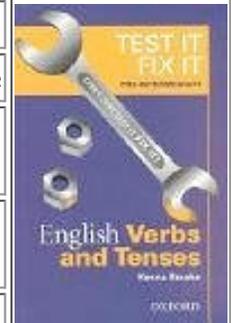


<b><i>Test It, Fix It</i></b>			
Author:	Kenna Bourke (2003)		
Publisher:	Oxford: Oxford University Press		
Sub-Title	Pages	ISBN	Price
English Grammar Pre-intermediate	Pp. 87 (paper)	0-19-438620-1	£6.95
English Verbs and Tenses Pre-intermediate	Pp. 88 (paper)	0-19-438073-4	£6.95
English Grammar Intermediate	Pp. 87 (paper)	0-19-438621-X	£6.95
English Verbs and Tenses Intermediate	Pp. 88 (paper)	0-19-438074-2	£6.95



*Test It, Fix It* is a series of four books: *Test It, Fix It: English Grammar Pre-intermediate*, *Test It, Fix It: English Verbs and Tenses Pre-intermediate*, *Test It, Fix It: English Grammar Intermediate*, *Test It, Fix It: English Verbs and Tenses Intermediate*. Each book consists of twenty English grammar tests. Each section consists of four parts: *Test It*, *Test It Again*, *Fix It*, *Review*. *Test It* has two exercises of certain grammar points (e.g., articles, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs, reported speech, passive voice, and so on). The kinds of exercises usually appearing in this part are matching, filling in the blanks, multiple choice (with only two options), identifying and correcting mistakes, and so on. *Test It Again* also consists of two exercises of the same kinds as we see in *Test It*. However, there are more kinds of exercises, such as making sentences from a group of words provided, completing a crossword puzzle, and so on. *Fix It* provides learners with the answer keys of the first two parts. It also gives some explanations to some answers (e.g., when to use the article "a", when to use "the"). *Review* can be considered a further reading of each section. It gives brief grammar lessons with examples of the grammar points covered in the first three parts.

As the author expresses, this series of books is designed to help learners recognize their problems in using English and show them how to correct the mistakes. The author suggests using each section as follows: First, learners will do the test in *Test It*. Then they go to *Fix It* to check their answers and to read the explanations of the grammar points. After that, they do the test in *Test It Again*. Then they read *Fix It* to see how well they did the test. Afterwards, they read *Review* to learn some more explanations with examples about the grammar points that are covered in the first three parts.

My first impression about this series of books is that the author tries to present and offer English grammar in a new way. Many other grammar books normally present a grammar lesson, then offer some exercises to help learners acquire the grammar points being taught. The author of this series of books does not state her philosophy in designing these books very clearly. However, from what I see in this series, I think these books are used as self-study material and as references rather than books to present grammar lessons.

There are some disadvantages to using this series of books. First of all, the four books lack an informative introduction. The author mentions how to use the books; however, she does not state very clearly who the users of the books are. In other words, she does not say if these books are designed for a particular population and context: English as a Second Language, English as a Foreign Language, and so on. The author also does not state if this series can be used as self-study material or course books. At the same time we cannot know exactly what background of English grammar the learners need to know before they use these books. Therefore, at first glance, it might be difficult for learners to determine their own level. To me, some words like "Pre-intermediate" or "Intermediate" are still very vague. They need to be clarified in an introduction to a book.

Secondly and also most importantly, almost all of the exercises do not provide opportunities for learners to produce the language to show how well they can use it. Learners are given isolated sentences to work with (rather than long passages where learners can see how contexts affect the use of language). Larsen-Freeman (2001) gave many good ideas of teaching grammar within the frame of Form, Meaning and Use. When we look at the series of *Test It, Fix It*, we see that this series does not have a very clear focus on any part of the frame suggested by Larsen-Freeman. It lacks form, which shows the learners how to form the language. It does not offer many opportunities for learners to use the language by themselves. In the series of books called *Grammar Dimensions—Form, Meaning, and Use* (1993), Larsen-Freeman offered many opportunities for learners to speak or to write using the grammar points presented in the books. But with *Test It, Fix It*, the language use is just limited to using the rules in isolated sentences or in very short conversations. I doubt if learners can really apply what they learn from the books into their real language use.

A word about the layout of the books: This series of books has a reader-friendly format. However, I think a lot of drawings or pictures are needed to illustrate the lessons. For example, I think the author needs to provide time lines to illustrate how to use verb tenses, or when to use certain tenses. For each level the author has two books: one called *Test It, Fix It: English Grammar* and another called *Test It, Fix It: English Verbs and Tenses*. In this way, it seems that the author pays too much attention to verbs and tenses. And if just looking at the titles, people might wonder if verbs and verb tenses are not parts of grammar. Therefore, it might be better if the two books were merged into one.

## References

Larsen-Freeman, D. (2001). Teaching grammar, in M.Celce-Murcia (Ed.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (pp.251-266). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

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