Complete English for Cambridge Secondary 1 Stage 7

TEACHER PACK

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Complete English for Cambridge Secondary 1 directly supports the Cambridge Secondary 1 English curriculum framework, enabling learners to tackle the Checkpoint test and rise to the challenge of Cambridge IGCSE® with confidence.

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Supplementary teaching material can be accessed at [www.oxfordsecondary.com/checkpoint-english-resources](http://www.oxfordsecondary.com/checkpoint-english-resources)
Introduction

Oxford’s Complete English for Cambridge Secondary 1 is an enquiry-based course designed to develop students’ skills and confidence in English. Recognising the multilingual and multicultural nature of today’s world, the approach supports your students in becoming life-long learners who are agile, independent, 21st century thinkers.

Carefully aligned to the latest Cambridge Secondary 1 English curriculum framework, you can be assured that Oxford’s Complete English for Secondary 1 is meeting your students’ learning goals. Arranged under engaging themes, each of the nine units covers topics and skills that facilitate learning across the curriculum as well as providing a firm foundation in preparation for IGCSE® First or Second Language English courses of study.

Student Book and Workbook

The guiding principles for Student Book 7 and Workbook 7 are creativity and engagement. The course as a whole aims to increase students’ awareness and competency in all aspects of English. They are encouraged to:

● explore the content of texts from or set in countries around the world
● create different types of writing, including poetry and play scripts
● collaborate on grammar tasks and in speaking and listening activities
● engage with new concepts and the writer’s craft
● reflect on what they are learning, and why.

All units facilitate Cambridge Secondary 1 Checkpoint learning objectives, building on the Cambridge Primary English curriculum framework. The central learning objectives for each unit are provided at the beginning of each unit in the teacher book. Please note that learning objectives may only be partially covered within a particular unit, with other aspects of the objective covered elsewhere. Some objectives may therefore appear in more than one unit. This holistic approach ensures that, through the nine units of the student book, work book and teacher book, the curriculum framework is covered fully in an engaging and logical way. Each unit ends with an entertaining but purposeful quiz and an opportunity for students to reflect on their own learning and development in English.

The Workbook is designed as a stand-alone component. As a write-in resource it is connected to but not dependent upon having a copy of the Student Book in hand. The Workbook is ideal for consolidation and extension of concepts and skills that have been covered in a class session using the Student Book.

Reading

Each unit opens with a ‘Thinking time’ session in which students examine new ideas and established modes of thought as a class, in groups or pairs. This leads on to readings from modern fiction, pre-twentieth century poetry, non-fiction, news articles, autobiography or myths and folk tales. Reading extracts are accompanied by Word Cloud and Glossary boxes. Word clouds can be used to introduce students to new vocabulary, to explore meanings and usage in context. Words that appear in the Word cloud are sometimes a semantic group, sometimes a word-class group, depending upon the extract. Word builder exercises allow students to familiarise themselves with, and utilise, the words in the Word cloud.

Glossary features are also present with some extracts, to help students with words or phrases that may not be found easily in a dictionary because they are uncommon, colloquial, or technical phrases. With the help of the Word Builder feature and ‘Developing your language’ tasks, the writer’s craft can be discussed.
and practised. Within a clearly labelled ‘Understanding’ section, comprehension skills are consolidated with tasks requiring students to demonstrate their understanding of explicit and implicit meaning and lead from information retrieval to generating new material.

Writing
Stage 7 includes a wide variety of teaching and learning for writing with examplars of model student answers within the Teacher Book notes. Writing tasks include: writing a newspaper report and a letter, writing poems and playscripts, a descriptive account, a persuasive blog post and a suspense narrative. All writing tasks are carefully built up, offering step by step guidance so that students structure and organize their ideas coherently, using a range of sentence structures and punctuation to create particular effects. Each unit also contains essential grammar and spelling practice to improve technical accuracy.

Speaking and listening
Stage 7 speaking and listening tasks prepare students to: argue an issue, present and discuss a sporting event or a hobby, give an oral report of a storm, role-play a journey to school and engage in an entertaining drama game that involves using pronouns. Each task encourages active listening for turn-taking, and improves oral skills for debates and presentations. Group and pair work tasks enable students to explore complex ideas and feelings in a safe environment, and develop confidence in giving perceptive responses that show an awareness of another person’s extended meanings. Speaking and listening activities incorporate a fun element, but there is a serious purpose behind what students are asked to do; it is invaluable preparation for oral assessments in both First and Second Language English exams and later for group and team work at pre-university level. Audio recordings for listening tasks are located on the CD in the back of this book.

Formative and summative assessment
Throughout the units, students’ work is assessed through teacher, peer and/or self-assessment, with the objective of improving specific competencies and self-confidence. Workbook 7 enables students to practise and expand on what they are doing in lessons individually for homework. Answers and suggested answers can be found within the lesson notes for each unit in this book.

Teacher pack CD
Here you will find:
- Transcripts of listening tasks as printable word documents
- Audio files for each of the listening tasks shown with this symbol in the student book.
- Photocopiable resources

Complete English for Cambridge Secondary 1 offers teachers and students trusted and experienced authors who have crafted an English programme in line with the goals of Cambridge International Examinations, whose desire is to develop learners who are:
- Confident
- Responsible
- Reflective
- Innovative
- Engaged.

Acknowledging and celebrating the multilingual classroom, this course supports and stretches both monolingual and bilingual students in their English learning.
Spine-chilling suspense

Learning objectives
In this unit, students will:

● Work in solo, pair and group assignments, including role-play. pages 2–3 7SL7
● Demonstrate understanding of features of narrative and non-narrative texts by explaining and developing these features in their own discussion and writing. pages 4–5 7Rv2
● Use a range of increasingly complex sentence structures to communicate meaning and to give fluency to their writing. pages 6–7 and 10–11 7Wp3
● Clarify relationships between ideas with an accurate and increased use of connectives. pages 6–7 and 10–11 7Wp6
● Give an informed personal response to a text and provide some textual reference in support. pages 8–9 7RO1
● Increase knowledge of word families, roots, derivations, morphology and regular spelling patterns. pages 8–9 7Ws2
● Clarify and extend meaning and create specific effects by using a range of features, e.g. precise and imaginative use of vocabulary. pages 12–13 7Wa8
● Provide appropriate detail and clarify relationships between setting, characters, themes, plot, etc. by using a range of features, e.g. varying sentence length and structure. pages 14–15 7Wp2

Curious culture
Taking about 5–10 minutes, draw out students’ ideas and prior experience in an informal way:

● Ask why they think people explore places and situations which put them in danger.
● Has anyone collaborated with others to create a situation of suspense in a story or drama?
● Ask if any have found ways to create suspense in their own writing.
● How do different lengths and types of sentences help the reader engage with a story?
● Ask: When you read a scary or adventure story, do you ever stop to reflect on how the writer created the suspense?

Setting the scene

Thinking time
You could start by asking students if they like to be frightened. The initial response is likely to be ‘no’ but then ask them about what they feel on breathtaking rides at the funfair, or while watching a scary movie.

The discussion generated by the questions can begin in small groups. Draw out some of their best ideas in a plenary discussion.

Answers
Suggested responses:
1. People can find what they imagine while reading more frightening than the images they see in a film.
2. People are generally frightened by what they do not know and once something is seen it is easier to understand.
3. Possibly because all humans are afraid of things they do not understand so people of all cultures make up stories about the strange and unknown.

Reflection
Creating suspense – the power of suggestion

Before the exercise, tell students to close their eyes and listen as you read the text aloud. You could illustrate how the power of suggestion is used to create suspense by asking students what we do and don’t find out about the creature from the extract. Some suggestions are given in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What we find out</th>
<th>What we don’t find out</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why it is hiding in the shadows</td>
<td>Details about the creature’s appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why it moves slowly</td>
<td>Who are in the crowd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether it has evil intent</td>
<td>Its name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How old it is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What noise it makes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Where it has come from</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Drawing the creature provides an opportunity for fun and creative expression.

Extension

Describing a creature

Ask students to use their drawing of a creature as a starting point for writing a description of a horrible being. Suggest that, to make their description powerful, it should appeal to as many of the senses as possible. Ask them to consider the following:

- How big is it?
- What colour(s) is it?
- What texture is it (slimy/rough/shiny)?
- What does it smell of?
- What sounds does it make?
- What does it do (move slowly/belch smoke/groan)?
Clinging to the edge

Prior knowledge
Students read a short text and analyse how the selection of verbs is used to develop suspense. They will need to draw on their full knowledge of different ‘powerful’ verbs.

Ask students if they have heard of the yeti. Explain that it is a creature from the culture or mythology of the Himalayan mountains of Nepal and Tibet. It is described as a huge hairy, ape-like creature that lives in the high snowy mountains. It is sometimes called the ‘abominable snowman’. There are few recent reports of sightings of the yeti but people sometimes find huge footprints in the snow. No explorers or scientists have been able to find proof of its existence but, more importantly, they have not been able to prove that it doesn’t exist. So the stories continue!

Clinging to the edge
Display the title of the passage and elicit its literal meaning with reference to the photo. Then discuss its metaphorical meaning (just hanging on when something bad could happen) and some examples (e.g. finding just enough money to pay your rent before you are thrown out of your house).

Read the sentence at the beginning of the Understanding section to the students to contextualise the passage before they start. They could read through the questions in this section first to give them a purpose for reading. Also explain that ‘yeh-teh’ is an alternative spelling for yeti.

Using verbs to create suspense
To introduce this section, look at some of the more powerful and descriptive verbs in the text, e.g. snaked, looped, blacked out, clamped.

1. Elicit and discuss verbs that students suggest. Some possible answers:
   a. terrified, frightened, petrified
   b. screamed, yelled, hollered
   c. thump, punch, bang

2. This would work well as a word race. Pairs or small groups share and note down as many words for each category as they can in a given time, e.g. two minutes for each category. Then ask the groups with the most words to read them out, or display them on a board. Can they find any others in a thesaurus?
Word builder

The questions in this section consolidate language and reading skills so ask students to work quietly on their own. Suggested responses:

1. a. adjective
   b. taut suggests stretched as far as it will go

2. They both add extra meaning: froze means stopped and unable to move and clung means held very tightly. This gives detail and strength to the description of her feelings, and builds on the earlier use of clamped and hugging.

3. It suggests the movement as he puts the rope around and around again.

Extended story, guided reading

On page 146 of the Student Book, there is an extended extract from the novel, ‘The Lastling’ by Philip Gross. After students have completed their extension activity and before students read this new part of the story, explain that this extract, entitled ‘No Way But Up’, describes the challenge the three characters face in escaping their ‘would be’ kidnappers. They must ascend the sheer cliff face. Tahr and Paris can speak to each other in English but the Yeh Teh named Geng-sun doesn’t use spoken language and ‘talks’ using her hands, postures and facial expressions. They all must communicate in order to help each other. ‘No Way But Up’ comes slightly before and continues beyond the text on Student book page 4, ‘Clinging to the Edge’. Ask students:

1. Compare the way Paris’ movements and actions are described with how Geng-sun moves. Why does the writer create this comparison? (accept answers which include, to show that Geng-sun doesn’t understand Paris’ fear because Geng-sun feels comfortable and natural in this setting but to Paris it is terrifying. This builds tension and creates suspense for the climb ahead.

2. How does Tahr express his and Paris’ fear at the plan to climb?

3. Explore the idea expressed in this passage that language is more than just words. Think about Geng-sun’s gesture that ‘came like a shout’ and Paris’ comfort hearing Tahr, ‘his voice came in a steady mutter, one of his chants’ in a language Paris didn’t speak or understand.

Using effective verbs

Page 3 of the Workbook gives students the opportunity to think further about the nuances of verbs and the importance of choosing them carefully when they write. It is suitable for homework. Suggested answers:

1. Threatening: exploded, flew, lurked, strode, loped, hulked
   Sad: trundled, lolloped, shambled, shuffled, strolled
   Humorous: waddled, danced, pranced

2. Suggested answers (some are suitable for more than one box):
   Happy yeti: smiled, laughed, chatted, chuckled, grinned
   Angry yeti: snarled, raged, foamed, roared, bellowed, yelled, boomed, thundered
   Hurt yeti: whimpered, grimaced, yelped, howled, yelled
   Shy yeti: peeked, hid, retired, smiled

Continuing the story

Once students have analysed the text, ask them to continue it. Start with a class discussion to stimulate ideas. Ask questions such as:

- Will Paris be able to climb up?
- How will Tahr and the ‘yeh-teh’ help her?
- What will happen when she reaches the top?
- Which verbs will be useful to describe this?

Suggest that they write another two or three paragraphs to describe how the situation is resolved. Tell them to try to keep up the suspense until Paris is safe and to choose their verbs carefully.
**Types of sentence**

In this section students develop their knowledge of sentence types. They start with simple sentences and then look at compound sentences. Complex sentences are dealt with on page 10. Students will have been exposed to a range of sentence types at primary level and acquired considerable knowledge. However, they may not be able to define and articulate what they know. Working through the explanations and examples on these two pages will focus students on this.

Start by displaying a simple sentence, e.g. *Tahr helped Paris,* and making sure students can identify and name the verb, subject and object. Then read through the explanation with the students.

**Using different types of sentence**

Using the illustration, elicit other simple sentences for each of the three categories.

**Answers:**

1. a. Tamsin
   b. loves
   c. Elicit the sentences from students and display on the board.

2. b, c and d.
   These sentences do not state one complete idea on its own – they include extra information.

Work steadily through the explanation with the students and elicit other examples of compound sentences to ensure they have all understood.

3. a. I
   b. rode, loved
   c. but

4. **Suggested answer:**
   I went on holiday to Abu Dhabi as I wanted to ride Formula Rossa. The theme park is called Ferrari World where I rode Formula Rossa three times. The ride reaches 150 km/h and it is the fastest in the world. You reach 1.7G of force so you feel like you are in a Formula 1 racing car. This is the best coaster I have ever ridden but the ride is not the most frightening in the world. I want to go back to the park because I can’t wait to ride Formula Rossa again.

5. Accept answers such as these:
   a. People love to ride fast rollercoasters because they like to be frightened.
   b. The suspense before we start moving is my favourite part but I love the whole ride.
   c. I love being turned upside down and I adore being thrown up in the air.
   d. My friend hates rollercoasters so he doesn't go to theme parks.
Simple and compound sentences

Page 4 of the Workbook gives students further practice in understanding and writing simple and compound sentences. Perhaps provide as homework so that students can work at their own pace, but ensure they understand what is required of question 3 (i.e. to pair any of the sentences, putting them into compound sentences, and then order them into a paragraph).

Supporting students

Check students’ work to find who needs more support. Work through the explanations and the exercises again if necessary.

Answers:

1. a. S  
   b. C  
   c. C

2. a. The movie was really good so I am glad I went to see it.  
   b. I really like suspense in stories but I don’t like horror.  
   c. I am pleased to have bought tickets for the concert because/as I was afraid they would sell out before I reached the venue.

3. Suggested answer:  
   Verruckt stands at over 50 metres high so it is taller than the Statue of Liberty. Verruckt is a water slide so it isn’t a rollercoaster at all. Accessing Verruckt is far from easy as there are 264 stairs to climb to enter the ride. You sit in a plastic tube shaped like a boat and there are no safety restraints to hold you in. The opening of the ride was delayed because tests showed riders were not secure.

Describing the ride of your life

Ask students to think about their favourite theme park and/or ride. Tell them to write eight to ten simple sentences to describe the park or ride, and why they enjoyed it. Remind them that a simple sentence contains one complete idea only. Then ask them to use their simple sentences to write some compound sentences. Remind them that this will require them to use conjunctions. Students may need to alter their original simple sentences to make the compound sentences clearer. Then ask them to put the sentences in the best order to make a paragraph. Again, they may want to make changes to their sentences so that the paragraph flows well.
Spine-chilling suspense

See monkey, fear monkey

Prior knowledge
Ask students to find Gibraltar on a world map or globe. Elicit anything they may know about it, especially the famous monkeys.
Gibraltar is a small territory in the far south of Spain at the closest point to North Africa. It is tiny, only 6 km² but with 30,000 inhabitants it is very densely populated. It has been a British overseas territory for over 300 years, which is a source of tension between the governments of Britain and Spain. Its main source of income is tourism.
One of the main tourist attractions in Gibraltar is the troop of 300 monkeys. They are macaque monkeys, originally from North Africa, but have made Gibraltar their home for many hundreds of years. They are the only group of wild monkeys in Europe. They live on the high rock of Gibraltar but sometimes raid the town for food. Many tourists love to see them but there are drawbacks, as the text makes clear.

Understanding
The extract contains some words that may be unfamiliar to students. Read it with the class before starting on the Understanding section. Look together at the words and definitions in the Glossary box.

1. His daughter wants to see the apes.
2. He talks about their sharp teeth and their biting. He also chooses vocabulary related to crime and violence, e.g. ‘all-out assault’, ‘armed robbery’, ‘ambush’, ‘resistance’. He calls them ‘devious thugs’.
3. The tone of the text could be changed by removing the vocabulary related to violence (as in 2 above) and replacing it with vocabulary that presents the apes as cute and their activities as amusing.

Stretching students
You could work with the higher-ability students to extend Question 3. Elicit and discuss some alternative ‘positive’ descriptions. Then set them to work in pairs or small groups to write a text about the Barbary apes called ‘See Monkey: Love Monkey’ which expressed excitement and enthusiasm at visiting the apes.

Speaking and listening
Organise students into pairs to discuss how the author creates humour and whether it makes the monkeys less frightening. Elicit responses in a short class discussion afterwards. Likely responses include:

1. He exaggerates by selecting vocabulary that would not usually be used to describe small animals, e.g. ‘devious thugs’ and ‘armed robbery’. He describes them as ‘psychotic’ and ‘malevolent’, not ‘cute’ and ‘cuddly’, which adds to the humour.
2. The humorous description leads the reader to conclude that the writer is exaggerating and that the monkeys cannot be as bad as he describes. However, he still raises the fear of being bitten painfully so the monkeys remain frightening.

Glossary

- **Barbary apes** - Apes that live in North Africa.
- **Macaque monkeys** - A type of monkey with a large brain and a triangular face.
- **Gibraltar** - A British overseas territory in southern Spain.
- **Tourist attraction** - A place visited for pleasure or interest.
- **Crime and violence** - Acts that go against the law and cause harm to others.
- **Devious thugs** - People who are cunning and harmful.
- **Psychotic** - Having a mental disorder.
- **Malevolent** - Having a cruel or malicious motive.
- **See Monkey: Fear Monkey** - A humorous text about visiting monkeys in a zoo.
- **Word builder** - An activity that helps students learn new words.

Extra Credit

- **Vocabulary that presents the apes as cute** - Words that show the apes in a friendly way.
- **Activity** - A task or exercise for students to do.

Extra Reading

- **Barbary apes** - A type of monkey that lives in North Africa.
- **Gibraltar** - A British overseas territory.
- **Tourist attraction** - A place that is popular with tourists.

Extra Practice

- **Exaggeration** - Overstating or blowing things out of proportion.
- **Humour** - The use of words or actions to make people laugh.

Extra Writing

- **See Monkey: Love Monkey** - A text that expresses excitement and enthusiasm at visiting monkeys.
- **Barbary apes** - Apes that live in North Africa.
- **Gibraltar** - A British overseas territory.
- **Tourist attraction** - A place that is popular with tourists.
Workbook

Adventurous adverbs

Page 5 of the Workbook gives students more practice in using adverbs ending in -ly.

The page can be done as homework but prepare students first by reading through the paragraph in question 1 to explain any unfamiliar vocabulary that might distract them from the task, e.g. roam, gullible, gaze, biased, assassins. Ensure they understand that question 2 requires them to write adverbs they think up for themselves. They can record the adverbs they listed for Word builder question 5 or use the Internet to find more adverbs.

1. The monkeys are naturally curious creatures. These cheeky characters are supposed to live in a nature reserve but they roam happily all over the Rock, much to the delight of the gullible tourists who gaze fondly at them. They don't realise until it is too late how physically aggressive these little monsters can be. Yes, you've guessed, I am extremely/amazingly biased but I am also extremely/amazingly scared of all those teeth and sharp claws. The latest estimate is that there are over 300 of these silent assassins freely living on the Rock so avoiding them is impossible.

Grammar

Developing your language – adverbs

1. frequently
2. hesitantly
3. fearlessly

Word builder

1. a. robbery
   b. noun
   c. It does not end in -ly.
2. Example answers: I have a permanent job now. He is not getting better as his illness is persistent. The pressure of exams at university is relentless.
3. Example answers: There are extremes of temperature in central Asia. All my friends and relatives are coming to my party.
4. Example answer: I will complete my homework tomorrow.
5. There are many. Students could work in small groups to list as many as possible in a short time and then share with the class. They could find more by doing an Internet search for ‘adverbs ending in ly’, for example www.examples.yourdictionary.com/examples-of-adverbs-with-ly.html

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Spine-chilling suspense

Complex sentences

Prior knowledge
Students will now build on what they have studied about simple and compound sentences to learn about complex sentences. These contain two clauses: a main clause that will make sense on its own but also a subordinate clause that adds meaning to the main clause but does not make sense on its own. It will also contain a subordinating conjunction (often just called a ‘connective’), which links the two clauses together. There are many more subordinating conjunctions than the basic conjunctions used in compound sentences. Students will have been exposed to complex sentences at primary level but may not have studied them before, so work through the explanations and examples slowly and carefully as the terminology can be challenging.

Using complex sentences
1. Answers shown as: main clause subordinate clause.
   a. She still loved him even after the accident in the laboratory.
   b. He had to save his friend because he knew she was afraid of heights.
   c. Before I became a horror writer, I never watched anything except comedies.
2. Possible answers:
   a. The thrill of the chase excited him although it also frightened him.
   b. Although it seems strange, dangling from the edge of the cliff didn’t worry him.
   c. Don’t ask me why I am so afraid because I have no idea.

Stretching students
You could give these additional sentences to higher-ability students who complete the exercises quickly while you work with those who need more support.
1. d. Although I’m still expected to go on Saturday, museums make me feel nervous.
   e. The movie was worth watching even though it was very scary.

Using subordinating conjunctions
1. a. Even though
   b. If
   c. because
   d. since
2. a. But After/Before/When
   b. if although
   c. whereas when/whenever
3. If you think students will find this difficult, start by eliciting ideas and writing some sentences collaboratively. Leave them on display for students to refer to as examples.

Answers:
1. d. Although I’m still expected to go on Saturday, museums make me feel nervous.
   e. The movie was worth watching even though it was very scary.
2. Possible answers:
   d. Spiders are so creepy if you see them running around fast.
   e. The suspense was killing her even though she got a thrill out of it.

2. d. Spiders are so creepy.
   e. The suspense was killing her.
Workbook

Complex sentences

Page 6 of the Workbook gives students further practice in using subordinating conjunctions and writing complex sentences. This works well as a short homework activity in providing students with an opportunity to practise what they have learnt. Introduce activity 1 beforehand to ensure that the students understand how to make sentences with the diagram. Check that they understand the words ‘venomous’ and ‘nocturnal’.

1. a. Spiders are arachnids which was a Greek word originally.
   b. Some spiders are venomous even though most aren’t a threat to humans.
   c. Some spiders are nocturnal whereas others hunt in the day.
   d. Always check for spiders before putting on your shoes.
   e. Spiders have eight legs whereas insects have six legs.
   f. People fear spiders because they’re quick and silent.

2. Accept any correct answers. Examples:
   a. I will watch TV after I have finished this work.
   b. I listen to music whenever I am in my room.
   c. I will see you at school if you are better.
   d. I might be late as I have to help my mother first.
   e. I won’t be able to leave until I have finished.

Playing a complex sentences game

Display three lists of six words. List A is any six subordinating conjunctions you want to practise. List B is six nouns that can be used as the subject of a sentence (e.g. spider, monkey, teacher) and List C is six more nouns (e.g. legs, bag, tourist).

Divide the class into small groups. Throw the dice once to select a conjunction and then twice more to select nouns. The groups then produce a complex sentence using the three words. For example, Although the monkeys chase the tourists, visitors to Gibraltar love to see the cheeky animals.

Ask the groups to read out their sentences and give a mark for the best one.

You could produce sets of cards with different conjunctions and nouns to distribute with dice so that groups can play the game independently.

Example cards

Card A
although
before
while
because
whereas
as

Card B
apes
people
tourists
neighbours
spider
rollercoaster

Card C
bags
thugs
robbery
shark
crocodile
daughter
Spine-chilling suspense

The key to writing suspense

Prior knowledge
As a pre-listening activity, tell students they are going to listen to a lecture by a writer, in which he talks first about how he became a writer and then gives some tips on how to be a successful writer. Ask students to work in pairs to make notes on what they predict are the writer’s tips. After a few minutes elicit and discuss some of the tips (without indicating what is in the recording). Play the recording once and ask students to listen out for the tips. After listening, discuss which of their predictions were correct and why they think their other predictions were not included.

Listening
Look at the Word cloud and Glossary box with students before they listen again. Explain any words they don’t know and elicit example sentences using the words in the cloud. Play the recording a second time before students answer the questions.

Understanding
1. Barbados
2. It refers to both the people and the language of Barbados.
3. Everyone needs some luck to get started but he makes it clear he worked hard and it cannot have been luck that his story won a competition – there would have been other entries so he must have written a good story.
4. For the author it is probably the final point (to have fun and enjoy the writing). Ask students to justify their answers.
5. Most authors will tell you that it is hard work – not all would say that it is fun!

Student-book answers

Describing Barbados
Students work in small groups to make notes.

Supporting students
If students find this difficult, play the recording again or distribute copies of the transcript for them to read.

Using ellipsis
This activity could be done as collaborative writing with the whole class, or in small groups with the groups sharing their sentences later.

Developing your language – hyphenated words

Answers
1. Fixed: sub-plot, long-range, short-handed, laid-back, long-term, short-sighted, re-edit, open-handed, fifty-fifty
   Not fixed: fast-paced
2. In the first sentence, the writer gave up his contract. In the second sentence, he signed again. The hyphen is necessary to show that this is the verb ‘signed’ modified by the prefix ‘re’ which adds the meaning ‘again’ – rather than the verb ‘resigned’.

Grammar
Vocabulary

Supporting students

It will be necessary to distribute copies of the transcript for students to answer question 2.

Explain that the word ‘whodunit’ derives from ‘who did (or done) it’ and describes a crime story in which the lead character (and reader) tries to work out who committed the crime.

1. It is very descriptive because the image it conjures up depicts an exciting situation in which we wonder what will happen next.

   The two phrases with ‘half’ are very effective because he is talking about something he thinks he didn’t do well enough.
   The ‘murder-suspense whodunit’ describes precisely what sort of book it was.

3. a. ‘Sugar cane’ has equal stress on both words but in the hyphenated ‘sugar-cane’ only the first part is stressed. This creates a rhythm of ‘dum-di-dum’ rather than ‘dum-dum-dum’.

Producing writing tips

Use the writing tips presented in the Benjamin Simon text as a starting point for students to reflect on their own writing.

- Put them into pairs to discuss and note their tips for producing good writing (in general rather than just stories). These can relate to:
  - the process of writing (planning, drafting, etc.)
  - time-management
  - writing aids such as a dictionary and thesaurus
  - mood and atmosphere (comfort, silence or listening to music, etc.).

- Combine the pairs into groups of four to share and discuss ideas.

- Hold a plenary session to draw out the ideas. Record those that the students consider to be the best or most helpful. Turn these into a poster that can remain on the classroom wall as a reminder.

Workbook

Hyphenated compounds

Page 7 of the Workbook gives students the opportunity to do more work on compound nouns and the use of hyphens.

It can be done as a short homework activity to support the class work. Prepare students for question 1 by checking their understanding of ‘long-sighted’, ‘short-lived’ and ‘sub-standard’.

After they have finished, check that they have understood words such as ‘U-boat’ (question 2), ‘bound’ and ‘re-bound’ (question 3).

1. a. long-sighted  
   b. short-term  
   c. re-elect  
   d. short-lived  
   e. sub-standard
Writing suspense – planning a beginning

Prior knowledge
As preparation, read aloud this short text.

It might have happened anywhere in this strange and magic continent of Africa. It might have happened in the sun-scorched deserts of the Kalahari where Camelthorn grow. Or in the Lebombo Uplands where mountains reach the sky. Or even in the Lowveld where woodland and grass unite. It might have happened anywhere. But just where, the four young people will not tell.

Perhaps they promised someone they would not tell. Perhaps they are silent because no one would ever believe their story. Perhaps they won’t tell because it seemed like a dream after all – a dream which all four of them shared. Whatever the reason, neither Sean, nor Nicky, nor Samantha, nor Gareth will ever tell.

All they say is that Nicky wandered away from their holiday coach, and when he did not return, they went to look for him. And so began an adventure they would believe their story. Perhaps they won’t tell because no one would ever believe their story. Perhaps they promised someone they would not tell.

Ask students the following questions and have a short, general discussion before they start planning their writing.

● What is the setting for the story?
● Are the main characters introduced?
● What is the crisis that starts the story?
● Having listened to this opening, what do you want to know?

Supporting students
Some students respond well to graphic organisers and grids. As an alternative, copy and distribute the PCM Story Mountain. For this activity, they need only complete the first three sections of the grid, although completing it all – and so having a plan for how their story will develop – may help them to write an effective beginning.

Elements of suspense
They should use the PCM Story Mountain as a checklist to ensure that their paragraphs are going to make an interesting and exciting beginning to a story.

This would be a useful piece of work to collect and evaluate. In your marking and comments, focus on the points in the diagram on page 15.

"Ali, we can’t go out there," cried Jasmin.

"We must if we’re going to get out of here before the guard comes back," replied Ali as he pushed the door.

Jasmin was terrified of what was outside. She knew Ali was right. They had to escape soon. The guard went out ten minutes ago and when he returned he would send the dogs after them. If they couldn’t escape from the evil gang now, they had no hope.

But what was outside the door? Could it be worse than what was inside? Jasmin trembled as Ali slowly pushed the door open...

Wow! I really want to know what is outside. I like the way you have used dialogue to get straight into the action and introduce the characters – but just correct the punctuation of the speech, please.

It’s good to use different lengths of sentences and you have done this well but the two sentences I have marked might be better as a compound sentence. Can you see how to do this?

A good use of questions and ellipsis to build suspense. Why not finish the story? I’d love to know what happens!
Workbook

Writing suspense
Page 8 of the Workbook offers students further practice in developing suspense. This could be done in two stages. Firstly, as an oral classroom activity in which the students work in pairs to bounce ideas off each other. They then do the writing stage as homework so that they have time to reflect and develop their own ideas.

Extension

Completing a story
After writing an explosive start to their story, encourage students to complete it.
- Students read the feedback you have given them on their two paragraphs and/or they exchange their opening paragraphs with a partner and exchange feedback.
- They use the PCM to complete the plan for the rest of the story.
- Using the feedback, they rewrite their opening paragraphs and then complete the story.
- ‘Publish’ the stories by reading out one or two of the stories, and making them available for the class to read.

Transcript: The Key to Writing Suspense
Madam President, members of the awards committee, honoured guests, fellow Bajans; it is my privilege to be here today to accept this award as ‘Bajadian of the Year’. For no matter where I have travelled and lived on this wonderful planet, Barbados will always be the place where I was born, and where I will always call home.

When I was told I had won this award I was asked to share my secret formula. I had the potential, that’s for sure; and I loved school – in particular English Literature – but in the end I was simply lucky. When I was seventeen, I entered a short story competition run by the Daily Nation. I’d already written a few half-hearted pieces but this time I took it seriously. I did my research, I spent hours drafting and redrafting, and I came up with a passable murder-suspense whodunit set in the sugar cane industry on the island. I walked away with five thousand Barbadian dollars and the offer of a scholarship to study English at an American university.

Like I said, I was lucky.

I soon found myself in Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., and I took a position at a publishing company in DC after graduation. I quickly realised I could write as well as any of the professional authors whose work I edited. So I set about writing my first suspense novel in the evenings and at weekends, even in my lunch breaks and before I travelled to work in the mornings.

I submitted my draft to an editor who I’d worked for and the rest, as they say, is history. Thirty-two years and sixteen novels later I stand before you to tell my story. I am a lucky man.

And what is my secret formula for writing success? To be honest, there is no real secret, but here’s what I’ve learned over the years – mostly by trial and lots of error. I think you need to:
- Write about what, where, and who you know.
- Make the readers like your main character and care about what happens to him or her.
- Don’t let the readers know more than they need to until the final climax, so include anti-climaxes.
- Make time an issue – deadlines create suspense.
- Stack the odds your hero faces so they are almost insurmountable but not impossible.
- Use lots of questions but don’t provide answers – let the readers’ imaginations work.
- Use cliff-hangers to keep the readers guessing; ellipses work well.
- Create dilemmas that your characters have to face.

And, most of all have fun. Enjoy it. I certainly have.

Thank you.

(Applause and fade)
Progress check

End-of-unit assessment

1. One mark each. Accept any two of:
   anonymous creature/no details of creature/
   we don't know why it is hiding/why it is
   watching/what or who is its prey/why it
   wants to attack. [2]

2. One mark. Accept one of: she is being
   chased by rebels/she is afraid of the climb.
   One mark for either Tahr or the yeh-teh

3. One mark for response that recognises the
   joining of two main clauses. Award one mark
   for a suitable example. [2]

4. One mark each. Accept any two of: any
   response involving the monkeys' aggressive
   behaviour/stealing food/searching bags/not
   following the rules/being very quick/being
   impossible to defeat. [2]

5. One mark for 'fearfully'.
   A further mark for recognising –ly ending. [2]

6. One mark: complex sentence.
   One mark: one main clause/one subordinate/
   use of subordinate conjunction. Award two
   marks for a suitable example. [4]

7. Two marks. One is a fixed compound noun,
   the other is an unfixed compound adjective.
   One mark for hyphenated.
   One must always use a hyphen (one mark)
   the other only depending on usage (one mark).
   [4]

8. One mark each. Colloquial term for Barbadian
   and local dialect.
   One mark for any two relevant details
   found in text – Bridgetown is the capital;
   Oistins is a fishing community;
   the Daily Nation is a newspaper. [4]

9. One mark each:
   Location for setting – choose somewhere
   familiar so you can add detail from memory
   Main character – name, gender, age,
   personality
   First or third person narrative?
   Situation – what major crisis is your character
   facing?
   What dilemma must be overcome?
   What is the time pressure? [4]

10. One mark each. Accept any four elements on
    page 15 of Student Book or in the author's
    speech. [4]

Suspense unit quiz

Page 9 of the Workbook offers students an
opportunity to revisit topics, and review
grammar and language learning, they engaged
with in the unit.

Answers.

1. Any two suitable examples
2. One main clause as opposed to two or more/
   accept use of conjunction
3. quietly/lazily/amazingly/calmly
4. Complex/one main and one subordinate
   clause
5. Joining words that begin a subordinate
   clause in a complex sentence/Whenever
6. Short simple sentences/text asks but does
   not answer questions/fear of being caught
   and of what is chasing/cliff-hanger/use of
   ellipsis/first person engagement

Reflection

Hold a few-minutes class discussion on how
students will use the different writing skills
covered in this unit in essays and exams as they
proceed up the school. Students should then
work independently on the reflection task. Ask
students where they would place themselves on
the 'peak of success' and, importantly, ask why they have chosen that position. Move on to the action plan questions to drill down further. The aim of the reflection activity is to encourage students to identify writing skills they need to practise more whilst reinforcing what they have done well. Give students the opportunity to practise the skills they have identified and revisit the action plan after a few weeks, encouraging students to compare their later attempts with the first.

End-of-unit activity

Listen one more time to the speech by Benjamin Simon.
Now imagine you are a best-selling writer of suspense and adventure stories. You have been given a prize and have been asked to give a speech to talk about your work and how to encourage young writers. Use the table to make notes before you write.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opening</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal information (e.g. where you were born; how you became a writer)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key to your success (e.g. how you became a successful writer)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tips for young writers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now write your speech.

Teacher reflection

1. Which parts of the unit did my students enjoy the most? Why was this?
2. Which parts of the unit did my students enjoy the least? Why was this? What could I have done to make the learning more enjoyable for them?
3. Considering the learning objectives and content, what did my students successfully learn while studying this unit?
4. Considering the learning objectives and content, what did my students struggle with while studying this unit? Why was this? What could I do to help them more?
5. Which parts of the unit did I teach well? How did I achieve this?
6. Which parts of the unit did I struggle to teach well? What can I do to improve on this?
7. When I teach this unit next, what can I do to make it a better learning experience for my students?

Listening

The full transcript for this unit can be found on page 15. A printable version is available on the CD.