Infotech
English for computer users

Fourth Edition

Teacher's Book

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Introduction

1 Who is Infotech for?

Infotech is an intermediate-level English course for students of computer science and technical English in secondary schools, universities and technical colleges. It aims to help these students to develop a wide variety of language skills and to acquire a knowledge of computers *in English*.

Infotech is also suitable for in-house training programmes, and for institutions where English has become a requisite for working with computers. This book is intended to help professionals using computers (e.g. engineers and desktop publishers) to understand a wide range of texts about ICT technologies.

Infotech does not require a specialist knowledge of computers, but it is advisable for teachers to understand the basic concepts and terminology of each unit. These are explained either in the unit texts or in the Teacher's Book (see Teacher's notes or Technical help sections).

2 What does Infotech consist of?

The Student's Book contains:
- a Map of the Book;
- 30 teaching units organized into eight modules (each unit provides an average of two hours of work);
- an appendix with a sample Curriculum Vitae;
- a list of irregular verbs;
- a glossary of technical terms;
- a list of acronyms and abbreviations.

The Teacher's Book contains:
- unit planning sheets with practical teaching suggestions; teachers can also use these sheets to make notes about optional materials, learning difficulties and evaluation;
- the answer key;
- audio scripts for the CD listening material;
- technical help where it is required;
- eight tests covering the eight modules of the book; this test material covers vocabulary, grammar, reading and writing skills and can be used to assess your students' progress.

3 Organization

The material in *Infotech* is organized into 'thematic' modules, which cover a wide variety of topics and styles of presentation; it is based on skills development and communicative tasks.

Each module consists of three to five units based on the same theme. The first page of each module sets the theme and provides the learning objectives. Most of the units follow a similar pattern:
- A 'pre-task' to make the texts more accessible and prepare the students for the main task.
- A main task which focuses on a particular skill.

- Language work and vocabulary exercises. The purpose of these 'enabling activities' is to prepare students for freer practice.
- A follow-up task. The aim of this is to provide students with more opportunities for speaking or writing.

Although the overall framework of each unit is largely the same, the variety of tasks makes each unit unique.

The book presents the topics in gradual development, from computer essentials to more sophisticated issues such as networks and future trends, so we recommend that the units are studied in sequential order. This will help SS understand basic hardware and software components and then proceed to more complex matters like internet security, web design and wireless communications. However, another possibility is to study only those units that your students are interested in. For example, you may want to focus on particular topics, such as buying a computer, the Internet, or video games.

4 Skills development

Infotech lays particular emphasis on developing receptive skills – that is, reading and listening – although these skills are supported by speaking and writing activities.

- The **reading** texts are mostly authentic or adapted from original sources – specialist magazines, computer programs, reference manuals and websites. The tasks are designed to develop a variety of reading strategies, such as skimming, scanning, matching texts to pictures, etc. Text analysis is also a relevant feature of this book: students have to look for information, find reference signals, identify cohesion devices, or distinguish facts and opinions.
- The **listening** passages include conversations (e.g. buying a computer), interviews, online tutorials, podcasts, lectures, descriptions of hardware and software, etc. It can be helpful to start the listening tasks with a pre-listening activity, such as pre-teaching vocabulary, 'brainstorming' the topic, etc.
- The **speaking** tasks develop oral skills through quizzes, role plays, discussions, information-gap and problem solving activities.
- The approach to **writing** is based on two assumptions: (i) writing is an interactive process where the writer tries to communicate something to a real or imaginary reader; (ii) the organization of ideas is as important as grammatical accuracy. Consequently, the students are encouraged to write complete, coherent texts. The writing tasks include describing objects and diagrams, summarizing texts, writing essays with pros and cons, making predictions, writing posts for online forums, writing emails, faxes and letters, etc.

5 Grammar and vocabulary

The **Language work** tasks revise major language points necessary at this level. The **HELP boxes** in the units are designed as a resource which can be used as part of classroom teaching or outside the classroom. The language work concentrates on those grammatical constructions which are typical of technical English (passive forms, classifying structures, imperatives, modal verbs, comparatives and superlatives, discourse markers, etc.). Grammar exercises are contextualized and arise from the linguistic forms that appear in the oral or written texts. Sometimes students have to work out the grammar for themselves or compare with their mother tongue.

5

Infotech lays special emphasis on **vocabulary** acquisition. Below are a few tips about how to deal with it.

- Explain the difference between *active* and *passive* vocabulary. Some students are not conscious of this distinction and are very anxious about their lack of active vocabulary. Active vocabulary refers to those lexical items that the student is able to use appropriately in oral or written communication. Passive vocabulary refers to those items that can be recognized and understood during the process of listening and reading. Passive vocabulary is much easier to acquire than active vocabulary at any stage in the learning process.

- Tell your students that they do not need to understand every word in a text and encourage them to guess the meaning from context – the surrounding words and the situation. When students meet unknown words, it can also be useful to work out what part of speech they are – nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc. Word building exercises and the study of word formation processes (affixation, conversion and compounding) will help students to develop and extend their vocabulary.

- Explain the importance of learning word combinations, often called *collocations*. A collocation is a pair or group of words that are often used together. For example, we say *attach a file*, *make a phone call* (not *enclose a file*, *do a phone call*). Students need to learn collocations in order to sound more natural in English.

- Draw students' attention to the Glossary for help with acronyms and technical terms.

- Train students to use their dictionaries properly. Students should be able to understand the pronunciation guidance, the layout of entries, abbreviations, etc. They can visit the Cambridge dictionary website at www.dictionary.cambridge.org or an online computer dictionary on the Web, such as www.webopedia.com.

- Encourage students to use a notebook or a file on disk to write down important words and grammar points. Some students may also like to have an 'internet scrapbook', where they can paste the best things from the Web.

6 *Online activities*

The *Infotech* website at www.cambridge.org/elt/ict provides students with more opportunities to develop their knowledge and language skills online. The site contains an interactive PDF worksheet for each of the 30 units, which revises and consolidates vocabulary and grammar from the unit. Additionally, at the end of each module, students are invited to visit the *Infotech* website for an online task. These 'web quests' have been designed to encourage students to use the Web in English to carry out tasks related to the topics of each module. Each task comes with full teacher's notes.

The website is regularly updated to reflect advances in computer technology, and also includes new reading activities, a blog, a word of the week and podcasts. The site is also related to *Professional English in Use ICT*, a vocabulary book by Elena Marco Fabré and Santiago Remacha Esteras, published by Cambridge University Press.