

**STEP FORWARD INTRODUCTORY LEVEL: LANGUAGE FOR EVERYDAY LIFE
BY J. K. SANTAMARIA**

Santamaria, J.K. (2008). *Step Forward Introductory Level: Language for Everyday Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pp. iii + 172. Introductory Student Book \$16.50.

**Reviewed by
Rhonda Petree**

Oxford University Press has introduced a new *Introductory Level* textbook for pre-literacy adult learners in the four-part *Step Forward* series. This standards-based textbook is based on practical themes and has supplemental workbooks, a teachers' guide, and an audio program. It is designed to be used with *The Basic Oxford Picture Dictionary*.

This book is organized into 12 units with five lessons each. Each unit is divided into topics such as, "How are you feeling?" and "What time is it?" Within each unit, there is a consistent format that covers vocabulary, life stories, grammar, everyday conversation, and real-life reading. The conversation sections model natural speech and are set in authentic contexts. Each lesson has a learning objective at the bottom of the page, such as, "Identify appropriate language to describe feelings and emotions." Many lessons end with assessment activities that ask learners to bring information to class such as a shopping list or the names of schools in their community. These authentic resources are then used for discussion or as learning tools.

The table of contents also links the lesson material to four major adult assessment programs, including the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) and Equipped for the Future (EFF). Teachers who need to meet these specific assessment competencies will find this information useful.

This textbook not only effectively presents basic literacy skills, but most units have sections that work on critical thinking skills, math concepts, and pronunciation. In the unit about families, for example, the real-life math section has an activity about converting inches to feet for measuring height. While in the problem-solving section of the families unit, learners listen to the script while looking at some pictures, they need to decide how a parent should deal with her son who did not do well on a test. In the unit about time, the pronunciation section has listen and repeat exercises that help learners practice their intonation in yes/no questions. Not every textbook can claim to be so thorough in its breadth of incorporating skills.

Yet the textbook provides more than just skills practice, there are also many useful resources at the end of the book. There are listening scripts, grammar charts, a vocabulary list, an index, and a U.S. map. The index is divided into academic skills, civics, life skills, the topics covered in the book, and workforce skills. These resources provide many more ways to access the practical features in the book.

In addition to being well designed and comprehensive, the pictures in this textbook are realistic, interesting, and colorful (which makes it appealing, but could also be a cost factor). The pictures of people represent a variety of cultures and ages and are reflective of adult learners who may be using the book.

Step Forward Introductory Level is a well-designed, visually appealing, and effective textbook. This would be a great book to use with beginning-level ESL students in newcomer programs or adult basic education programs. It covers a wide-range of skills and reflects the images and needs of the adults who are likely to use the book.

AUTHOR

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