

# GROWING WITH ABC

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# DEAR TEACHER !

“GROWING WITH ABC” is an integrated course in English, targeted for use with very young learners. The course provides pupils with the necessary pre-literacy, vocabulary and oral/aural skills and is especially designed to serve as a solid foundation for the standards of early Stage One of the Foundation Level.

The book covers the domains of the English curriculum appropriate for young learners and focuses on clearly defined benchmarks.

## RATIONALE

### Background philosophy

The method used in “GROWING WITH ABC” is based on the *Multi Intelligence* Approach which maintains the use of different kinds of intelligences:

visual-spatial - the use of visual aids such as drawing, visualization, pretending;

musical-rhythmic - utilizing the use of songs, rhythmic chants;

bodily-kinesthetic - it employs such tools as physical games, role play, body language;

verbal-linguistic – it uses such tools as formal and informal conversation;

intrapersonal – the use of self-reflection;

interpersonal – the use of team work, cooperative learning, group projects;

logical-mathematical – the knowledge occurs through the process of seeking and discovering patterns.

Howard Gardner's theory suggests that there is some evidence that different aspects of intelligence are controlled by different areas of the brain and that an individual might have far greater strengths in some areas of intelligence than others. Hence, the teaching process should facilitate the use of different intelligences in order to provide ample opportunities for pupils' prevailing intelligences.

Gardner, H. (1983) "Frames of Mind: the Theory of Multiple Intelligences"

New York: Basic Books

Gardner, H. (1999) "Intelligence Reframed". New York: Basic Books

The “GROWING WITH ABC” course stresses the importance of the development of *Emotional Intelligence*, which is the individual's ability to manage self awareness, impulse control, confidence, self motivation, social deftness, adaptability and a talent for collaboration.

Teachers are encouraged to find out what intrigues, stimulates and motivates the children in order to promote a love for learning, an arousal of curiosity and ability for self-direction on the part of the pupils.

The Emotional intelligence (E.I) is a cross-section of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills and facilitators that determine how effectively we understand and express ourselves, understand others and relate with them, and cope with daily demands. According to Professor Bar-On (2004) "There can be no cognitive learning without affective learning. There can be no feeling without the involvement of the mind."

For further reading:

The Handbook of Emotional Intelligence : Theory, Development, Assessment, and Application at Home, School and in the Workplace" by Reuven Bar-On (editor),

Bar-On, R. (2005). The Bar-On model of Emotional-social Intelligence.

*Psicothema*, 17.

Ben-Zeev, A. (1993). Emotions and moral evaluations. In: Metaphilosophy. Vol. 23(3). Oxford. USA.

### Goals of the program

- to impart **communicative English skills** and foster **socialization** in young children
- to expose the children to English in a **supportive and anxiety-free climate**
- to provide the opportunity to acquire English in **relevant and authentic** settings
- to cater for **varied learning styles** in the children
- to use English in **socially and culturally appropriate** ways
- to heighten an **awareness of the self**, the immediate classroom community, and the community beyond the school
- to promote **interactive learning**
- to encourage the development of **positive feelings** towards learning while leading to the acquisition of skills
- to facilitate **meaningful, authentic and relevant** learning experiences.

**These goals are in compliance with those set by the Ministry of Education.**

### Design of the program

The ABC program is designed to help children make sense of their learning experiences in a developmentally appropriate classroom atmosphere.

The ABC classroom supports opportunities for optimal social and emotional development as well as offering cognitive learning experiences that enrich world knowledge and encourage a sense of creativity and fun.

### Patterns of the lesson plans

The main teaching points are presented every lesson with the help of the ABC puppet.

The use of the puppet gives the pupils the opportunity to become emotionally involved with the events taking place throughout the book.

### Activities

The course offers various games, performances, dialogues, songs and chants, affording each child the opportunity to learn in the most suitable way according to his/her particular learning styles.

## A: EARLY ENGLISH ?

The program is meant for pupils aged 6 - 8 (pre-reading stage of Foundation Level Stage One).

What are the long-term benefits of learning a second language at an early age?

In addition to developing a lifelong ability to communicate with people, children who learn a second language may improve overall school performance and superior problem-solving skills.

Younger learners are comparatively uninhibited and flexible when learning a second language. They are able to imitate the tone and intonation of the teacher by repetition and are able to communicate in an extroverted and unreserved manner without being afraid to make mistakes.

This allows the teacher to use songs, games and dialogues to assist their learning process in a natural context.

Introducing children to alternative ways of expressing themselves and to different cultures generally broadens their outlook and gives them the opportunity to communicate with many more people.

According to Krashen, "Acquirers who begin natural exposure to second languages during childhood generally achieve higher second language proficiency than those beginning as adults."

S. Krashen, R. Scarcella, & M. Long (eds.), *Child-Adult Differences in Second Language Acquisition*, Newbury House

According to Singleton (1984) "... in naturalistic situations those whose exposure to a second language begins in childhood in general eventually surpass those whose exposure begins in adulthood."

Singleton, D., *Language Acquisition: The Age Factor*, Clevedon Multilingual Matters

## **B: CONTENT**

Central to the story of "GROWING WITH ABC" is a friendly, appealing and fun-loving puppet called ABC. He is sent from some far distant planet to the planet of Earth to learn how the people live there. As his planet is completely different from ours, he was given there the task to find out about certain subjects, such as numbers, colors, parts of the body, food and animals. He succeeds in fulfilling his task with the help of the family who 'adopted' him.

The pupils in the class are involved in ABC's studies by helping him investigate the subjects. They do this by undertaking various activities which result in various products. These activities should help them to visualize everything ABC saw on the planet of Earth.

ABC's story is related through the medium of 14 picture stories. Each story presents a complete episode in itself, but at the same time it is possible to follow the thread of the story.

In other words, each story is both an independent unit, but at the same time, all the stories are interrelated.

The stories include a description of ABC's everyday activities, his discoveries and some of his problems. In this way, pupils slowly develop an emotional relationship with ABC and identify with him.

In addition, two fairy tales are included in the program.

The ABC puppet is an integral part of every lesson, giving the pupils the opportunity to respond to events taking place throughout the book.

The pupils talk with ABC, tell him their secrets, participate in solving his problems, share his frustrations and his joys.

The pupils go for a walk with ABC, together they celebrate the delights of nature; they visit a farm and see the animals; arrange a birthday party for ABC's baby sister or talk about the hazards of having a pet against their parents' wishes.

The pupils are encouraged to discuss ABC's everyday problems (in their native language), at the same time relating their own problems to the ones of their hero, ABC.

Thus, the learning process becomes more meaningful, arousing interest and stimulating personal involvement and emotional response and the teacher creates a supportive, positive and "anxiety free" classroom climate.

## C: TEACHING METHODS

The following is a description of some of the generic teaching methods suggested in the Teacher's Guide:

### 1. Presenting and reinforcing vocabulary

- a. The new vocabulary, words and phrases, are presented by looking at and listening to the teacher reading out the picture stories. The initial presentation is always followed by an explanation in the native language, allowing the pupils to feel confident that they understood everything. (In the Teacher's Guide, new vocabulary is taught under the heading of I SPEAK ENGLISH.)
- b. The next stage is to reinforce the new words and phrases from the picture stories. This is maintained through the use of picture cards, picture descriptions in the book, rhythmic repetitions, and dialogues.
- c. At the stage of reinforcement the new words are combined with the ones which were learned previously thus maintaining the principle of cyclical learning. (The heading in the Teachers' Guide - REINFORCEMENT)
- d. Further work on reinforcement includes various games, performance tasks and activities. (The headings in the Teacher's Guide: GAMES. PERFORMANCE. ACTIVITY)
- e. Another medium for the introduction of new vocabulary is one of songs and chants. Some of these are well known and some were specially written for this book. (The headings in the Teacher's Guide: LET'S SING! CHANT. RAP)
- f. At later stages, both the vocabulary from the picture stories and the words acquired through songs and chants are combined and "re-entered" into the dialogues to become an integral part of the comprehensive pupils' vocabulary. (The heading in the Teacher's Guide – MAKING CONVERSATION)

## 2. Discussions

Discussions that follow either after the first presentation of the picture stories or at the later stage, help pupils become involved in the content of the picture stories and connect the acquired material with authentic situations. (The heading in the Teacher's Guide - LET'S TALK!)

## 3. The role of games

The ABC program provides ample opportunities for exploration, experimentation and manipulation through the medium of games and contests. In these games, children examine and refine their learning thereby developing their imaginations and sense of creativity.

The games in the ABC program are rule-oriented and promote the development of autonomy and cooperation contributing to social, emotional and intellectual development.

## 4. Phonological awareness

A great deal of attention has been paid to making the pupils phonologically aware of the sounds in the English language. Pupils are introduced to initial sounds, rhyming words and other phonetic phenomena of the English language.

## 5. Reading and writing

Reading and writing are not formally taught at this stage. The pupils will, however, have ample opportunity to be exposed to the printed text through 'reading' picture stories, songs, titles which the teacher writes on the board. These activities will serve as their initial exposure to written English.

## 6. Parent involvement

Parent involvement in the learning process is one of the primary objectives in the "GROWING WITH ABC" course. The teacher encourages and fosters the parent-child relationship in order to encourage the child and enhance the learning process.

Parents are given frequent opportunities to provide input into their children's language acquisition.

Parents are expected to review songs and chants with their children, or to devise short dialogues with them.

It is important for a teacher to keep contact with the parents. This may be achieved by sending them a letter indicating that their son/daughter is chosen to be "the best pupils of the week (month)."

At the end of every unit the parents are sent letters explaining what material their child has learned.

We suggest organizing lessons in which the parents are allowed to be present.

Another way is evaluating the pupils' progress with stickers or stars put in the Activity Book and asking the parent/s to sign the page.

## 7. Homework

Homework tasks in this program consist mostly of review activities, relating the content of the lesson to their parents, or bringing some material for performing tasks in class.

The section "Don't forget!" (at the end of the Pupil's Book) serves as a daybook for making notes concerning homework.

The pupils either write down the task in their native language or make drawings/signs to remind them at home about the tasks being given in the class. This depends on the level of the class.

In the "Notes" column of the "Don't forget!" section the teacher or the parents may write their remarks, creating a "dialogue journal" for written communication between the parents and the teacher.

## 8. Group size

Group size can vary according to the requirements of the school. Working in a larger group can facilitate more choral work and grouping activities. Large classes may be grouped randomly, according to ability or according to friendship choices.

Be sure that each child feels safe and comfortable in his/her group and that nobody is isolated.

Smaller groups can be used to overcome disparity of student differences and encourage social interaction and communicative activities between the children.

## 9. Pacing

Every pupil acquires a foreign language at his/her own pace and in his/her own way. While deciding upon the pacing, the teachers should take into consideration the following: all the numerous activities suggested in the program should lead to the active acquisition of the vocabulary outlined at the end of every unit. If the pupils fail to do it, it means that either the pacing was not appropriate or there wasn't enough variety in the methods used by the teacher, the teacher did not cater to the various learning styles of the pupils. (Remember! Different pupils master the language through different kinds of Intelligences.)

One of the ways to achieve better results is to enforce the spiral method which is widely recommended in the program, e.g. the pupils who haven't acquired the names of the colors in Unit 3 will encounter them in unit 4 while describing the parts of the body.

If, in any case, after all the methods have been used, but the desirable results have not been achieved, the teacher should reconsider his/her way of presenting material and either emphasize some activities or slower the speed of teaching.

## 10. Native speakers

Though native speakers are usually a minority in the class, they should be incorporated into the class activities.

Here are some ways to activate these pupils:

### 1. Oral activities

- Appoint the native speakers as judges in the games
- Give the text of a folk tale to be learned in the class to a native speaker before the lesson and let him/her present it to the class.
- While presenting a picture story, let the native speaker be one of the characters.

### 2. Reading and writing tasks

- While checking the knowledge of the words (I CHECK MYSELF), let the native speaker read the words rather than look at the pictures and name them.
- Give the task to learn the spelling of the words from the "I CHECK MYSELF" section.



- Photocopy the text of a picture story (from the Teacher's Guide) and let the pupil read it in the class.
- Scramble the sentences of a picture story and let the pupil arrange them.
- Give the text of 3 – 4 picture stories and ask the pupil to find suitable pictures.
- The texts of the chants and songs are written at the bottom of some pages. Suggest that the pupil read it aloud.
- Since only one part of any song is printed in the book, suggest that the native speaker writes (or better prints) the whole song. Put it on the ABC BOARD.
- Additional material:  
Two tales are printed at the end of the Teacher's Guide. Ask the pupil to read them, to draw them and to put the words under the suitable pictures.

## D: ASSESSMENT

In the ABC program, oral and written assessment has been especially designed as a systematic procedure for collecting information, facilitating further professional reflection on the part of the teacher as well as on the part of the pupils themselves.

The “GROWING WITH ABC” program views assessment as an ongoing process of observing, recording and documenting the work children do and how they do it.

The assessment procedure itself, as suggested in the Teachers' Guide, allows the children to be comfortable and relaxed rather than tense and anxious.

In the “GROWING WITH ABC” program, self evaluations (“I CHECK MYSELF”) are suggested at the end of each unit as a summary, allowing the pupils to recognize their own progress by taking the time to reflect.

The book includes activities for written evaluation. They comprise of tasks which require the pupils to check their own knowledge of various lexical items in the active vocabulary list.

As giving marks is not acceptable at this age, it is advisable for every teacher to develop his/her own type of "visual" evaluation. This may include putting a certain number of stickers or stars at the end of every unit in accordance with the performance level.

The "GROWING WITH ABC" program makes wide usage of the ABC BOARD (see the TEACHING TIPS section). This board should serve as a means of behavior reinforcement. The teacher decides upon "the best pupils of the week (month)" and their names are put on the ABC BOARD.

The teacher’s Guide provides a wide variety of suggestions for alternative assessment of oral/aural knowledge in songs, dialogues, and use of vocabulary items.

The following grids may serve as a form of assessment.

### SOCIAL INTERACTION

	Accurate	Simple	With Errors
Pupils interact and convey simple messages			
Pupils use comprehensible language			

## ACCESS TO INFORMATION

	Accurate	Simple	With Errors
Pupils obtain and use information from comics			

## PRESENTATION

	Accurate	Simple	With Errors
Pupils present information orally using comprehensible language			
Pupils integrate their knowledge of chunks into the dialogues			
Pupils use correct pronunciation and intonation forming comprehensible messages			

## APPRECIATION OF LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

	Accurate	Simple	With Errors
Pupils become acquainted with English appropriate to their age and interests			
Pupils are aware that their culture is different to other cultures			
Pupils are aware that languages are different (cognates, etc) at the word and sentence level			

## ASSESSMENT RUBRICS FOR SONGS/CHANTS/DIALOGUES

Name of song or chant or dialogue \_\_\_\_\_

	Excellent	Good	Needs improvement
Passive recognition			
Comprehensible reproduction			
Use of correct intonation and stress			
Ability to adapt for communicative purposes			

The "GROWING WITH ABC" program makes wide usage of the ABC BOARD (see the TEACHING TIPS section). This board should serve as a means of behavior reinforcement. The teacher decides upon "the best pupils of the week (month)" and their names are put on the ABC BOARD.

## E: STRUCTURE OF THE PUPIL' S BOOK

“GROWING WITH ABC” is an integrated course book consisting of eight units.

The book consists of two parts.

The first part is comprised of picture stories, songs, chants and coloring activities.

The pages in the second part (starting from page 61) are meant for cutting out.

In this way, the book itself remains intact.

The Teacher’s Guide specifies the activity pages to be used for each unit.

The two last pages “Don’t Forget!” at the end of the book serve as a daybook where the pupils make notes concerning homework. They either write down the task or make drawings / signs.

## F: STRUCTURE OF THE TEACHER’S GUIDE

The Teacher’s Guide consists of the 4 sections:

1. Detailed plans for 53 lessons.
2. Tapescripts.
3. Suggestions for English Days and special events.
4. Material for Holidays (photocopiable).

## G: OBJECTIVES, DOMAINS, BENCHMARKS, TASKS

UNIT	OBJECTIVE	DOMAIN	BENCHMARKS	TASK
1	To introduce oneself	Social interaction Access to information Presentation	To ask and answer questions  To follow directions  To present information through a song	To prepare a dialogue with ABC puppet. To prepare a Name Tie
	To introduce the English language	Appreciation of language  Social interaction Presentation	To identify and use words that are cognates To compare English with the pupils' native language  To engage in a simple conversation  To present information using visual aids	To draw and to present ABC's day  What's your name? My name is...  Description of the pictures
2	To use numbers	Access to information  Social interaction Presentation	To extract information from visually available material To locate relevant information  To interact in order to get information  To describe things and events	To prepare a presentation of oneself      To prepare a clock and to tell the time

<b>UNIT</b>	<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>DOMAIN</b>	<b>BENCHMARKS</b>	<b>TASK</b>
3	To use colors in a relevant context	Access to information  Social interaction	Follow short simple directions given orally  Interact for purposes such as playing a game	To prepare and play bingo game
	To present a dialogue based on a vocabulary from the topic Colors and Numbers	Social interaction  Appreciation of language  Presentation	To engage in a simple dialogue To ask and answer questions for purposes such as giving and receiving information To express feelings Communicate a personal response  To appreciate the basic elements of English word order  Present information on limited context using visual aids	To present a dialogue “ABC meets new friends”  To describe pictures
	To describe pictures, places around us	Social interaction  Access to information  Presentation	To express feelings To ask and answer questions  Follow short simple directions given orally  Present information on limited context using visual aids Describe people, places	To make magic glasses and with their help to describe what they see around them

UNIT	OBJECTIVE	DOMAIN	BENCHMARKS	TASK
4	To use new vocabulary of parts of the body	Social interaction  Access to information  Presentation	Engage in conversation for giving information  Follow short directions given orally  Extract information from visual data  Present information and ideas in speech in an organized fashion	To prepare short conversations using the parts of the body vocabulary on topics “At the doctor”, “I am sick”
	To make use of new vocabulary for practical purposes	Social interaction  Appreciation of language  Presentation	Ask and answer questions To interact for purposes such as constructing an alien  To be aware of peculiarities of English language  Present information on limited context using visual aids	To construct an alien and present it to the class
5	To name family members	Social interaction  Access to information  Presentation	Interact for purposes such as making requests Describe feelings  To extract information from visual aids and oral presentation Understand the general meaning in a text  Present information on limited context	To present a family To find a person based on a given information
	To talk about families. To use the family vocabulary with numbers and colors	Appreciation of culture and literature  Appreciation of language  Presentation	Describe main characters and settings in a literary text  To be aware of the basic elements of an English word  Present information based on visual aids	To perform and present families from a “Funny Planet” To make and present a Family Theatre

<b>UNIT</b>	<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>DOMAIN</b>	<b>BENCHMARKS</b>	<b>TASK</b>
6	To understand sequence of events and characters	Access to information  Social interaction  Presentation	Follow short simple directions given orally  Ask and answer questions Express feelings  Describe people, places, things and events	To prepare a dialogue "At the Market"
	To make a version of the song using the familiar vocabulary.	Appreciation of language  Social interaction  Access to information	Know the basic elements of English word order and use this knowledge in building sentences  Engage in short conversation  Understand the general meaning in a text and use as needed	To make up a song  To describe pictures
	To use new vocabulary, including fruits and vegetables to present an exhibition	Social interaction  Access to information  Presentation	Ask and answer questions Express feelings Interact for purposes of preparing an exhibition  Extract information from visual and auditory data Understand the general meaning and main ideas in a text  Present information on limited content using visual aids	To prepare an exhibition "In the Land of Fruit and Vegetables"
7	To talk about pet animals To present animals	Social interaction  Access to information  Presentation	Express feelings Ask and answer questions Interact for purposes such as presenting an Animal Parade  Follow short simple directions given orally Identify opinions and feelings  Present information in an organized fashion	To present an Animal Parade









UNIT	OBJECTIVE	DOMAIN	BENCHMARKS	TASK
7	To use a new vocabulary and combine it with the vocabulary learned before To prepare a show	Access to information  Social interaction  Appreciation of Language  Presentation  Appreciation of Literature and Culture	Understand the general meaning in a text Locate relevant information  Engage in short conversation Interact for purposes such as preparing a show  Know the basic elements of English sentence structure  Describe people, places, things and events Present information using visual aids  Describe main characters, settings and events in literary texts	To prepare a show “ABC in the Land of Animals”
8	To make a review of all the vocabulary learned over the year	Social interaction  Access to information  Presentation	Ask and answer questions Express feelings  Follow short simple directions given orally  Present information on limited context using visual aids	To construct “ABC” and to present a short dialogue with him

## H: THE LOGOS USED IN THE BOOK

In order to simplify the use of the Teacher’s Guide, the following clues were used:

Sign	Indication
Words written in <b>bold</b>	Teacher says words in <b>English</b>
Words <u>underlined</u>	This word becomes part of the active vocabulary
↔	Signifies a connection between the ABC story and the following task



	Signifies presentation or reinforcement of the picture stories
	Signifies reinforcement of the vocabulary
	Signifies performance of commands
	Pupils' activity
	Games
	New song learned or reviewed
	The pupils work with the book
	The pupils perform a dialogue

## I: TEACHING TIPS

To assist you in the teaching process, we would like to suggest the following tips and recommendations:

- Be friendly and supportive at all times. Remember that each child has a different learning style.
- Make sure that the lessons are pleasurable and fun-filled. This makes for interest and motivation.
- Vary your activities and adapt them to suit the children in the class.
- Write the subject of the lesson on the blackboard and say it aloud to the pupils. They have the right to know what they are going to be taught.
- Read the introduction to each lesson at the beginning of each unit.
- Use the symbolic icons (logos) to denote the activities to be used during the lesson. This will help you organize your lesson and encourage the pupils to take responsibility performing the tasks.
- Prepare a special ABC BOARD in the classroom. There you will display pupils' drawings and other creative pieces of work with pride to other pupils and the parents.
- The program offers a wide range of activities. If some of them seem to you difficult for performing, simplify them or just omit.
- Make use of this Teacher's Guide. It may be very helpful to you.