



Using coursebooks effectively

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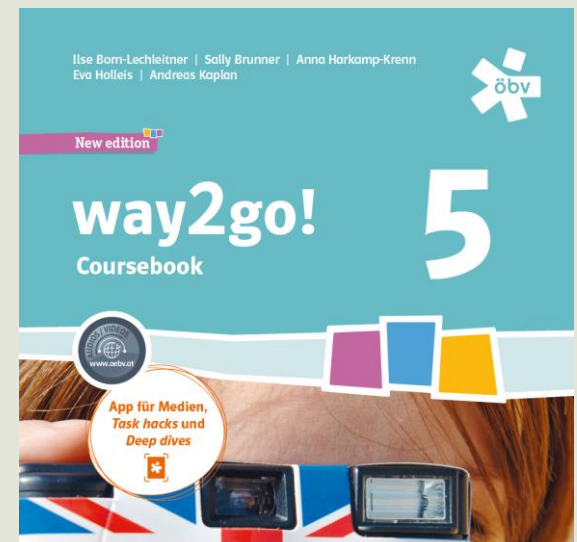
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Working for the ministry on...

- *Kompetenzraster*
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6 Using coursebooks effectively

Andreas Kaplan and Nancy Campbell

In this chapter, we ask the following questions:

What is the role of coursebooks in Austrian ELT classes?

What can teachers expect their coursebooks to contribute to their teaching?

What can teachers not expect from coursebooks?

How can teachers entering the profession use their coursebooks effectively?

How does effective coursebook use develop as a teacher gains more experience?

Coursebooks in Austrian ELT classes

- free personal copies of coursebooks for all students
- widespread use of coursebooks in class
- increased due to washback of centralised exams

“In no other school subject do coursebooks exert a similar influence as in language teaching. The book is in fact often treated as the syllabus” (Appel, 2011)

Are coursebooks just for lazy teachers?

- equating coursebook use and laziness is unfair
- effective teachers are not necessarily good materials designers
- dependency on coursebooks decreases with teachers' experience

What coursebooks can contribute

- (mostly) error-free materials
- practice and reference materials for self-study
- up-to-date exam materials mimicking standardised formats
- ideas for a range of classroom activities

What coursebooks can't do

- teach all of and only the curriculum
- remove the need for methodological considerations
- offer extended reading practice
- provide a tailored experience to a class

Coursebook use in class

“[U]ntil you feel secure, use your coursebooks exactly as intended by the author. When you are ready, then experiment a bit [...] by personalizing a few exercises, choosing not to do some of them, etc. Gradually assume control over the book and use it increasingly as a resource rather than the centerpiece of the course” (Scrivener, 1998)

Coursebook use in class

The school magazine of your English partner school has started a series of articles on successful advertisements. You have decided to send them an article about an ad you like.

In your article you should:

- describe the advertisement
- explain what makes it special
- specify the target group

Write around 250 words. Give your article a title.

→ See *Writing coach, Article*, p. 178, before you start!



Strategies box

When you **specify** something, you **explain** or **describe** something clearly and **in detail**.

Workshop: Using coursebook materials

- Work in groups.
- Look at and discuss the materials provided.
- **How might an experienced teacher adapt your materials for a specific teaching aim?**
- Share your ideas.
- Prepare a short statement for the other groups.

Workshop: Using coursebook materials

Some ideas how the coursebook materials might be adapted in class:

- Expand on an aspect of the task (i.e. writing task into process writing)
- Do task, but have students focus on the how (i.e. reading strategies)
- Focus on a specific language area (i.e. collocations)
- Change to a different skill (i.e. writing instead of speaking)
- Use as a model to create similar materials (i.e. recording a video)
- Exploit material for own task (i.e. cut up text to be put back together)

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Thank you!

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