrics are set up containing the ten assessment criteria for each year of Compulsory Secondary Education (*ESO*), the pertinent

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<sup>6</sup> Contractions of these terms are presented in original Spanish.



specifications necessary to obtain the above-mentioned results, and the competencies involved in each of the criteria.

### **2.3 Agustín de Betancourt Secondary School**

The Agustín de Betancourt Secondary School in Puerto de la Cruz has been recognised as one of the most prominent public schools in the north of Tenerife. The school is situated in El Tejar in the district of Puerto de la Cruz, in the north of the island of Tenerife. Currently, the Agustín de Betancourt Secondary School accommodates more than 800 students distributed in two shifts and it is also the location of the Official Language School. The school is equipped with acceptable facilities: departments, laboratories, library, audio-visual classrooms, common room, computer rooms, projectors in the classrooms, and so forth; and it has sufficient teaching resources to meet the needs of this type of teaching.

With respect to the First Foreign Language subject, I was able to gain access to the English Department's programme for 2021-2022. The following is a summary of the programme of each level of Compulsory Secondary Education (*ESO*), not including the performance improvement programme's classrooms *PMAR* and *POSTPMAR*—subject to curricular adaptations—. Note that every year is composed of three learning situations planned so as to impart one per term, in addition to dedicating the month of September to a general review of the prior knowledge.

- Year 1:
  - My Life
  - Houses and Animals of my Dreams
  - Healthy and Junk Food
  
- Year 2:
  - What about your Favourite Stars
  - Amazing Stories
  - The Best Way of Life
  
- Year 3:



- What to Do and Eat around Town
  - A Travel Experience
  - Life and Customs in the Future
- 
- Year 4:
    - Funny Things
    - Breaking News
    - Culture and Environment

Appendices 1, 2, 3 and 4 attached below contain tables which summarise the contents split into linguistic dimensions (vocabulary, grammar, reading, etc.) followed by the final tasks to be completed at the end of each learning situation. The assessment criteria, competencies and learning standards set out in this programme are exactly the same as those set out in *Decreto 83/2016, de 4 de julio* (BOC, 136, 2016).

### **3. COURSE COMPONENTS ANALYSIS**

After having examined the theoretical references, the objective of this section consists, on the one hand, of outlining the vast amount of material that these books supply and, on the other hand, of discussing their quality and confirming whether a leap from A1 to A2+ (CEFR, 2001, p. 24) can really be achieved or whether, as perceived by students, the content is repeated over and over again.

#### **3.1 Components**

At each secondary educational level, *Action! and New Action!* (McDonald & Devlin, 2019) published materials comprise a Student's Book, a two-in-one Workbook and Language Builder, and interactive online resources. Besides, they also contain a Teacher's Manual, a Class Audio, a Teacher's All-in-One Pack and Digital Teacher's Resources. Such an abundance of materials may have its strengths and drawbacks in the classroom. In the course of this analysis, what will be examined, among other matters, is whether all the course components are worthwhile, whether they are amenable to adaptation, whether



there is repetition in the content and thus no further learning progress, and so on.

### **3.1.1 Components for the student**

The following lists all the resources that are aimed at students, specifying the different parts of which they are composed.

#### Student's Book:

- Introductory unit
- Nine structured units
- Three review sections
- Three projects
- Section Time Out! (only in ESO 1)
- Extra Culture Magazine
- Video Slideshows
- World Map
- Spelling Appendix
- Pronunciation Appendix
- Pairwork Appendix
- Irregular Verb List

The introductory unit of each book reviews basic vocabulary, grammar, and writing skills. Along with this, the review sections also include a vocabulary and grammar recapitulation of three units since it has been designed to cover three units per trimester of the academic year. Moreover, each unit offers cultural and cross-curricular content highlighting vocabulary development and recycling, as well as numerous listening and speaking activities stressing real-world communication.

#### Workbook:

- An introductory unit
- Nine units
- Check your progress section
- Self-Evaluation section





- Vocabulary reference section
  - Bilingual Glossary
  - Bilingual Speaking Glossary
- Language resource section
  - Grammar Appendix
  - Irregular verb list
- Writing resource section
  - Writing guide
  - Writing and project plan resources
- Portfolio section
  - Portfolio tasks
  - Project plans
- Learning competencies section
  - Self-evaluation Charts

#### Language Builder:

- Vocabulary and functional language
- Activities for revision

The workbooks contain nine units including vocabulary and grammar practice, reading texts and comprehension exercises, completion dialogues, error correction, and extra writing practice. Additionally, they provide a progress check section per unit with error correction and dictation exercises, as well as a self-assessment area. It also comes with the full-colour Language Builder section to review and consolidate vocabulary and functional language listed by topics through fun activities such as following the maze or matching the pictures using the vocabulary of the unit. According to these books, competence in Mathematics is being practised, whereas this subject's curriculum does not include it among the competencies that are being worked on (BOC, 136, pp. 18238-18239).

It is also noteworthy that Burlington has released the Basic Practice books for curricular adaptations, which are for students who need to reinforce the basic content of that specific year. These books are a simplified version of the Workbooks whose main distinguishing features are that the instructions are

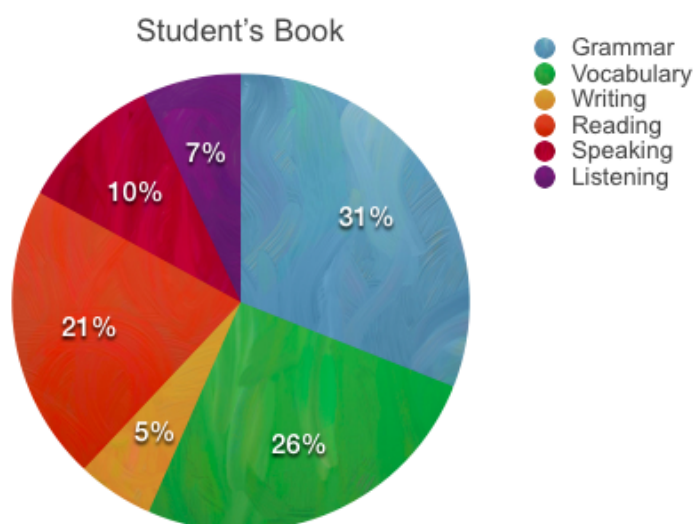


in Spanish, a bilingual word list is available, key grammatical structures are presented in very simple tables with a translation, and a section of self-checking and self-assessment exercises is provided at the end of every unit.

One concern that arises when analysing these materials is whether there is an excessive focus on grammar and vocabulary, in light of the conclusions of Harmer and Thornbury (2013) of targeting communicative tasks with a focus on content instead of formal precision when learning a foreign language.

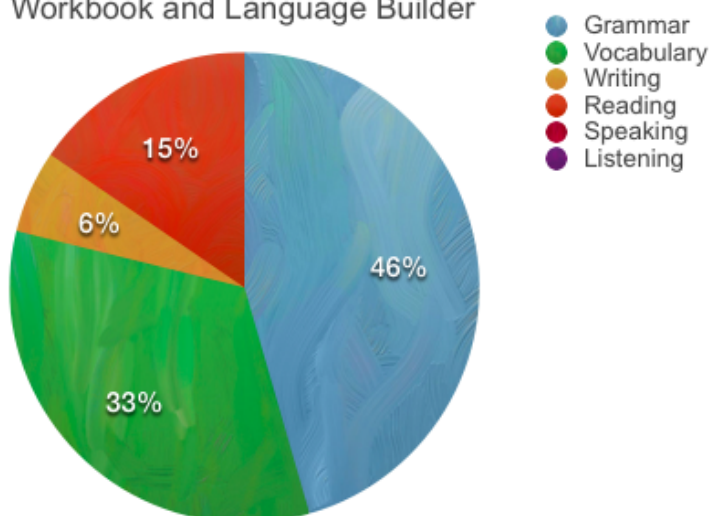
For the purpose of clarifying this question, the charts below are presented. These illustrate the percentage of activities in *Burlington Action! 1 Student's Book* and *Workbook* (McDonald & Devlin, 2019) units 1 and 9 that address the different areas of grammar, vocabulary, writing, reading, speaking and listening.

It should be observed that some activities differed from the areas they were intended to develop: for instance, a speaking activity consisting of matching sentences in the gaps of a dialogue or a listening activity involving the repetitions of single vocabulary words. Therefore, the different skills have been classified in accordance with the definition of language activities provided by the CEFR (2001, p. 14).





Workbook and Language Builder



What stands out in these figures is the dominance of the areas of grammar and vocabulary, representing more than 50% of the content of the books –specifically a 57% in the Student’s Book and a 79% in the Workbook. This is certainly an aspect that requires improvement by including more activities in the other areas, especially speaking and listening.

Moreover, after reviewing all the components for the student, it could be considered critical whether there is a need to use the two books–Student’s Book and Workbook–, taking into account the economic situation of some families and the confusion the use of too many materials may cause. All in all, the Workbook reinforces the main content of the Student’s Book which makes it suitable for setting activities as homework, taking into account the time needed to teach all the units in the school period. In this respect, consideration should be given to the needs of the target group. Based on my experience, when working for a public school in a middle-class area of the island, one of these resources should only be required, since families cannot afford both and students are inclined to refuse to do homework.

If I were to decide which book to use during the school year, my preference would be the Student’s Book due to its better skills balance and greater adaptability. The Workbook, on the other hand, seems to be intended to reinforce the grammar, vocabulary and writing assignments of the unit that, in



spite of being more easily assessed, do not fully represent progress in language learning.

### **3.1.2 Components for the teacher**

Burlington Action! Books include an interleaved Teacher's Manual, an All-in-One Pack, and a wide range of Digital Teacher's Resources. All these resources are listed as follows, with details of the different parts of which they are compiled.

#### Teacher's Manual:

- Introduction and components of the course
- Assessment and evaluation sections
- Evaluation of students' language and learning competencies
- Teaching notes interleaved with the Student's Book
  - Introductory unit
  - Nine structured units
  - Three review sections
  - Three projects
  - Section Time Out! (only in ESO 1)
  - Pronunciation Appendix
- Extra Culture Magazine
- World Map
- Spelling Appendix
- Pairwork Appendix
- Irregular verb list
- Student's Book answers
- Workbook answers
- Language Builder answers
- Listening scripts
- Optional listening activities
- Photocopiable Student's Book material

This comprehensive manual contains all the physical materials available to students and, as a new feature, an extensive introduction to the course



describing the use of all the resources, especially the digital ones, and the procedures for assessment. Teachers will also find cross-referenced notes linked to these components in order to facilitate lesson planning as well as extensive background information on the topics in the Student's Book.

#### Teacher's All-in-One Pack:

- Test section including
  - Diagnostic test
  - Revision worksheets
  - Nine-unit tests
  - Three-term tests
  - Two final exams
  - A listening and speaking test per each unit
  - A term test
  - A final exam
  - Three key competencies tests
  - Answer key
- Mixed-ability section including
  - Two photocopiable Extra Practice worksheets per unit
  - One additional photocopiable Extension worksheet per unit
  - Answer key
- Extra pairwork speaking activities
- Answer key
- Audio material

The test section includes different levels of difficulty so that the teachers can adapt it to the general level of their students. Besides, the Extra Practice material is a reinforcement of grammatical structures and vocabulary.

Teachers are provided with a great deal of material to work with during the school year and may create learning situations using only these resources, an approach which is not optimal according to *Decreto 83/2016, de 4 de julio* (BOC, 136, pp. 18243) above mentioned, which suggests the use of diverse materials. In this sense, it should be revised so as to ensure the adaptability of these books to the needs of each group, using them in conjunction with other



innovative ideas in the field of education. At the same time, the exclusive use of these resources could also be criticised on the grounds that it risks making teachers more passive in their lessons, merely following the instructions in the manual, and using assessment methods that do not correspond to the criteria established by *LOMCE* (BOC, 136, pp. 18246-18358) as will be discussed below.

### 3.2 Contents

Burlington Teacher's Manuals include the course overview of each level and explain in further detail the objectives of every unit as well as providing a table with the vocabulary and speaking phrases. Moreover, at the beginning of each Student's Book a table of contents is provided with details on the vocabulary, grammar, and activities to improve the reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills. The manuals also feature a brief explanation of what is included in the cultural magazine and the slideshows along with the key competencies that are worked on in each unit.

Burlington stresses the vocabulary and grammar which defines the didactic unit given that the texts, audios, dialogues and writing assignments are adapted to such vocabulary and grammatical structures. At each level of education, what is proposed is an introductory unit reviewing previous knowledge and nine units as summarised in appendix 5. Based on this table, it can be inferred that the published materials are conceived according to a progressive learning process on the basis of background knowledge and its reinforcement just as stipulated by *LOMCE* (BOC, 136, p. 18238). What is thus attempted is a gradual expansion of language knowledge. This idea is illustrated in the following example in which, despite the fact that the topic is repeated, the vocabulary is completely different:

Year 1  
All about Animals<sup>7</sup>

Butterfly	Horse	Shark
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<sup>7</sup> Note. From "New Burlington Action 1 Teacher's Manual", by McDonald, C., & Devlin, E., 2019, *Burlington Books*, p. 20. Copyright 2019 by BURLINGTON BOOKS ESPAÑA, S.L.



Canary	Lion	Snake
Dolphin	Monkey	Tiger
Elephant	Mouse	Turtle
Frog	Panda	Whale
Giraffe	Rabbit	Zebra

Year 2  
Amazing animals<sup>8</sup>

Ant	Fly	Mosquito
Bear	Goat	Octopus
Cheetah	Gorilla	Ostrich
Cockroach	Hamster	Pig
Cow	Hippopotamus	Sheep
Crocodile	Jellyfish	Spider
Deer	Lizard	Wolf

Accordingly, the topics to be covered could be encapsulated the following way: personality and feelings, food and drinks, education, jobs, weather, family and friends, animals, daily and free-time activities, science and technology, sports, fashion, places in town, body and health, transport and travel, environment, and crime. As a result, these books address the most frequently recurring topics of daily life. As a result, these books address the most frequently recurring topics of daily life in line with the CEFR levels A1 and A2 (2001, p. 24). It is questionable as to whether the content is appropriate for the intended users, adolescents aged 12 to 16. It is my opinion that, as these are general topics with a high frequency of use in everyday situations, it is indeed adequate to teach these contents, yet perhaps references to topics of interest to the students could be included.

Similarly, the grammatical content is also frequently repeated, although with the difference that the previously covered content is refreshed and increased in difficulty. Throughout the four books, grammatical content such as

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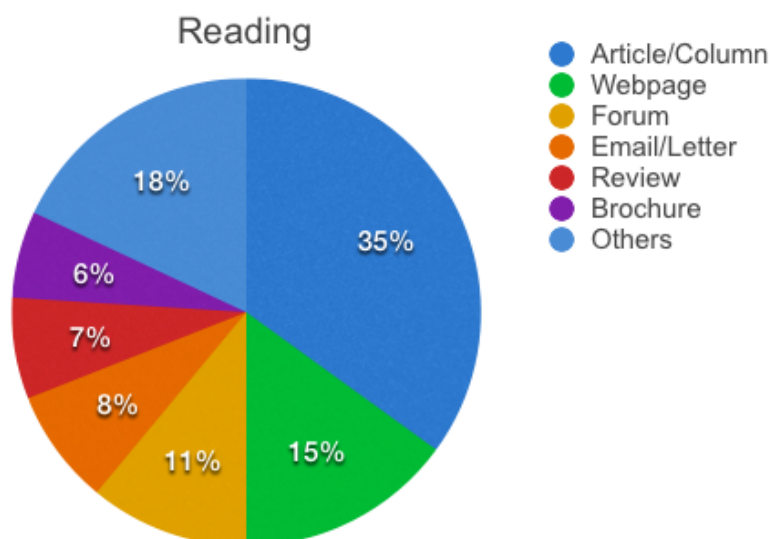
<sup>8</sup> Note. From "New Burlington Action 2 Teacher's Manual", by McDonald, C., & Devlin, E., 2019, *Burlington Books*, p. 24. Copyright 2019 by BURLINGTON BOOKS ESPAÑA, S.L.



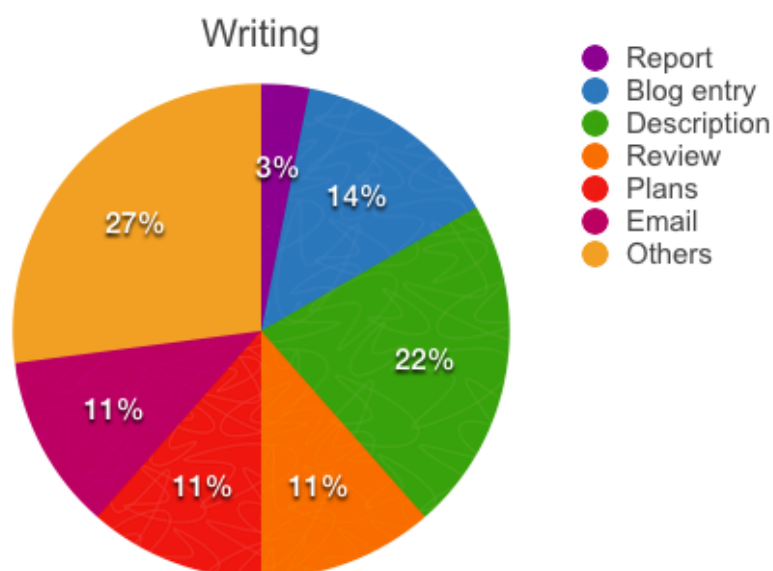
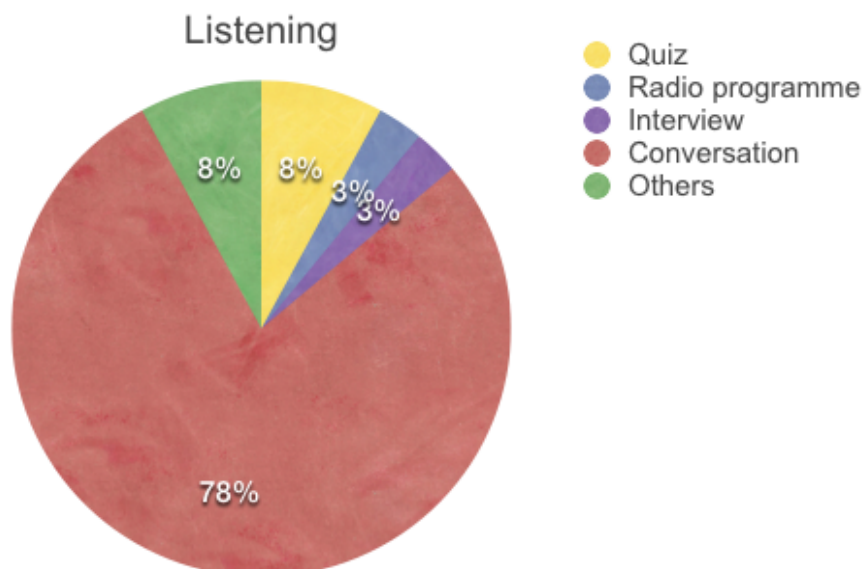
the following are included: personal pronouns, question tags, possessive adjectives, comparative adjectives, Saxon Genitive, the use of articles, quantifiers, relative pronouns, some/any compounds, adverbs of manner, modals, reported speech, first and second conditional, Present Simple, Present Continuous, Past Simple, Past Continuous, Present Perfect Simple, Passive Voice, and Future tenses (Present Continuous, “to be going to”, and “will”).

Having examined the table, it could be stated that, here again, a progressive approach is being adopted in which the book for Year 2 revises the previous one while adding three or four new grammatical structures and so forth with the other books; consequently, when comparing books 1 and 2, not much progress is made, and yet there is noticeable progress when contrasting books 1 and 4.

By the same token, each unit may include one to two reading, listening, speaking and writing activities related to the topic and grammatical structures to be taught. To illustrate the variety of resources employed in the four educational levels to practice the reading, listening and writing skills, the following charts are presented:







The data here collected takes into account the contents from the four Student's Books' table of contents. Included in the reading section one can distinguish surveys, forums, polls, articles, columns, web pages, reviews, book summaries, brochures, blogs, school projects, e-mails, letters and presentations. Moreover, the listening section comprises quizzes, radio programmes, interviews, conversations, announcements, podcasts and songs. Finally, the writing section provides profiles, blog posts, descriptions, reviews,



rules, emails, plans and predictions, surveys, narratives, column responses, articles and reports. For the purpose of simplification, all fields which are less frequently used have been integrated in the "others" category. What stands out in this chart is the dominance of articles, conversation activities and descriptive essays.

In contrast to this, speaking activities attempt to supply language functions related to the topic of the unit being taught –buying a train ticket or ordering food in a restaurant– by providing an example of a conversation and phrases which can be included in a real situation. The following example presents a conversation in which two students must choose an animal and then guess the one their classmate thought of by asking questions.

Year 1  
Describing Animals<sup>9</sup>

What does it look like?
It has got ( <i>big ears and a small tail</i> )
Where does it live?
It lives in ( <i>Africa and Asia</i> )
What does it eat?
It eats ( <i>plants</i> )
How big is it?
It's ( <i>up to four meters tall</i> )
What animal is it?

Nevertheless, speaking activities are subject to variation in relation to the students as the Teacher's Manual strongly encourages teachers to personalise these activities. While it is true that such dialogue builders may result in artificial conversations, they are a convenient tool to start communicating orally.

On a different note, having carefully analysed Agustín de Betancourt's English teaching programme (appendices 1-4), it can be observed that both the content of the programme and these published materials share a large number

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<sup>9</sup> Note. From "New Burlington Action 1 Teacher's Manual", by McDonald, C., & Devlin, E., 2019, *Burlington Books*, p. 20. Copyright 2019 by BURLINGTON BOOKS ESPAÑA, S.L.



of similarities. In fact, it could be stated that the entire programme was designed in accordance with six or seven units from the Burlington published materials of each level, generally assessing two units per term. For the purpose of specifying the units proposed to be taught in each learning situation, the following table is added:

	Learning situation 1	Learning situation 2	Learning situation 3
Year 1	My Life: Units 1-2	Houses and Animals of my Dreams: Units 3-4	Healthy and Junk Food: Units 5-6
Year 2	What about your Favourite Stars: Units 1-2	Amazing Stories: Units 4-5	The Best Way of Life: Units 6-7
Year 3	What to Do and Eat around Town: Units 2-1	A Travel Experience: Units 3-4-5	Life and Customs in the Future: Units 7-6
Year 4	Funny Things: Units 1-2	Breaking News: Units 5-6	Culture and Environment: Units 4-8

It should be taken into account that, by not covering all the units of the books, coherence between educational levels is lost, causing a change of outcomes with respect to the level progression. Consequently, it could be concluded a proper foreign language progression may be acquired through these books, enabling learners to communicate in basic real-life situations.

### 3.2.1 Digital resources

Considering the relevance of ICTs in the educational curriculum of this subject, it is essential to examine the digital resources for students and teachers provided by this series of cookbooks.

#### Action Interactive:

- Interactive Wordlist
- Interactive Grammar
- Dialogue Builders
- Techno Help



### Student's Zone Burlington Website:

- MP3 recordings of the Student's Book
- Culture Magazine texts
- Workbook dictations
- WordApp

*Burlington Action! Interactive* incorporates tools intended to help students in their learning. Firstly, the Interactive Wordlist consists of an interactive word list, spelling practice and vocabulary activities. Meanwhile, Interactive Grammar involves self-checking exercises to practise grammar. In addition, Dialogue Builders refers to a series of exercises for practising functional speech dialogues. Lastly, Technical Help gives support and resources for students doing the web tasks in the Student's Book. Alternatively, a trendy resource that the publishing house has launched is Burlington's WordApp for all mobile devices, where vocabulary and spelling can be practised in an interactive unit-by-unit manner. The WordApp includes interactive word lists, vocabulary activities and games.

### Teacher's Zone Burlington Website:

- Interactive Whiteboard Materials
  - Interactive digital Student's Book
  - Interactive digital Workbook
  - Interactive digital Language Builder
  - Grammar animations
  - Wordlists
  - Dictations
  - Slideshows
  - Additional team games
  - Flashcard activities (only for ESO 1 and 2)
- Learning Management System (LMS)
- Test Factory and Other Editable Resources
- Burlington ESO Grammar Factory
- Burlington ESO Culture Bank
- Audio material



- Workbook and Language Builder answer key
- Photocopiable Student's Book material

#### Britain DVD:

- Nine episodes
- Three photocopiable worksheet per episode

Grammar animations visually highlight the grammatical structures, meanwhile wordlists and dictations supply vocabulary lists with audio and translation functions to help practise and test vocabulary. Furthermore, the slideshows present visual CLIL and culture-based displays to try to enhance learners' learning. Flashcard activities, however, involve vocabulary activities with visual and audio elements to reinforce vocabulary. Finally, the Test Factory and Other Editable Resources contain all the material in the All-in-One Teacher Pack in editable Word format. On the other hand, the online Learning Management System (LMS, n.d.) allows teachers to monitor each student's work for fully interactive reporting and progress.

To my mind, digital competence is not adequately addressed with this section of digital resources as it only provides additional vocabulary and grammar practice, but at no point do they train to use digital tools.

#### **3.2.2 Other content aspects**

Other aspects to consider about these course elements involve the inordinate use of visuals, with no blank spaces, and the values that are depicted in them. First of all, one can comment that all four book covers seem to be symbolic of the intended values of the course: a fun learning process that leads to an opening of the mind to other cultures. Thus, young people of about the same age as the students are shown smiling and travelling, among other activities. From the moment these books are opened, they are bursting with colourful images aimed at catching the students' attention, yet bordering on the childish in contrast to the published materials in other school subjects.

In addition, the representation of the classroom is another crucial consideration when designing educational materials. Not all the students in



Spanish high schools come from this country and, even if they do, there is great diversity in terms of gender, ethnicity, religion and sexuality; hence the images that accompany these materials should help to represent such diversity. In general, the Action! and New Action! books do address this issue but, nevertheless, there is still a predominance of white people in them and certain gender roles continue to be extended, such as the image of a male worker and a male doctor in the unit about professions or the cultural comment of children acquiring their father's surname, a tradition that is becoming optional. These values of respect, tolerance and feminism, all specified within the objectives of this educational stage according to the current educational law (BOE, 3, p. 176-177), must be transmitted in the classroom and, in this sense, I hold the view that teachers should design a specific learning situation to discuss these issues.

Another element that should be mentioned is the need to integrate a cultural factor, a consideration which these materials have certainly addressed in the cultural magazine section and other texts from the books. They cover intercultural topics from other countries, not necessarily English-speaking ones. It is also highlighted in the curriculum as competence to be cultivated (BOC, 136, p. 18238).

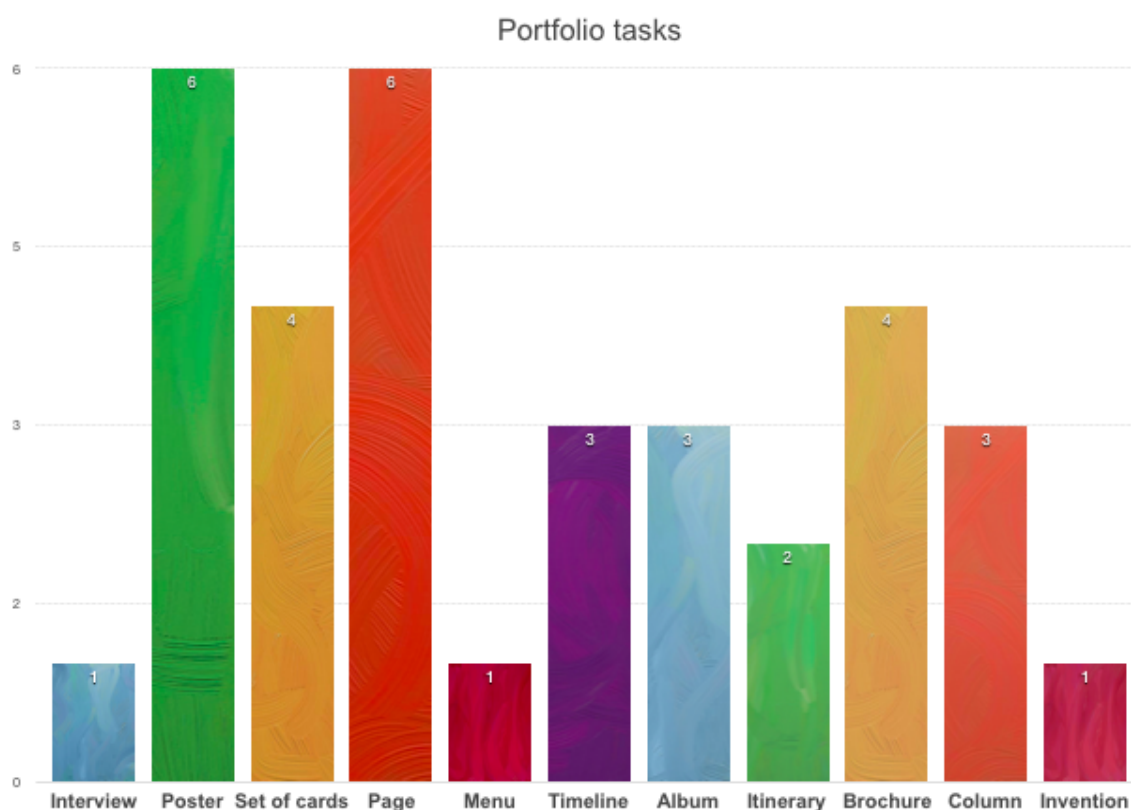
### **3.2.3 Portfolio tasks**

The portfolio, suggested by Burlington Action! books, contain references to their learning styles, targets for improvement, evidence of progress and a record of contact with native English speakers of cultural exchange with the community where the language is spoken. Each Burlington Action! unit offers a step-by-step set of tasks related to the topic of that unit. Additionally, at the end of each term, students have to elaborate on a project which not only reviews what they have learnt in the previous units but also requires them to apply many of the key competencies. A Techno option is also suggested in each task addressing the use of digital competencies. All this is closely related to the action-oriented approach and the communicative tasks suggested by the CEFR as the most effective language learning method and it is also reflected in the school's teaching programme which proposes a final task per term. Similarly, as



opposed to the section on digital resources, digital competence is properly addressed.

It should be mentioned that the projects are detailed in the Student's Book at the end of units 3, 6 and 9 as well as in the Portfolio section of the Workbook, where the tasks are also explained. The Teacher's Manual, in addition, contains the assessment criteria to be worked on with each task. Listed in appendix 6 are the nine tasks and three projects of each educational level are outlined. As can be gathered, both the tasks and the projects are varied at all educational levels, following the main topic of each unit, thus being perfectly cohesive. Only the animal card set is repeated in Years 1 and 2. This column chart resumes the content of the portfolio tasks of all the levels according to their thematic content. For simplicity some topics have been integrated into related topics –booklet into brochure, map into itinerary, blog into album, and list into timeline.



From this chart, it can be concluded that the most common tasks are posters and page design. This is reflected in the school's teaching programme



as final tasks, where Years 1 and 4 are the ones that drew inspiration from these Burlington resources.

In my view, tasks and projects are the most successful method of assessment for foreign language learning, reflecting an action approach and being adaptable to teamwork. Unfortunately, this alternative is not as well received by teachers, most likely because it takes more work than taking tests.

In addition, if Vygotsky's (1978) theories are to be considered, teachers would play the role of guides when performing these tasks, thereby fostering student autonomy.

### **3.3 Assessment and evaluation**

A section of the Teacher's Manual also provides various useful resources for creating an individual student profile, tracking progress and constructing a summative assessment chart. It is intended by these published materials that students record all their completed self-assessment sheets and worksheets, as well as samples of their school work, in a separate folder which they can then hand to the teacher during the year. Thus, periodically, class time should be devoted to allowing students time for filling in the record sheets and for reflecting on their progress. This idea of encouraging students to evaluate their own progress is of great interest since it makes them more aware of their learning and motivates them to continue improving.

The Formative Record Sheet included in the Teacher's Manual (see appendix 7) is designed to help teachers to register their students' unit marks at regular time intervals, together with the student's attitudes toward the language. Summative Assessment (see appendix 8), by contrast, gives the teacher a numerical mark for each student. It should be pointed out that the most significant measurement of student performance is the individual student's progress from the beginning of the year until the end of each term, thus being a continuous assessment subject.

Overall, the assessment suggestions provided by Burlington Books are comprehensive and amenable to modification to enable teachers to customise them. As for the Formative Record Sheet, I would like to comment that it seems to me to be very pertinent to assess the student's attitude considering the behavioural problems that are nowadays faced in schools.





### **3.3.1 Test Factory**

A comprehensive section is also devoted to test materials, including a diagnostic test to check students' level at the beginning of the school year, nine-unit tests, term tests, final tests and key competencies tests. From this section, it is worth mentioning that many of the tests assess grammar and vocabulary to a large extent, an evaluative benchmark which is not among the assessment criteria according to the legislation (BOC, 136, pp. 18246-18358). Similarly, this evaluation method does not adhere to an active approach and does not foster collaborative learning. Their adequacy can thus be questioned. Thus do not seem to be adequate.

## **4. DISCUSSION**

The most relevant issues of the previously analysed materials will be discussed in this section. The topics to be explored cover the weaknesses of these published materials in relation to what is set out in the curricula, an example of the implementation of the books in the Agustín de Betancourt secondary school, the students' progress in language proficiency when using these published materials, an improvement in the ESL assessment and the adaptability of these resources.

### **4.1 Published materials' deficiencies**

Having examined these materials, it becomes evident there are considerable discrepancies with respect to the CEFR and the Spanish educational system.

Firstly, it is stated (CEFR, 2001, p. 9) that language learning relies on the capacity to communicate effectively in the foreign language, thus adopting a communicative approach. The curriculum of this subject (BOC, 136, 2016) and the reflections of Harmer and Thornbury (2013) also support the purpose of the CEFR of studying a language through communicative tasks. Yet a great deal of Burlington's materials is notable for their excessive focus on the acquisition of vocabulary and the correct use of grammatical structures.

In this regard, the lack of balance between grammar and vocabulary content –more than 50% in both the Student's Book and Workbook– and the



work on skills could be criticised. It would be appropriate that these materials replace some activities with others aimed at working on the listening and speaking skills, which are the ones that appear less frequently. With respect to this, consideration should be given to what is specified in the curriculum:

Para la puesta en marcha de las actividades de comprensión o producción oral en la etapa de Educación Secundaria Obligatoria, se trabajarán situaciones reales o simuladas que partan de aspectos familiares para el alumnado o que despierten su interés para, más adelante, ser usadas en contextos cotidianos o menos habituales (BOC, 136, p. 18235)<sup>10</sup>.

Therefore, if activities addressing these skills were to be incorporated, they should be flexible and adjustable to the students' interests. In this case, when using these materials in a real context, they should be complemented by other resources that meet these needs. Non-adapted materials could also be included to avoid artificial communication, thus exposing learners to real texts, videos or podcasts.

Moreover, the speaking activities accomplish their function by providing language builders with which to start developing this skill, but they may be rather limited. For that reason, it would be a good idea to expand these activities by looking for possible real-life situations in which the students will have to defend themselves. This relates to the reflection of Harmer and Thornbury (2013) which recognises the importance of the functions of language, i.e. the forms that are used in particular situations as realizations of speech acts.

Some suggestions to carry out in the classroom could be “marriage of convenience” or “speed dating”. The first activity consists of dividing the class into pairs, half of the class will play couples and the other half will play police officers, to simulate an interrogation in order to determine whether the couple is real or just a convenience. The second activity, perfect for the beginning of the school year, involves a dialogue every five minutes with a different partner on a different topic.

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<sup>10</sup> “In order to implement listening comprehension or oral production activities in the Compulsory Secondary Education stage, real or simulated situations will be practised based on aspects that are familiar or arouse students’ interest so it could be later expand it to everyday or less common contexts”.



It is also striking to note that the mediation activity referred to in the CEFR (2001, p. 14) is not included in these materials. The only reference might be the translation activities included in the Workbook. In any case, it is also an aspect of the materials that could be improved by providing situations in which the students have to explain the content of the message to a third person. This can easily be achieved through graphics and images, for instance.

Likewise, the *LOMCE* curriculum highlights the need to improve ICT skills (BOC, 136, p. 18239), an aspect that these materials fail to address. Although they offer digital resources, these are reduced to completing the same type of fill-in-the-blank or answering questions activities online but do not require the development of digital competencies to manage computer programs or other ICTs, excluding the Techno option of the portfolio tasks.

For this reason, it would be advantageous to implement activities that require the use of ICT in each unit using the high school computer facilities, since it cannot be expected that all students will have access to the Internet in their homes.

Among some ideas, I would propose are the following: edit a home video following a cooking recipe, follow a Twitter thread created in class about a topic of interest, and record a TikTok video in which the difference between similar English terms is explained (e.g. sensitive and sensible).

It is also noteworthy that, due to the modern possibilities available nowadays, it may be a sensible action to introduce correspondence with ESL students from other countries around the world into its digital resources. It could thus be created as a social network that connects students of the same age through videos, emails, images, etc. This measure would be supported by the objectives of the stage which seeks to prepare students to form an active part of a globalised society (BOC, 136, p. 18234).

Finally, one should also mention the importance that the curriculum attributes to the values that these materials should promote, as mentioned below:

la selección de tareas y materiales se deberán fomentar activamente valores imprescindibles en la formación de ciudadanos responsables como la igualdad y la empatía, el espíritu democrático y la práctica de la cooperación, el trabajo en



equipo, la valoración del patrimonio histórico y cultural, el desarrollo personal y social, y el espíritu crítico, entre otros. (BOC, 136, p. 18239)<sup>11</sup>.

This aspect may be strengthened by representing intercultural diversity in images, texts and vocabulary, avoiding cases that may be considered sexist or racist. In addition, some activities designed to address such diversity and raise students' awareness of it may be provided. The Student's Book includes a cultural section, but there are insufficient activities in it to discuss these topics, although it could be adapted by the teacher.

#### **4.2 A better choice of assessment**

As commented above in the analysis section, the materials targeted at teachers are rich in material for assessing students in the form of tasks, projects and tests. In them several methods of evaluation are suggested, although it is at the discretion of the teacher to select the most appropriate one, thus being able to choose only a selection of these.

Furthermore, the formative record sheet and a summative assessment (appendices 7 and 8) provided facilitate the continuous assessment of the subject, keeping track of units, terms and finals results. These evaluation resources are helpful since, if not used exactly as they appear, they inspire the design of new ones adapted to a better method of evaluation.

Defining the method of evaluation is fundamental since the learning situation will depend on the final product. If grammar, reading comprehension, listening comprehension and written production are assessed at the end of each unit, the sessions will be devoted to perfecting grammar and these skills. By contrast, if an assessment method based on final tasks is preferred, then the sessions will be dedicated to acquiring all the necessary tools to complete the task successfully. This would result in fewer gap-filling activities centred on language form and more tasks that involve expressing oneself in a foreign language.

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<sup>11</sup> “The selection of tasks and materials should actively boost values essential to the education of responsible citizens such as equality and empathy, democratic spirit and the practice of cooperation, teamwork, historical appreciation and cultural heritage, personal and social development, and critical spirit, among others”.



Considering the communicative perspective and task-based learning proposed by the CEFR (2001), it would seem logical to adopt this approach and assess communicative tasks according to rubrics. What is more, if one draws on Dewey's (1938) theory of experiential learning, this method of assessment also seems to be the most accurate.

The manual does not provide rubrics, which means that teachers should design and adapt them to each context. Nonetheless, these materials do provide tasks and projects (see appendix 6) which would be suitable to incorporate as, unlike tests, they do address a communicative perspective. Besides, some of these tasks may be exhibited outside the classroom and even uploaded on the Internet, thereby boosting students' self-esteem.

Furthermore, these proposed tasks offer the option of adapting them so that they include the digital competence that the *LOMCE* curriculum (BOC, 136, p. 18239) has placed so much emphasis on.

All these resources should then be regarded as a foundation on which to plan a program adapted to the group, with the possibility of evaluating final tasks in pairs or small groups and carrying out the appropriate curricular adaptations for students with specific educational support needs.

In this regard, it would be of interest to incorporate the theory of collaborative learning (Slavin, 1991) and multiple intelligence (Gardner, 1983) when designing the final tasks for the satisfactory learning outcomes they may offer.

### **4.3 ESL level progression**

Regarding the language proficiency level increase, a progression can be noted in the students' level of English from A1 to A2 (CEFR, 2001, p. 24) as long as all the contents are taught. As mentioned in the analysis section, these materials follow a gradual approach to learning that relies on prior knowledge and its reinforcement, consistent with the provisions of the law:

El alumnado que curse la ESO partirá de situaciones comunicativas cotidianas y conocidas para progresivamente avanzar hacia un dominio de la lengua que le



permita desenvolverse de manera apropiada en contextos menos habituales al final de esta etapa (BOC, 136, p. 18238-18239)<sup>12</sup>.

By sticking to Burlington's suggested programme, students will have expanded their proficiency in the foreign language and thus will be able to simply communicate in common real-life contexts.

Nonetheless, one aspect that could be improved is the content, which could be made more stimulating through the use of humorous activities, games, interesting videos, songs, motion activities, teamwork, and ICT tools, among others. Not all students will be receptive to learning, especially in view of the compulsory nature of this educational stage, and their motivation must be reinforced. The more motivated the student is, the further they will progress in the foreign language.

Related to this, the excessive display of images may be a source of distraction for the students and, for this reason, I would suggest excluding those that do not have a communicative motive.

In conclusion, by gradually expanding the range of vocabulary and language functions, it is possible to achieve language progression.

#### **4.4 A real application scenario**

I would like to remark on how these materials are being used at the Agustín de Betancourt high school to share my impressions about this setting, always considering small variations in use between teachers.

First of all, the general English level of the students is very limited in spite of the high school's location in a tourist area of the island. A possible explanation for this may be the lockdown in which all subjects suffered a decrease in overall performance. Therefore, the starting point for the programme seems to be inferior to what can be expected.

The course element that students are required to have is the Workbook of the corresponding year, the Student's Book being optional since teachers can project this book in the classroom. The English department's programme (see appendices 1-4) is largely designed around the contents of these

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<sup>12</sup> "Students in Compulsory Secondary Education shall start from familiar, everyday communicative situations and progressively advance towards mastery of the language that will enable them to interact appropriately in less common contexts by the end of this stage".



materials, supplemented unofficially by other resources such as films, YouTube videos, or other coursebooks.

Since the method of assessment adopted by this department uses the tests provided in these materials, the lessons follow the model provided in each year's Teacher's Manual. While this measure brings more consistency between teachers' methodologies, it also means losing creativity and neglecting adaptation to the students' needs.

As a positive aspect, students also appreciate being provided with a book in which the lessons are organised, thereby creating a sense of order for them. Nonetheless, the focus taken in this school does not meet the expectations of the CEFR (2001) or the *LOMCE* (2015) as these materials excessively centre on grammar and vocabulary.

Consequently, my suggestion would be to enrich the books with other supplementary activities and thus compensate for the deficiencies in these materials.

As I have already remarked, I am inclined to believe that it is better to use the Student's Book by adapting and including other resources to meet a more communicative and fun approach. Ideally, this measure would be applied by the entire department members in order to maintain coherence among them all, but unfortunately, the reality of the situation demands extra work that not all of the English teachers are willing to undertake.

#### **4.5 Resource adaptation**

There is no denying that the use of published materials has risen in popularity when it comes to language teaching due to the heavy schedules and correction burdens that teachers endure, consuming a great deal of their time. Having a vast amount of adapted resources at your disposal within a clear framework and at an affordable price –approximately 30 euros per book– is a great convenience. However, they can be upgraded to a more communicative method by adjusting them to their target users.

It should not be forgotten that these materials also include Basic Practice books which aim to address curricular adaptations for students with specific educational support needs. These books are a simplified version of the Workbook and are not applicable as an adapted resource. For these students,



personalised curricular adaptations must be tailored to each case, rather than a book differentiated from the rest of the course only by its bilingual context.

With regard to the adaptability of the other materials, it should be mentioned that they are amenable to any changes that may be necessary as the teacher sees fit. It is very convenient to count on a practically ready-to-use programme, yet it should not be forgotten that the greatest facility that can be found in these books is not the number of activities, but rather the organisation of the contents taught in each unit. Designing a learning situation is made much less complicated if the functional and lexical exponents to be covered are already established along with a consistency of contents and language proficiency between the different educational levels. Hence, the table of contents of each book may serve as a template when creating one's own learning situation based on the vocabulary and grammatical structures upon which to build the different skills, concluding with a final task to be used for evaluation.

It is also relevant to accommodate the interests of the students in the tasks and, as the topics are very generic, they can be easily customised. To illustrate the adaptation of these resources, the following section has been added.

## **5. A PROPOSAL TO BOOST THE PUBLISHED MATERIALS**

During my teaching internship I was given the opportunity to present a didactic unit to a Year 3 group of students –from ages 15 to 16–. Following the English department's programme (see appendix 3), I designed a situation involving the vocabulary of the universe and the grammatical functions expressing the future (Will, Be going to, and Present Continuous), finalising with a final writing task in which the students were to predict life in 70 years' time. Along with using my own resources, I also adapted some activities from the *Burlington New Action! 3 Student's Book* (McDonald & Devlin, 2019) which I would like to present as approaches to adapting and improving these materials.

### **5.1 Activating new vocabulary**





At the beginning of each unit, a list of new vocabulary related to the topic is provided, however, not always the way it is introduced is the most engaging for the students.

In Unit 7 of the book (Burlington New Action 3 Students' book, page 78) a brochure of a science fair appears with the unit's vocabulary highlighted. The teacher's manual suggests the completion of word-matching activities and then a speaking task in which students comment on this fair.

As an innovative proposal, I introduced the new vocabulary by placing sticky notes with the word definitions in English around the class (pictures may also be provided instead): on the students' tables, on the teacher's desk, on the blackboard, on the window, on the door, etc; and then I distributed slips of paper with the vocabulary of the unit and some extra words among the students in order to make them stand up and search for the definition they needed. Thereby also triggering one's previous vocabulary and intuition.

Afterwards, I used a presentation that included a new term per slide so that the student who had the slip of paper with that word had to read aloud the definition. By doing so, all the students were made to be attentive, as they did not know when it would be their turn.

Since I had more vocabulary papers than students in the class, I was able to give them between one and two slips of paper each. However, if there were more students, it could be changed in such a way that, in pairs, they have stand up to match all the vocabulary words with the definitions distributed in the classroom.

This idea proved to be a success when I implemented it in practice. The students concentrated more on the activity, collaborated with each other, had fun with it and, in addition, it allowed me to control better who was participating and who was not.

It is paramount to seek methods of activating students and keeping them focused since it is not only ADHD students who have difficulties with concentration. Our students are born in a technological era and, unluckily for education, one of its possible consequences derives from concentration difficulties.

Alternatively, I also created free online resources such as a space dice and a hidden message puzzle which I personalised. The dice has six images



representing vocabulary, one on each side, and I used it to practice vocabulary at home and for a writing activity that I will explain later; the hidden message puzzle, on the other hand, consisted of a word search with the secret message "planet Earth will be ours". Initially, I suspected students might view this material as too childish for their age, but they also welcomed it.

Lastly, I consider using a current reference such as a film trailer or the lyrics of a song to reinforce this vocabulary as a refreshing option. For instance, I chose the trailer of *The Martian* to review the vocabulary of the unit.

These ideas arise from the need to make students more active and to motivate them to become engaged in the topic by showing them why they might be interested in it.

## **5.2 Functional exponents teaching**

Each unit provides a grammar overview which summarises theoretical content in a box and supports it with activities. Future tenses and the first conditional are studied in unit 7 (Burlington New Action 3 Students' book, page 82). It is suggested that the teacher presents the use and formation of these tenses and then works through the activities in the book in order for students to internalise this knowledge.

Nevertheless, the majority of them mainly focus on the form and not as much on the content. My suggestion would be to revise which exercises really reflect the future functions and to incorporate original and engaging activities related to the topic and final task. As the final task concerns predicting the future, I conceived these two proposals based on future tenses.

Firstly, I was inspired by the fortune cookie messages and I asked the students to write a witty message predicting the future of one of their classmates without knowing to whom it would be sent. Once they have written down their predictions on a piece of paper, they are then distributed among the class and shared.

Here the students were more concerned with the content of the message rather than the form, not realising that they were including one of the future tenses or first conditional structures that were being taught. This activity was well received and challenged the students' creativity.



The next activity, on the other hand, consisted of posing a question to an online fortune-telling ball. One by one, the students approached the classroom computer to inquire about a question they were interested in. But despite the fact that all students could visualise the question through the projector, many of them were not attentive to their classmates and lost their concentration. Therefore, this idea should be modified, perhaps by pairing them up and asking them to write down their classmates' answers on a sheet of paper.

In this case, an adaptation has been made by introducing activities that work on the future functions to be taught in the unit. In my view, students will better internalise functional exponents through activities that relate to themselves, involve collaborative learning and that they find fun.

### **5.3 Creativity and writing**

The final task, a writing assignment predicting what life will be like in 70 years' time, has been extracted exactly as it is from the book (Burlington New Action 3 Student's Book, page 87). It presents a model which introduces addition connectors and a three-paragraph structure into the essay, besides using the vocabulary and grammatical structures of the unit.

The book suggests students write their own future predictions based on this model and, for this purpose, they are provided with a section in the Workbook in which to plan the ideas to be included in each paragraph and a space to write them.

My proposal is to try to increase students' creativity by pushing them out of their comfort zone. In order to do so, they are given a sheet of paper on which they have to write their name and then, using the space dice, they are provided with one or two words from the vocabulary of the unit with which they have to write the first paragraph of their prediction.

Once the first paragraph has been written, students will have to make a ball of paper and exchange it with another classmate in order to continue with the second paragraph. This process will be repeated a third time to write the final paragraph, trying not to use the same sheet of paper again.

Students are free to write as long as they wish, with a minimum of four sentences per paragraph, but a time limit of 10 minutes will be set to challenge them more while controlling time. The intention of this activity is for students to



become aware of their own communication errors when reading each other's work.

The outcome of this activity when put into practice was highly satisfactory. By having a set time for each paragraph, the students concentrated better on the task than if they had had the whole session to complete the entire essay. It also fostered a collaborative, creative and productive environment. In my opinion, one of the key indicators that students are really engaged in the task is having a lot of questions and, in this case, they certainly did.

Finally, an individual writing test was conducted in which the same task was carried out: predicting what life would be like in 70 years' time. For assessing the students, a rubric was created in which the four areas of creativity, structure, coherence and correct use of future verb tenses in the text was rated from 1 to 4 each, with a mark of 4 representing the most positive one.

Students were given 30 minutes to complete the task and were allowed to ask me as the teacher for words, although not vocabulary from the unit.

The results were quite favourable considering the fact that the task differs greatly from the tests to which students are accustomed. Out of the 15 students who sat the exam, 9 passed this challenge, 7 of who obtained a qualification of remarkable –more than a 7 out of 10–. This represents that 60% of the group passed, a superior result to the rest of the writing marks of the course, to which I was given access through the tutor teacher.

## **6. LIMITATIONS**

This section seeks to be a self-critical review of this research work and will include the shortcomings and potential improvements that it could have.

### **6.1 Limitations of my analysis**

In the interest of not digressing from the main focus of this Master's thesis, the analysis of these published materials is primarily concerned with ensuring that the contents of said materials are in line with the requirements of the CEFR (2001) and the current educational law (BOE, 3, 2015). Therefore it should be noted that any checklist materials such as the ones mentioned in Tomlinson's article (2012) have not been applied.



Likewise, neither have I referred to these materials in relation to the educational law that will come into force in the 2022-2023 school year, *LOMLOE*<sup>13</sup> (BOE, 340, 2020). While these perspectives were taken into account and ultimately not included, it must be acknowledged that they could have enriched the analysis.

Along with this, it is noteworthy to mention that the use scenario of these materials has been examined from the experience in a single centre. Ideally, one would want to investigate the implementation in several schools, but since access was limited to that school, it is clear that the data is not conclusive.

In addition, interview or questionnaire data could have been included to support the conclusions and produce a richer study. It was originally planned to carry out an interview with the Burlington sales representative as a source of data, however, it was cancelled due to lack of availability. In addition, the book series authors could have contributed significant information to the study. Attempts were made to contact them but no response was received and thus this possibility was also discarded.

The same applies to the perceptions of the limitations of the books regarding students and parents (eg., too many components, reluctance to use the book, artwork being childish) It would have been appropriate to conduct a survey or focus group in order to draw more robust conclusions. While this was contemplated the limited time available did not ultimately allow me to interview the students or their parents. Furthermore, I would have had to obtain ethics clearance and I was unsure how to go about it.

## **6.2 Limitations of my proposal**

The first criticism that could be incorporated with regard to the shortcomings of my proposal is that the activities have only been implemented in one group. In spite of the fact that the implementation of these proposals was highly successful, it would be convenient to have tested them with other groups with different needs in order to compare results and draw more detailed conclusions.

Furthermore, note that despite being able to assess the writing task, the learning outcome could have been measured in the other activities as well. The

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<sup>13</sup> Spanish acronym for Organic Law for the Modification of the Organic Law on Education



reason for this is attributable to the fact that they were not originally intended to be part of this study.

If more objective conclusions on learning outcomes are to be drawn, then a pre- and post-test should be completed to record the progress obtained after these activities, accompanied by a teacher's diary in which my conclusion could be included and an interview or questionnaires administered to students so as to achieve triangulation (Cohen, 2019). In the case of my study, only the final results were gathered.

The students' willingness to participate in these activities could also have been objectively shown by means of surveys. Unfortunately, even though students did express their satisfaction in the class, this factor was not included and, therefore, it could not be demonstrated in this research.

Likewise, following the action research paradigm (Ketterer, Price et al., 1980), critical reflections on the results of my proposals could have been achieved. From these findings, adjustments could be made to the design, content, or focus of the activities and then I could have implemented the revised design with with the same group, critically reflecting once again on the learning outcomes of this approach.

To conclude this section, I reflect on the main objective of this study namely assessing how well these published materials reflect the stipulations of the CEFR and the current law in themselves. It might be observed that they may ultimately fail to fulfill their stated objectives if teachers are unable to implement the materials as the authors and the publisher intended. A further question is raised if that is the case, namely why teachers choose to depart from the use of the materials as described in the the teacher's guide. In all likelihood this is in part a question of the balance between the teacher's autonomy and creativity along with the need to respond to contextual factors. These cannot be disregarded and, therefore, the extent to which teachers have the flexibility to create their learning situations should be noted.

While it is a fact that the provisions of the educational law indicate the use of open teaching methodologies, it would not be a good practice on the part of the teacher not to teach a topic due to a personal preference.



My proposals are intended to expand the possibilities offered by these books, whilst not ignoring the fact that they are the reference with which to follow a theme.

## 7. CONCLUSION

In this Master's thesis a sample of published ELT materials, specifically *New Burlington Action! 1, 2, 3 and 4* (McDonald & Devlin, 2019), have been analysed from the viewpoint of their components, contents and assessment suggestion. It has additionally been discussed the deficiencies of these materials with respect to educational regulations, the progress of the level that may be obtained by their use in schools, and a questioning of the most suitable evaluation method.

Such materials have clearly provided a wealth of components for both the student and the teacher. Nevertheless, consideration should be given to the circumstances of the group when selecting which books to work with and, therefore, it may be considered to use only a part of these materials.

In addition, both the content and the suggested method of assessment have their limitations. The focus on the acquisition of vocabulary and mastery of grammatical structures in these books is far from being communicative-centred, contrasting with the CEFR (2001), the *LOMCE* curriculum (BOE, 3, 2015) and the reflections on literature relating to the field of education (Harmer & Thornbury, 2013; Vygotsky, 1978; Slavin, 1991; Dewey, 1938).

However, given the challenges teachers are facing, the use of published materials is not discouraged, since they have been proven to meet the progress expected at this stage. The most reasonable practise would be to adapt these materials to a task-based approach in which communication is prioritised and to complement the units of the book with other resources that compensate for gaps regarding listening, speaking and mediation skills, ICT management and moral awareness.

Despite the limitations encountered in this study, data have been collected showing the effectiveness of adapting these materials to particular groups.

For this purpose, my suggestion would be to design learning situations on the model offered by these books and, having familiarised with the group,



modify them according to their needs, paying attention to students with learning difficulties and developing an environment in which collaborative and experiential learning is fostered and students become motivated and involved in their own learning.

All in all, learning a foreign language must be like opening doors to a world full of opportunities and the experience of studying it should be an engaging and stimulating one.





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## 9. APPENDICES

Appendix 1<sup>14</sup>: The Agustín de Betancourt English Department's programme.

Compulsory Secondary Education Year 1.

Linguistic dimension	Learning Situation	Tasks
Vocabulary	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Countries and nationalities</li> <li>- Family</li> <li>- Routines</li> <li>- Leisure activities</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Animals</li> <li>- Body parts</li> <li>- House and household chores</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Food</li> <li>- Feelings</li> <li>- Sports</li> <li>- Adverbs of manner (quickly, easily, etc)</li> </ul>
Grammar	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have got</li> <li>- Possessive adjectives</li> <li>- Present Simple (affirmative)</li> <li>- The Saxon Genitive</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Present Simple (negative and interrogative)</li> <li>- Present Continuous</li> <li>- Present Simple/ Continuous</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Articles (a, an, some, some and the)</li> <li>- There is/ There are</li> <li>- Can/ Can't</li> <li>- Must/ Mustn't</li> </ul>
Reading	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The use of social networks</li> <li>- A family tree forum</li> <li>- The use of smartphones</li> <li>- A British boarding school</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A model and the ocean</li> <li>- Dolphins helping fishermen</li> <li>- Houses from different periods of history</li> <li>- Housework and teenagers</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Letter asking for advice</li> <li>- A 9 year old girl's blog</li> <li>- The ideal body for three sports</li> <li>- Kenyan runners</li> </ul>
Writing	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- General and personal questions</li> <li>- A personal profile</li> <li>- A blog post about your favourite day of the week</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A report about an animal</li> <li>- Tasks that family members do in their home</li> </ul>

<sup>14</sup> Note. Adapted from "Programación Anual del Departamento de Inglés", 2021, IES Agustín de Betancourt. Copyright 2021 by Departamento de Inglés del IES Agustín de Betancourt.

	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A restaurant review</li> <li>- The rules of a sport</li> </ul>
Listening	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How to register on a social network</li> <li>- How to sign up in a fair</li> <li>- Good and bad habits</li> <li>- Leisure activities</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Choosing a pet</li> <li>- Animals at the zoo</li> <li>- The description of a room</li> <li>- Activities two families are doing in their house</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Food</li> <li>- Fast food restaurants</li> <li>- An interview for a school newspaper</li> <li>- The rules of a game</li> </ul>
Speaking	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Routines</li> <li>- Leisure activities</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Describing animals</li> <li>- Describing a house</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Taste and preferences</li> <li>- Ordering food in a restaurant</li> <li>- Skills and rules of a sport</li> </ul>
Pronunciation	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- /ti:n/ and /ti/</li> <li>- Some contractions</li> <li>- /s/, /z/ and /iz/</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Intonation of sentences</li> <li>- -ing ending of verbs</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- /I/ of /i:/</li> <li>- The negation of modal verbs and their contractions</li> </ul>

Final task	1	Individual exposition of a handwritten poster of their genealogical tree
	2	Individual exposition of a poster describing their dream house
	3	An oral presentation about an athlete of their choice

Appendix 2<sup>15</sup>: The Agustín de Betancourt English Department's programme.

Compulsory Secondary Education Year 2.

Linguistic dimension	Learning Situation	Tasks
Vocabulary	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- School subjects</li> <li>- Environment</li> <li>- Expressing feelings</li> <li>- Personality adjectives</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Body parts</li> <li>- Verbs</li> <li>- Weather</li> <li>- Natural disasters</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Health</li> <li>- Food</li> <li>- Animals</li> </ul>
Grammar	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Present Simple</li> <li>- Present Continuous</li> <li>- Present Simple/ Continuous</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Past Simple</li> <li>- Past Continuous</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Modals</li> <li>- Comparative adjectives</li> </ul>
Reading	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Education</li> <li>- Athletes</li> <li>- Famous people</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Living in different places</li> <li>- Natural disasters</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Health magazine</li> <li>- Healthy diet and lifestyle</li> <li>- Animals</li> </ul>
Writing	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Email introducing themselves</li> <li>- Describing pictures</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A blog about an unusual experience</li> <li>- A story</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An opinion column on healthy habits</li> <li>- An article</li> </ul>
Listening	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- People from various places</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stories from the past</li> <li>- World records</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Health problems</li> <li>- Healthy activity in school</li> <li>- Endangered species</li> <li>- Animal description</li> </ul>

<sup>15</sup> Note. Adapted from "Programación Anual del Departamento de Inglés", 2021, IES Agustín de Betancourt. Copyright 2021 by Departamento de Inglés del IES Agustín de Betancourt.



Speaking	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The environment</li> <li>- School subjects</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Personal experiences</li> <li>- Describing pictures</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Giving advice for a healthier lifestyle habits,</li> <li>- Animals and their characteristics</li> </ul>

Final task	1	Letter introducing yourself
	2	Essay on a natural disaster
	3	Article about an animal

Appendix 3<sup>16</sup>: The Agustín de Betancourt English Department's programme.

Compulsory Secondary Education Year 3.

Linguistic dimension	Learning Situation	Tasks
Vocabulary	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Art and work of art</li> <li>- Food</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sports and sports equipment</li> <li>- Travelling</li> <li>- Professions</li> <li>- Emotions</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Universe</li> <li>- Fashion</li> </ul>
Grammar	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quantifiers</li> <li>- Present Simple</li> <li>- Present Continuous</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Comparative and superlative adjectives</li> <li>- Past Simple</li> <li>- There was/ There were</li> <li>- Past Continuous</li> <li>- Past Simple/ Continuous</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Future tenses</li> <li>- Modals</li> </ul>
Reading	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Food packaging</li> <li>- Culinary customs</li> <li>- Art festival in Australia</li> <li>- Urban camouflage through art</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A plane journey without tickets</li> <li>- A film review</li> <li>- Film villains</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Myths about the Moon</li> <li>- Mars</li> <li>- Fashion museum</li> <li>- Fast fashion shops</li> </ul>
Writing	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A review of a restaurant</li> <li>- A pictorial description</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A report about a sport</li> <li>- An email about a trip</li> <li>- A book review</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An essay on predictions of the future</li> <li>- A piece of advice</li> </ul>
Listening	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Restaurant advertisements</li> <li>- Art festivals</li> <li>- Paintings</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Requests</li> </ul>

<sup>16</sup> Note. Adapted from "Programación Anual del Departamento de Inglés", 2021, IES Agustín de Betancourt. Copyright 2021 by Departamento de Inglés del IES Agustín de Betancourt.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sports</li> <li>- Travelling</li> <li>- A television programme</li> <li>- An event in the past</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Making plans</li> <li>- The future</li> <li>- Fashion</li> </ul>
Speaking	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Order food</li> <li>- Make food suggestions</li> <li>- Ask for information</li> <li>- Describe a painting</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Respond to requests</li> <li>- Compare sports</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Plans and predictions</li> <li>- Expressing opinion</li> <li>- Giving advice</li> </ul>
Pronunciation	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Intonation and rhythm of sentences</li> <li>- -ing ending of verbs</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accentuation of words</li> <li>- /t/, /d/ and /ld/</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The contracted form of will</li> <li>- Contracted forms of modals</li> </ul>

Final task	1	Individual presentation describing a painting
	2	Blog's entry about a travel experience
	3	An advice column response

Appendix 4<sup>17</sup>: The Agustín de Betancourt English Department's programme.

Compulsory Secondary Education Year 4.

Linguistic dimension	Learning Situation	Tasks
Vocabulary	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cities</li> <li>- Describing adjectives</li> <li>- Personality adjectives</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Personal relationship</li> <li>- Crime</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environment</li> <li>- Materials</li> <li>- Culture and tradition</li> <li>- Geography</li> </ul>
Grammar	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Past Simple</li> <li>- Used to</li> <li>- Past Continuous</li> <li>- Past Simple/ Continuous</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Present Perfect Simple</li> <li>- Present Perfect Simple/ Past Simple</li> <li>- Future tenses</li> <li>- First and second conditional</li> <li>- Indirect speech</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Passive voice</li> <li>- Modals</li> </ul>
Reading	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A tourist guide</li> <li>- Hobbies</li> <li>- Funny experiences</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An inspirational story</li> <li>- Books</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A museum brochure</li> <li>- Jobs</li> <li>- Cultural customs in the world</li> </ul>
Writing	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A personal blog entry about a trip</li> <li>- A story about a funny experience</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An essay about someone</li> <li>- A letter or email to give advice</li> <li>- An article about a news story</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A report on a problem</li> <li>- A description of a trip for a tourist brochure</li> </ul>
Listening	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tourism</li> <li>- Leisure activities</li> <li>- An incident</li> <li>- Past events</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Achieving goals</li> <li>- Singers</li> <li>- Future</li> </ul>

<sup>17</sup> Note. Adapted from "Programación Anual del Departamento de Inglés", 2021, IES Agustín de Betancourt. Copyright 2021 by Departamento de Inglés del IES Agustín de Betancourt.

		- Crime
	3	- Environment - Holidays - A student exchange programme
Speaking	1	- Travelling - Past activities - Funny incidents and experiences
	2	- Talking about goals and achievements - Interviewing - Talking about crime
	3	- Giving opinion - Talking about the recycling process - Traditions
Pronunciation	1	- Accentuation of words - Correct pronunciation of the weak forms of was and were
	2	- The correct pronunciation of the Past Participle of verbs - Stressing compound words - Consonant sounds at the end of words
	3	- /s/, /ʃ/, /æ/ and /e/ - Contracted forms of some modals - /ð/ and /d/
Final task	1	Essay about a funny experience
	2	Report the latest news
	3	A description of a trip for a tourist brochure

Appendix 5<sup>18</sup>. Vocabulary and grammar content of the Burlington Books

		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Introduction	Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- School items</li> <li>- Cardinal numbers</li> <li>- Ordinal numbers</li> <li>- Colours</li> <li>- Days and months</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- House</li> <li>- Family</li> <li>- Transport</li> <li>- Clothing</li> <li>- Feelings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Family</li> <li>- Geographical features</li> <li>- Weather</li> <li>- Animals</li> <li>- Parts of the body</li> <li>- Sports</li> <li>- Clothes</li> <li>- Food</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sports equipment</li> <li>- Action verbs</li> <li>- Clothing and accessories</li> <li>- Travel items</li> <li>- Jobs</li> <li>- Mobile phones</li> <li>- Food and drink</li> </ul>
	Grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Personal pronouns</li> <li>- To be</li> <li>- Question tags</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To be</li> <li>- Have got</li> <li>- There is/ There are</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To be</li> <li>- Have got</li> <li>- There is/ There are</li> <li>- Present Simple</li> <li>- Present Continuous</li> <li>- Question tags</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Present Simple/ Continuous</li> </ul>
Unit 1	Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Countries and nationalities</li> <li>- Family</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- School subjects</li> <li>- School items</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Food and drink</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Places</li> <li>- Town</li> </ul>
	Grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have got</li> <li>- Possessive adjectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Present Simple</li> <li>- Question tags</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Articles</li> <li>- Quantifiers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Past Simple</li> <li>- Used to</li> </ul>
Unit 2	Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Routines</li> <li>- Activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Verbs of feelings</li> <li>- Adjectives of personality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Art</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adjectives of personality</li> </ul>
	Grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Present Simple (affirmative)</li> <li>- Saxon Genitive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Present Continuous</li> <li>- Present Simple/ Continuous</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Present Simple/ Continuous</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Past Continuous</li> <li>- Past Simple/ Continuous</li> </ul>

<sup>18</sup> Note. Adapted from "New Burlington Action 1, 2, 3 and 4 Student's Book", by McDonald, C., & Devlin, E., 2019, *Burlington Books*, p. 1-2. Copyright 2019 by BURLINGTON BOOKS ESPAÑA, S.L.

Unit 3	Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Animals</li> <li>- Parts of the body</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Music</li> <li>- Adjectives of places</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sports equipment</li> <li>- Action verbs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Experiences</li> </ul>
	Grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Present Simple (negative and interrogative)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There was/ There were</li> <li>- Past Simple (affirmative)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Comparative adjectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Present Simple Perfect</li> <li>- Present Simple/ Perfect Past</li> </ul>
Unit 4	Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The house</li> <li>- Household activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parts of the body</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Travel items</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environment</li> <li>- Materials and containers</li> </ul>
	Grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Present Continuous</li> <li>- Present Simple/ Continuous</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Past Simple (negative and interrogative)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Past Simple</li> <li>- There was/ There were</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Passive voice</li> </ul>
Unit 5	Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Food and drink</li> <li>- Feelings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Weather</li> <li>- Disasters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jobs</li> <li>- Emotions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Relationships</li> </ul>
	Grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Articles</li> <li>- There is/ There are</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Past Continuous</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Past Continuous</li> <li>- Past Simple/ Continuous</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Future tenses</li> <li>- First conditional</li> <li>- Second conditional</li> </ul>
Unit 6	Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sports</li> <li>- Action verbs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Health</li> <li>- Food</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clothing and accessories</li> <li>- Fashion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Crime</li> </ul>
	Grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can/ Can't</li> <li>- Adverbs of manner</li> <li>- Must/ Mustn't</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Modals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Modals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reported speech</li> </ul>

Unit 7	Vocabulary	- Places	- Animals	- Space - Space travel	- Science - Technology
	Grammar	- Was/ Were - There was/ There were	- Comparative adjectives - Articles - Quantifiers	- Future tenses - First conditional	- Relative pronouns - Some/ any compounds
Unit 8	Vocabulary	- Clothing - Adjectives about fashion	- Computers - Technology	- Town - Environment	- Culture and traditions - Geography
	Grammar	- Past Simple (affirmative)	- To be going to - Present Continuous (future meaning)	- Present Perfect Simple	- Modals
Unit 9	Vocabulary	- Transport - Geographical features	- Jobs	- Mobile phones	- Everyday items
	Grammar	- To be going to - Present Continuous (future meaning)	- Will - First conditional	- Passive (Present and Past Simple)	- Comparative adjectives



## Appendix 6. List of portfolio tasks and projects

### Year 1<sup>19</sup>:

- Tasks
  1. Do an interview
  2. Make a poster of a sport star
  3. Make a set of animal cards
  4. Make a “beautiful houses” magazine page
  5. Plan a nutritious menu
  6. Make a timeline of a sport
  7. Make a photo album of a city
  8. Make a poster of a music singer or group
  9. Make an itinerary of a holiday
- Projects
  1. A personal profile
  2. An information page
  3. A travel brochure

### Year 2<sup>20</sup>:

- Tasks
  1. Make a timeline of important things in your life
  2. Make a magazine photo-spread
  3. Make a music magazine spread about a group or singer on tour
  4. Make a booklet about legendary creatures
  5. Make a poster about disasters
  6. Make a class advice column board
  7. Make a set of animal cards
  8. Make a travel page about a place
  9. Make a zodiac page
- Projects
  1. A poster

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<sup>19</sup> Note. Adapted from "Teacher's Manual 1", by McDonald, C., & Devlin, E., 2019, *Burlington Books*, p. 16-18, 26. Copyright 2019 by BURLINGTON BOOKS ESPAÑA, S.L.

<sup>20</sup> Note. Adapted from "Teacher's Manual 2", by McDonald, C., & Devlin, E., 2019, *Burlington Books*, p. 18-20, 28. Copyright 2019 by BURLINGTON BOOKS ESPAÑA, S.L.

2. A report
3. A product review

#### Year 3<sup>21</sup>:

- Tasks
  1. Make a booklet about places to eat
  2. Make information cards for an art exhibition
  3. Make a poster about a sport
  4. Write a travel blog
  5. Make a TV guide page
  6. Make a magazine page about dress codes
  7. Make a brochure for a city of the future
  8. Make a tourist map of an interesting street
  9. Invent a product
- Projects
  1. A photo journal
  2. A TV programme review
  3. A timeline

#### Year 4<sup>22</sup>:

- Tasks
  1. Make a magazine page about an interesting place
  2. Make a “top five” list of film or TV comedies
  3. Make a “spotlight on” page
  4. Make a poster about an environmental problem
  5. Make an advice column page
  6. Make notices for a class or school information board
  7. Make a poster about superpowers
  8. Make a travel brochure
  9. Make information cards about the history of everyday items
- Projects

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<sup>21</sup> Note. Adapted from "Teacher's Manual 3", by McDonald, C., & Devlin, E., 2019, *Burlington Books*, p. 18-20, 28. Copyright 2019 by BURLINGTON BOOKS ESPAÑA, S.L.

<sup>22</sup> Note. Adapted from "Teacher's Manual 4", by McDonald, C., & Devlin, E., 2019, *Burlington Books*, p. 18-21, 29. Copyright 2019 by BURLINGTON BOOKS ESPAÑA, S.L.

1. A biography
2. A trivial quiz
3. An itinerary

Appendix 7<sup>23</sup>: Formative Record Sheet (McDonald & Devlin, 2019f, p. 14)

Score: 1 – 10
1 = Insufficient
5 = Sufficient
10 = Outstanding

Name  
 Class  
 School Year

		Unit >	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Date											
Communication Skills	Reading										
	Writing										
	Listening										
	Speaking										
Language Skills	Grammar										
	Vocabulary										
	Pronunciation										
	Functional Language										
Attitude	Use of English in Class										
	Homework										
	Behaviour										
	Projects										

Observations

<sup>23</sup> Note. From "New Burlington Action 1 Teacher's Manual", by McDonald, C., & Devlin, E., 2019, *Burlington Books*, p. 14. Copyright 2019 by BURLINGTON BOOKS ESPAÑA, S.L.

Appendix 8<sup>24</sup>: Summative Assessment (McDonald & Devlin, 2019f, p. 15)

Name  
 Class  
 School Year

	Diagnostic Test	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Final Exam 1	Final Exam 2	Final Mark
Reading							
Speaking							
Listening							
Grammar							
Vocabulary							
Writing							

Observations

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<sup>24</sup> Note. From "New Burlington Action 1 Teacher's Manual", by McDonald, C., & Devlin, E., 2019, *Burlington Books*, p. 15. Copyright 2019 by BURLINGTON BOOKS ESPAÑA, S.L.