

JODI SANDFORD - DAVID MASSEY

*Bridges*

*English for Communication Sciences*  
*Manuale per corsi di inglese*

*New Edition with Key*

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## **Introduction**

*Bridges:*

*English for Communication Sciences*

*Manuale per corsi di inglese*

by Jodi Sandford with David Massey

When thinking about how to teach a 60 hour English language course there were several factors to take into consideration: the limited number of hours, the excessive number of students (an average of 100-150) per lesson, the variation of true language background, the variation in age and motivation. We chose to alternate the physical set up between the Aula Magna, the only room big enough to hold so many students, that was also equipped with audio visual means; and the computer laboratory, which although small, allowed for the students to group 2-3 to a computer.

Consequently we decided to divide the course into three types of lessons:

1. Speaking Listening and Grammar English, (SLG ENG);
2. Communication Theory English, (CT ENG)
3. Computer Internet English, (CI ENG).

18 hours are dedicated to each type of lesson. This division will be indicated throughout the volume. CI ENG is held for two hours once a week for the entire semester, but the two hour SLG ENG lessons are held twice a week for the first half of the semester and the two hour CT ENG lessons twice a week for the second half of the semester.

By holding the grammar related lessons for the first half of the course our objective is to give those without a background in English a basis to start from, and at the same time to give the other students an in depth review of basic English grammar, morphology and phonology. The course is organized to verify the knowledge acquired, three times, once at the end of each theme related module.

The first module is the Grammar module, the second the Translation module, and the third the Analysis module. They vary topically, moving from the closet type of communication; intrapersonal and interpersonal, to group and organizational communication, and then in the last module to mass communication. Each week includes three two hour lessons; each module lasts three weeks, for a total of 18 hours, before a progress test. Each student must pass at least two of the three written tests,

corresponding to the modules, in order to access the oral exam at the end of the course. The objective in this case is to give a gradual approach to the material, to enable and to encourage a gradual yet constant study of the language.

In addition to explanations of both structures, concepts, collocations and usage of the language, we have presented every day material from as many different sources and as many different media as possible. Throughout the manual we have included material from, books, essays, encyclopedias, dictionaries, web sites, newspapers, editorials, movies, music, cds, games, advertisements, radio, press releases, promotional devices, letters, e-mails etc., as many forms of the language as possible. It is our opinion that the best way to learn English is from the understanding of real/true language, that which we read and hear every day. It is for this reason that we have used citations, and pieces of texts, that can be found especially when studying Communication Sciences. We have also relied on the Internet, and its many resources, for back up to this text. We have made a point of citing the original sources and authors, if there are any omissions, the publishers will be glad to rectify these, when the title is reprinted. Our goal is to expose the students to as much variation as possible, to give them elements to further their education on their own.

Constructing a course that is dynamic in structure permits us to reach our new audience of students more readily. Maybe some students will be more interested in one aspect rather than another, but by giving them a rose of material to choose from there should be something for everyone. The media supplies us with a constant flow of information in English, approaching the language from an analytical and selective point of view should help motivate language students that most probably will be using the language as back up to their principle interest. It is our hope that the language elements they acquire will motivate them to apply the theory and understanding to the material they will need in further studies or career prospects. This course wants to point the students in the direction of the language tools they can use to decipher the world that surrounds them and to give them the opportunity to learn what is the best approach for themselves.

Communicative language learning is limited by the sheer number of students, yet examples of variation are presented. The SLG ENG lessons have explanations, practice, translation, exercises and assignments to work on, both in class and on ones own. We are fully conscious of the fact that we have not covered all the grammar points, nor did we expect to be able to in such a limited situation. The material presented is a good start to

understanding the code of English, and it is for this reason that in the first part we concentrate on linguistic text analysis, perception, modality, denotation, connotation, code, phonetics, phonology, and morphology. SLG ENG starts with the details and builds up to more complex texts. Then in the second part of the course, the CT ENG lessons, we do the opposite, working from the texts and theories we analyze the results, the objectives, the targets, the genres, and the meanings, in other words a semiotic, semantic and pragmatic approach.

At the end of the manual we have included the series of CI ENG lessons that are based on the computer and internet. Practice material from web sites and web quests, that offer a cultural approach and understanding have been included. It is only through a cultural understanding that we can negotiate the meaning of a text. Culture is fundamental to understand or to be able to translate, if not use, another language different from one's own. We must consider the content and the substance, the form and the context, the verbal and the paralinguistic traits. In order to come to an understanding we must first learn what these aspects are, and what effects they may have. Interpreting and executing a language truly requires many talents. We hope to have developed a tool to further these possibilities.

Perugia, March 2005



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**SLG ENG 1. Module 1.**

**General Introduction, course explanation. Pronunciation.**

**The English Language, the Alphabet, Capitals, months, days, numbers.**

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One of the first things that strikes an Italian learner of English is that the vowels are “not pronounced the way they are written”. This is obviously true if you look at the English language from the Italian language point of view.

In fact, English uses different sounds than other languages. For example, the first sound in the word *thin* and the first sound in the word *away* are never spoken in many languages.

So you have to know all the English sounds. You also have to practise your pronunciation – listen to English words and sentences, and try to repeat the English sounds as well as you can.

Reading an English word does not tell you how it is pronounced. For example, the words ‘*no*’ and ‘*do*’ both end in the letter ‘*o*’. However, ‘*no*’ and ‘*do*’ are pronounced in a completely different way.

This means that, generally, you have to learn the pronunciation of every word that you use. How can you learn the pronunciation of an English word? You can look it up in a dictionary and read about how it is pronounced. Dictionaries tell you about pronunciation through a special system called “phonetic transcription”.

Phonetic transcription is written with a phonetic alphabet. The most popular phonetic alphabet is the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), Appendix 1 where it is compared with the TEXT System. Appendix 2 contains all the sounds used in the English language, and explanation of the SAMPA TEXT System, which uses a computer readable phonetic script.

However, native English speakers have learned to read the English language “code” that tells us how to read certain combinations in English. Let’s observe some of the first rules they teach us when we learn to read. These rules are a simplification of a very complex phonetic reality, but it is the way we are taught to perceive the code.

VOWEL	LONG	SHORT
A	shape /eɪ/	cap /æ/
E	leader /i:/	head /E/
I	light /aɪ/	little /ɪ/
O	boat /@o/	bottom /Q/
U	cute /u:/	cut /v/
Y = semi vowel	reply /aɪ/	syntax /ɪ/
W = semi vowel	few /u:/	

This transcription uses the Text alphabet, which enables us to write phonetics easily with the computer.

### Exercise 1:

*Go to this site to see the various phonetic alphabet interpretations of the vowels sounds:*

<http://faculty.washington.edu/dillon/PhonResources/newstart.html>

The long vowel is pronounced the same way as the letter is called, is either in the stressed syllable, or is indicated by a silent letter(s). These vowels are sometimes called strong. Generally speaking we can say that the 5 vowels have a total of 22 different phonetic variations. This includes the diphthongs such as oɪ, aʊ, and for some eɪ and aɪ. Often pronunciation changes are dictated by the syllables, the combination of consonants and vowels and where the stress falls.

The short vowel is pronounced in a softer or shorter way than the long vowel. Sometimes this vowel is atonal, especially when it falls toward the end of a word, or in an unstressed syllable. These vowels are sometimes called weak.

Practise repeating these sounds:

<http://www.antimoon.com/how/pronunc-soundsipa.htm>

Go to this site for more information and listening practice:

<http://www.arts.gla.ac.uk/IPA/fullchart.html>

Do these exercises:

<http://www.better-english.com/easier/pron.htm>

The letters of the alphabet follow with an example and transcription in *Appendixes 1 and 2*.

Observe the letter, the phoneme and the word example. The consonants do not change much in pronunciation.

### **The English You Know**

The true story is that there are no real beginners. All of us are constantly surrounded by words from different languages, many of which are English and some of which are English words used to signify something different.

autogrill = road side restaurant  
 autostop = hitch hiking  
 camping = camp ground  
 dancing = ballroom, discotheque  
 footing = jogging  
 golf = sweater (jumper)  
 parking = parking lot  
 plaid = lap blanket (lap robe, travelling rug)  
 plum cake = pound cake  
 smoking = tuxedo  
 toast = toasted ham and cheese sandwich

When considering the impact that English has had internationally we must recognize the economy of the language: 'mezzi di comunicazione di massa' becomes; mass media.

#### **Assignment 1:**

Find some examples of English words in Italian magazines, newspapers and names of businesses.

#### **Assignment 2:**

Other 'English expressions' used in Italian that do not mean the same thing in English.