

Perfect partners

Heinle ELT continues the series that pairs skills development with *National Geographic* pictures

READING EXPLORER 2
(Heinle ELT) Paul MacIntyre
978-1-4240-2940-2

This title is the second in a new four-level series from Heinle ELT that aims to develop reading and vocabulary skills by making use of text and images from its partner for this project, the well-known and highly attractive glossy journal, *National Geographic*. In fact this series represents one of several initiatives featuring a range of titles being brought out by a busy publisher. Each of the twelve units in *Reading Explorer 2* consists of two reading passages, along with an optional video activity.

The passages cover an admirably wide variety of topics, but on the whole ones we might expect considering the geography-related source: culture, science, social issues, travel and adventure are all in focus, always backed up with eye-catching images of things like animals, insects, maps and monuments.

The opening pages invite the reader to 'Explore Your World!' by showing a world map illustrating a dozen or so curious facts with follow-up questions such as: Puerto Rico is famous for *sofrito*. What is it – and how do you make it? As a way into the book, the numbers of

pages providing the answer are then given. Following this the 'Scope and Sequence' (contents pages) outline the breakdown of units by themes such as 'On the Menu', which looks at the history of the humble olive, and then food from the Caribbean. Animals and Language explores whale songs and guard dogs while possibly the most absorbing unit in the book, History Detectives (with some rather graphic images guaranteed to catch the eye of curious teenagers at least) describes the life and times of the iceman ('Ötzi') and the mummified King Tutankhamun.

Each unit is followed by a review, firstly consisting of a crossword plus a cloze-type text which, to complete, encourages students to return and scan the units involved. This precedes four glossy pages with, as far as possible, further topic-related texts: dead languages and language groups follow the unit on animals and languages, while also included is buried cities and a link to ancient eras.

I must admit, though, that it was not always clear to me to what extent such material actually 'reviewed' the units. I felt they served more and perhaps functioned better as extensions to the unit.

In fact, my later reading of *Reading Explorer 2* led me to

realise how such texts were more closely linked to the added themes of world heritage and global views. Individual units begin with warm-up questions, then move on to getting the reader to work from short and longer texts backed up by related photos in order to do tasks involving gap completion, multiple-choice type questions or labelling timelines.

Each of the two parts of the unit ends with vocabulary practice that is once again mostly in the form of gap-filling. I felt the combination of material from *National Geographic* and language teaching was never stronger than in units three to five.

These illustrated Grand Central railway terminal in Manhattan, unmissable sights in India and the flooding of New Orleans in 2005, all with photos that seem to pull in the reader to want to know more – what else could a reading series ask for?

Reading Explorer 2 and all others in the series are accompanied by the usual range of resource add-ons, information on each of which can be found at www.elt.heinle.com/ng.

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REVIEWS IN BRIEF

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BOOK OF THE MONTH



BUSINESS VOCABULARY BUILDER INTERMEDIATE TO UPPER-INTERMEDIATE
(Macmillan) Paul Emmerson
978-0-230-71684-1

This practice course covers 35 topics such as sales and finance, then focuses on effective communication such as telephoning and meetings. The layout is familiar language input on the left and practice exercises on the right. Exercises are generally engaging and useful, with a high number of matching and gap-fills.

The CD provides useful

BUSINESS RESULT ADVANCED (OUP) Kate Baade, Christopher Holloway, Jim Scrivener and Rebecca Turner 978-0-19-476818-4

The twelve units of this new coursebook have titles such as teamwork, risk, performance and leadership. Each unit covers vocabulary and grammar, business communication skills and useful phrases. Culture is dealt with systematically throughout and the book draws on the real business world. A highlight is the CD-Rom, which provides the recordings as mp3 files for

Reviews by Pete Sharma

model sentences plus interviews with business people from different backgrounds.

The breadth of topics is impressive. The explanations of terminology are clear. The content knowledge is sometimes explained rather drily, resembling a textbook for native speakers studying business. Nevertheless, the input on trends language and business reports is excellent; the language in the 'phrases you need' boxes and the discussion topic prompts are useful.

The level is appropriate for the target group; the graphics, while quirky, enliven the content. The book would benefit from a short introduction. Students will undoubtedly get both information about business and solid language practice from this book.

listening on the move, and a useful glossary which students can customise to review vocabulary. The quality of the visuals and layout of the book is stunning. Students on short courses can take a fast-track route through the material. Recommended.

WORKING WITH IMAGES (CUP) Ben Goldstein
978-0-521-71057-2

Using pictures is a powerful way to engage learners; this resource book contains over 75 practical teaching activities which use authentic images to stimulate

ideas and discussion. Section A includes activities on describing, interpreting and creating images; Section B looks at types of image, signs, advertising and art.

Many activities are original and stimulating. There are engaging activities focusing on emblems, famous paintings and old family photographs. The highlight of the book is the CD-Rom, which contains an essential bank of images stored as pdfs. Excellent.

A PLACE I KNOW WELL
(The Listening Business) Sheila Thorn 078-1-905848-11-9

This book aims to expose learners to authentic listening. Five unscripted interviews show typical features of spoken English: assimilation, hesitation, false starts, redundancies and colloquial expressions. The speakers are native and non-native with a variety of accents. The student's book contains exercises which help intermediate students get used to these features. The teacher's book provides an essential introduction to the methodology. This volume is driven by sound pedagogy and should prove a useful addition to the scripted audio material generally contained in ELT coursebooks. The material allows teachers to exploit listening and provides scaffolding to ensure students are not overwhelmed. Worth investigation.

for the Bournemouth English Book Centre

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