

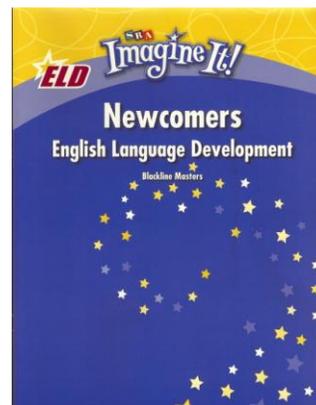


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***English Language Development  
Newcomers Blackline Masters (2009)***

Imagine It!  
SRA/McGraw Hill  
Columbus, OH  
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Newly arrived students to the United States may not have the language skills needed to effectively communicate in a verbal manner. Given that these students do not know the English language well enough to learn about photosynthesis or the Revolutionary War, it would be beneficial to start teaching them survival vocabulary and basic life skills that the *English Language Development Newcomers Blackline Masters (ELDNBM)* text offers for these English Language Learners (ELLs).

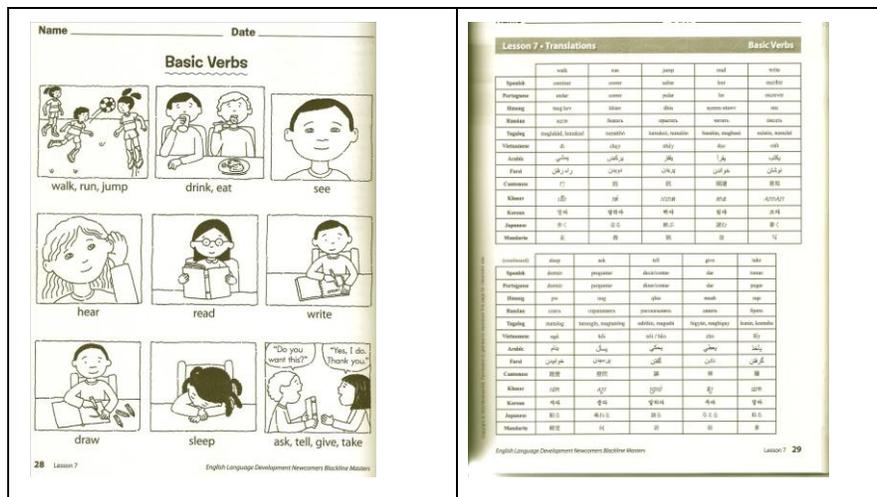
The *ELDNBM* is part of the *Imagine It!* series designed for English as a Second Language (ESL) and bilingual classrooms and is intended for use with beginner level ELLs in Grades K-6. *ELDNBM* provides lessons for educators that help beginner ELLs learn survival vocabulary that is used in every day communication and situations. The purpose of this text is to teach ELLs basic vocabulary of the English language that will enable them to survive in a country where their first language is not the dominant language.

Three sections, *Personal*, *School*, and *Community* make up the core of the text, each providing ten to thirteen lessons on different concepts. The first section, *Personal* focuses on the students. Some lesson titles include, *Names and Greetings*, *Body Parts*, *Family*, *Emergency Situations*, and *Weather, Seasons, and Clothing*. The second section, *School* is about learning and school factors. A few lesson titles include *Colors*, *Time*, *Numbers*, *School Schedules*, and *Classroom Commands*. The last section, *Community*, focuses on the students' environment. Lesson titles from this section include *Neighborhoods and Neighbors*, *Shopping*, *Money*, *Traffic*, and *Modes of Transportation*.

Each lesson has four parts: *introduction*, *practice*, *apply*, and *take home pages*. The *introduction* provides teachers with an idea of how they can deliver the instruction and vocabulary associated with the concept. It gives explicit directions for teachers and dialogues they can use. The *practice* section presents teachers with a guide for scaffolding the vocabulary that was established in the introduction. Student involvement and interaction is minimal in this section. The *apply* section, the section where student involvement and interaction is at its

maximum, contains a review of the vocabulary and the opportunity to use it during cooperative learning activities. *Take home pages*, as seen in Figure 1, are available for each lesson. They include an overview of the concepts through visual representations and provide a list of translations for the vocabulary words in thirteen languages. These pages act as a bridge from school to home and allow students to share their knowledge with family members. Included with each lesson are lesson objectives, a list of materials needed, and various teacher tips, such as cultural connections and monitoring techniques.

Figure 1



The lessons and activities are authentic and deal with real-life situations. Although the section *School*, offers lessons that teach content in conjunction with language, the majority of the lessons teach basic life skills that one would need in order to survive in this country. The lessons would be most valuable when teaching communication, rather than academics. For example, students are introduced to American currency, but not how to add or subtract monetary amounts. Also, these lessons, based on the content, would be most beneficial when teaching primary grade levels. Most of the lessons, such as *Weather*, *Seasons*, and *Clothing*, the *Alphabet*, and *Colors* are more appropriate for students in kindergarten or first grade. On the other hand, lessons, such as the *United States Map* and the *United States Regions* might be inappropriate for primary grade levels. Thus, the cognitive levels and appropriateness of concepts vary throughout the text.

Most of the lessons employ the Total Physical Response (TPR) method and the Communicative Approach. One activity in the 'apply' section of the *Emergency Situations* lesson involves students placing a mock call to 9-1-1. Another activity in the lesson, *Classroom Commands*, involves using TPR to pantomime 'sit,' 'stand,' 'raise your hand,' 'work with a partner,' and 'hand in your homework.' Through this method and approach, each lesson provides students with a moderate amount of opportunities for meaningful and valuable learning for communicative purposes.

The *ELDNBM* includes three appendices. Appendix A is the *Ongoing Assessment Chart* that teachers can utilize to document student performance and progress. Appendix B is *Vocabulary References*, which provides teachers with vocabulary words that do not have a translation listed on the take home pages. Appendix C is the *Newcomers Photo Library CD-ROM* and *Images Index*. The *Newcomers Photo Library CD-ROM* is an interactive photo library that contains many features.

On the CD-ROM, there is a list of categories that are correlated with the concepts from each lesson. One can click on a category, click on a specific vocabulary word and the photo library will pronounce the word in English, as well as show the written spelling, the phonetic spelling, and a brief description of the word. The photo library can also pronounce the word in 13 other languages, including Spanish, Hmong, and Russian. For example, a student clicks on the category *Clothing* and then clicks on *shoes*. The photo library says the word *shoes* and provides a visual of a pair of shoes and a description. The CD-ROM also has two games for students. The ‘Multiple Choice’ game is geared toward students who possess literacy skills and the ‘Select the Correct Picture’ is geared toward visual learners and students with limited literacy skills. Teachers can use the CD-ROM to make flashcards of vocabulary words from each lesson. The *Newcomers Photo Library CD-ROM* and *Images Index* is the most useful appendix for two reasons. First, it provides over 300 images associated with each concept to be used in the lessons. Second, it provides a list of the pictures that are included. Thus, a teacher will only have to look elsewhere for visuals if the CD-ROM does not provide the intended visual.

The *ELDNBM* key principle is verbal communication and supports the view that language is acquired through comprehensible input and verbal communication. Therefore, the text focuses primarily on listening and speaking. Teachers use verbal communication and pantomime to teach a concept. For example, in the *Emergency Situations* lesson, the teacher is instructed to fall down and act like s/he hurt his/her leg, pick up a phone, and dial 9-1-1 to receive medical assistance. Students use their listening comprehension skills to understand the concept and verbal skills to apply their knowledge in cooperative learning activities. The *Apply* section in numerous lessons instructs the teacher to let students role-play with one another, allowing for an adequate amount of interaction to occur between students, but there could be more. Although the students receive a large amount of input, the opportunity for output is slightly limited by the excess of teacher input. Even though the text addresses beginner proficiency level students, it should allow for more opportunities to practice speech production. Reading can be incorporated into a lesson if students possess literacy skills in their first language, but the skill is only used to refer to translations of vocabulary words; the text does not explicitly teach reading skills. Writing skills for the students are not included in any lesson.

Overall, the *ELDNBM* provides teachers with a starting point when teaching newly arrived ELLs. The goal of the book is to teach students survival communication skills and that is exactly what it does. There is very little to no content area knowledge presented. Although the text supplies lessons for each concept, it should be used as a supplement to a larger curriculum to ensure that academic content is incorporated. If the goal of the program is to introduce basic vocabulary and life skills to speakers with little or no knowledge of the English language, then this book is very much appropriate and will most likely produce high-quality results.

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