

CAMBRIDGE OBJECTIVE IELTS

First Edition

Michael Black & Annette Capel

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BOOK REVIEW

Cambridge Objective IELTS Advanced is, indeed, a distinguished book among IELTS practice materials. This book can truly be called an ‘All in one’ book. The book has been developed for constructive and instructive language use. It is a lively coloured book which is rich with authentic coloured pictures of events and circumstances. It is an authentic-communicative practice book. The book’s authors - Michael Black and Annette Capel have put much effort to create artistic works. Cambridge Objective IELTS comprises 20 units, 10 Test folders, 10 Writing folders, Revision Units, Grammar folder, Self-study folder, and a CD-ROM accompanied by a guide to use.

The CD-ROM is, significantly, beneficial because it supported the following services: a) 10 sections in the CD-ROM which provide further practices of a selection of materials from two units of Objective IELTS Advanced Student’s Book, b) creation of users’ own lessons, c) link to grammar reference in order for users to type in and save their notes for each grammar point, d) link to word list containing all vocabulary items used in the CD-ROM with definitions from the Cambridge Learner’s Dictionary, audio and ability to type in and save notes, and e) Phonemic chart with audio.

Cambridge Objective IELTS begins with an innovative coloured Map of Objective as its table of content to introduce a variety of practices presented in the book. The Map of Objective IELTS is followed by a comprehensive explanation of the content of IELTS. All the units presented in the book are integrations of main skills (i.e., Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking) and sub skills (i.e., Grammar, Vocabulary, and Pronunciation). Every other unit is followed by either a ‘Test folder’ or a ‘Writing folder’. Also, after every four units a ‘Revision Unit’ is provided to enhance learning of the previous subject matters.

Unit 1 is a combination of discussion practice with inbuilt vocabulary of some compound nouns which are enforced by some gap-fill exercises. This unit is then integrated with ‘Listening’ (Multiple choice and Note completion), ‘Speaking’ (part 1) and ‘Reading’ practices accompanied by ‘test spots’ which elaborate on important points. An explanation on ‘Modality’ as integrated grammar brings the unit to an end. This unit is followed by a ‘Reading’ test to explore ‘List of Headings’ (one of the IELTS Reading Test Types with high frequency of appearance in the test).

In unit 2, an explanation on one of the problematic areas of pronunciation with respect to numbers and letters such as 13 or 30, etc. is presented. This unit is accompanied with

'Listening' test spot, beautiful pictures of sport events, vocabulary elaboration on intensifying adverbs and 'Speaking' (Part 3). This unit is followed by 'Writing folder 1'. The folder provides an explanation on design of an essay plan with mind map and paragraph plan. The unit concludes with some writing tasks. Next, unit 3 focuses on 'Multiple Choice' and 'Matching' in 'Listening', an explanation on the language of lectures and 'Academic Writing' in addition to 'Cleft sentences'. Then, Test folder 2 provides important information on the difference between 'TRUE/FALSE/NOT GIVEN' and 'YES/NO/NOT GIVEN Questions' (a confusing and problematic area for most test-takers to realize the difference).

Unit 4 looks at 'Skimming' and its rules, language terms in vocabulary and small group discussions both in 'Reading and Speaking' tests. In 'Listening', the focus is both on the effects of attitude towards the language users of different accents or varieties and on the influence of attitude towards the accents or varieties in use. Also, main functions of adverbial clauses are explored through exercises in grammar followed by an elaboration on the pronunciation of vowels in English. Finally, 'Writing folder 2' outlines 'Academic writing task 1' (description of information shown by graphs).

Units 5-8 with their accompanying 'Test folders' and 'Writing folders' focus on the followings, respectively: collocations in vocabulary, identification of missing information, how to introduce and link ideas in an oral presentation, how to describe a process, different forms of passive, how to manage comparative structure in academic writing, how to manage to speak in an appropriate length in speaking parts, how to quote in 'Writing', the use of concessive clauses, outline of reporting ideas, some useful hints and techniques on matching tasks in 'Reading', different functions of the preposition 'up' in phrasal verbs, how to complete a flow chart in 'Listening', and explanation of the conditional sentences followed by some tasks and exercises to further exploration.

Units 9-12 focus, mainly, on comparison and contrast. Comparing and contrasting things are very usual in writing and speaking skills in IELTS. These units also provide some useful vocabulary and expressions. In these units, easy to understand explanations on 'Inversion, Modal verbs of speculation and deduction, Non-finite clauses, and Infinitives' have been provided in 'Grammar' parts. Apart from invaluable information in 'Grammar', user can benefit from a plenty of practices on 'Multiple Questions, Missing Words, List of Headings, True/False/Not Given and Yes/ No/ Not Given' test types both in 'Listening and Reading' tests in units 9 to 12.

'Cloze Type Tests, Matching and Locating information' are very well explained in units 13-16. In these units, users can find helpful hints on 'the Future Tense, Pronouns Clinic and Verb Patterns' in Grammar. Also, units 13-16 cover the notion of genre in 'Writing' (e.g., Formal vs. Informal). In addition to appropriate genre and tone in 'Writing folders', 'Error clinic and Vowel combinations and Suffixes, and Word order' are provided, as well. In these units, 'Speaking' (part 3), the advanced part of 'Speaking' test has also been elaborated up on.

Units 17 to 20 bring this invaluable book to an end. These units pay more attention to 'Speaking' (part 3) and provide readers with extra information on genre in 'Writing'. Units 17-20 elaborate on 'Classification and Summary completion' in 'Reading and Listening'. These units provide some useful information on 'Idioms and Metaphors and Word building' in 'Vocabulary' parts. Also, these units provide users with significant information about 'Relative clauses, Noun phrases and Modal perfects as parts of Grammar.

So, users can find invaluable answers to some of their questions and queries with respect to different types of questions in IELTS and significant aspects of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and genres. In the end, the 'Grammar folder' provides users with quick and

easy access to the desired key grammatical points. Answers to the questions in different units and recorded scripts can all be found in the ending part of the book.

In my point of view, this book not only can be beneficial to IELTS instructors and test-takers both inside and outside of the classroom, but it can be beneficial to those who aim to gain mastery over communicative tests. Last but not the least, it may be noteworthy that IELTS is only a tool in order to measure test-takers' level of language proficiency. So, test-takers should not consider it as the goal, rather they should try to attain mastery over the English language with respect to its social and academic purposes.