

courses. The Lexicon in all the levels includes a simple definition of the entry, and students can hear the correct pronunciation of all entries.

Some tools are unique to certain course levels. In addition to the Speaking Lab and the Lexicon, the early units in **Basic** feature an ABC tool, which demonstrates how to write each letter of the alphabet, and presents words for each letter, and recordings of a native speaker pronouncing each of these words.

The tools unique to the second half of **Basic** are a Grammar tool, a Speech tool, and a Language Use tool. The Grammar tool gives explanations of the grammar topics relevant to this level, and interactive exercises for each grammar topic; the Speech tool provides brief explanations and examples of topics related to pronunciation and intonation in English; and the Language Tool presents brief explanations of common communicative functions, such as apologizing, greeting, and thanking. Languages and cultures differ in how they many such communicative functions are expressed. Learners often perform these functions in the way they would in their native language, which may be inappropriate in a different language and culture. The tool provides several examples of how each function is expressed in English.

The **Intermediate** and **Advance** courses include a larger number of tools, many of which address more abstract topics. For example, the Comprehension Tips tool includes explanations, examples, and tips of basic skills and strategies that together comprise the core teaching points for a course in reading comprehension. In many different ways, **Q English Online** also strives to enhance metacognitive awareness, thus also teaching skills that are transferable to other areas.



Feedback and Assessment

Feedback is an essential component of learning and is both motivating and reinforcing. The design of **Q English Online** is unique in that it incorporates several kinds of feedback and assessment. Firstly, learners take a placement test that assigns them to the appropriate level. Within the lessons themselves, all interactive practice activities have automatic feedback, allowing learners to check their answers, and repeat all activities as often as they wish. As noted above, the Speaking Lab provides learners with both written and graphic feedback on their pronunciation and intonation. The Writing Lesson includes a Grading Chart which learners can first view and then use to receive a final grade, based on the goals of the lesson. While writing, learners can also check their work and improve it using the special software embedded in **Q English Online**. Since learners may wish to receive additional feedback on their writing, they can also save their preparatory work on their own computers, and e-mail it to their teacher or to a peer. Finally, after completing any one of the three courses, learners can take an achievement test. At all stages, learners can view their progress in My Progress in the toolbar at the top of the screen.

Conclusion

Grounded in sound pedagogical principles, **Q English Online** features content in a large variety of topics to appeal to learners and teachers from diverse backgrounds, and a variety of innovative tools, teaching complex strategies in variety of tasks. Focusing on all four language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) and combining a theme-and task-based approach to language teaching, all course components are designed to complement and reinforce one another. Special attention has been devoted to details such as the level of language used throughout the course, the diversity of activities and tools, and the clarity and appeal of the interface to produce courses that would be clear, challenging and enjoyable.