Academy Stars

Second Edition

Parents' Guide

macmillan education

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About the course

Academy Stars Second Edition is an accessible and stimulating seven-level course in British English designed to promote academic excellence and effective communication. It delivers a strong grammar and skills syllabus, while developing fluency in real-world interactions. Central to the course is a range of features that deliver excellence in learning and give the children a sense of achievement and self-development.

The children are led through the course with ample opportunities to develop strong reading, writing and grammar skills which allow for communication and personalisation. The course follows a three-step approach to each skill, which makes *Academy Stars Second Edition* well-structured and highly accessible. The clear learning skills strand develops critical thinking, academic and self-evaluation skills, which will help the children become independent thinkers and learners.

The course features *Academy Stars Second Edition* characters in Levels 1–4 as they travel around the *Academy Stars* universe, exploring and learning as they go. By Levels 5–6, the children themselves become the *Academy Stars*.

The *Academy Stars* skyscraper is an exciting, modern and imaginative learning space. The building is split into seven sections, with each section relating to a different level of the *Academy Stars Second Edition* course with appropriate colour coding. The *Academy Stars* characters ride the transporter pod as it travels around the building, giving the children access to all of the exciting rooms and environments on each floor of the skyscraper. The pod also visits places outside of the skyscraper, for example, nearby gardens, a town centre and even under the sea.

ADVANCING FUTURES

Education for Sustainable Development and Citizenship

Macmillan Education's ESDC Program helps children become engaged global citizens. It ties classroom practice to Global Citizenship Education theory, incorporates an inclusive approach to language learning, and in most units references the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In *Academy Stars Second Edition*, children are encouraged to see themselves as valued members of local and global communities. They learn to think critically about how their actions affect the world around them, from caring for the environment to recognising the value of individual differences. Children are gently encouraged, with the support of the teacher, to express their own ideas and solutions for making the world a better place.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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Course overview

Academy Stars Second Edition is an accessible and stimulating seven-level course in British English designed to promote academic excellence and effective communication. It delivers a strong grammar and skills syllabus, while developing fluency in real-world interactions. Central to the course is a range of features that deliver excellence in learning and give the children a sense of achievement and self-development.

1 Learning skills

A key strength of *Academy Stars Second Edition* is the unique importance it gives to **learning skills**. Recognised as highly transferable skills that the children can apply to other subjects and throughout their lives, these are developed in the following ways:

- **Critical thinking** tasks are embedded throughout, challenging children to analyse and infer, draw conclusions, express opinions and give a personal response to texts.
- The features **Learning to learn** and **Learning about language** help children identify patterns and acquire strategies that will make them more effective and independent learners.
- Regular **Think about it!** tasks activate critical thinking skills, with a particular emphasis on decision-making, problem solving and collaborative working.
- Regular **self-evaluation** activities in the Workbook encourage children to identify their learning strengths and take responsibility for their own learning.

2 Learning outcomes

A motivational **Be a star!** feature provides tangible lesson outcomes to show children what they can do with the language and skills they have learned. It promotes a strong sense of progression and achievement, which motivates children to go further.

3 Graphic Grammar

An innovative approach to **grammar** helps the children engage with language in a motivating and effective way. Structures are presented visually using appealing graphics and colour-coded building blocks to highlight and reinforce patterns. Beautiful animations bring language to life through memorable presentations and clarify meaning, use and form. The **new Extra Stars: Grammar booster** section in the Pupil's Book gives children further practice opportunities.

4 Skills development

A step-by-step approach to each of the four skills ensures the effective development of key skills and strategies. Each Reading, Writing and Listening lesson practises a specific strategy to give children the tools they need to process or produce a variety of text types. A suite of completely **new reading texts** gives children an opportunity to work with a variety of text types, ranging from stories through blogs to articles. **A brand new listening strand in the Workbook** further supports the development of the listening skills, with emphasis on external exams preparation. Dedicated Speaking lessons in the Pupil's Book develop fluency in functional interactions and build confidence in presentation skills.

5 Literacy

Academy Stars Second Edition also develops **extensive reading skills** through beautifully illustrated Reading time sections. These lessons promote a life-long love of reading and build confidence in processing longer texts. The children are encouraged to analyse and interpret texts and give a personal response to them. The illustrations help develop visual literacy and engaging animations bring each story to life.

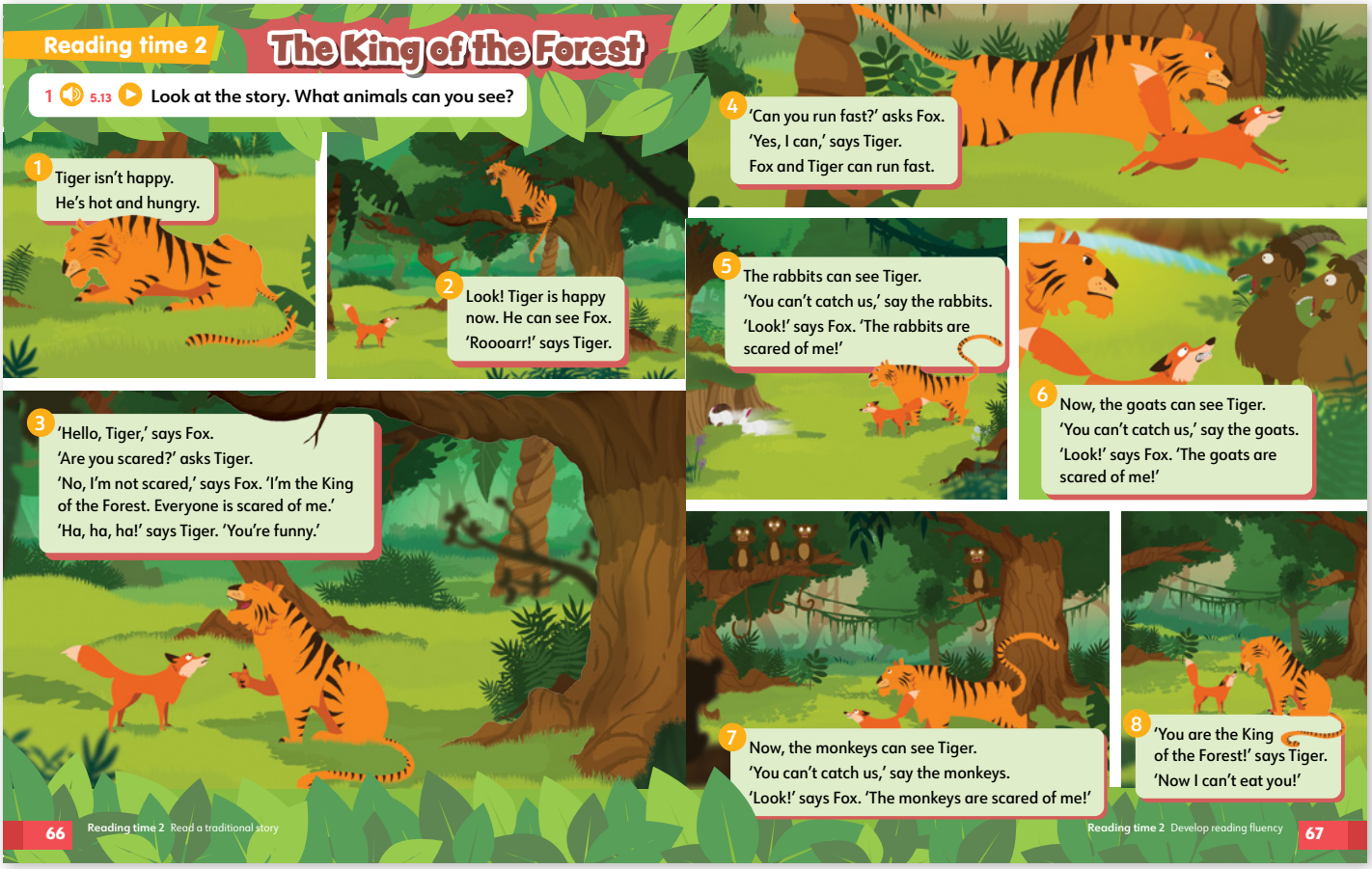
6 Assessment

Recognising the increasing popularity of external exams, *Academy Stars Second Edition* is mapped to the latest **Cambridge English Qualifications** tests for young learners, and includes regular test-style activities the **new Cambridge Exams practice lessons** in the Pupil's Book and throughout the Workbook. A comprehensive assessment pack offers a test builder, ready-to-go tests and Cambridge English sample tests to measure children's progress and achievement throughout the course.

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Course summary

Using video in the classroom



The *Academy Stars Second Edition Graphic Grammar* and *Reading time* sections are accompanied by animated videos to help develop visual literacy and bring the grammar points and stories to life.

As most children are visual learners, *Academy Stars Second Edition* uses animations as a way to support visual learning and help the children make a connection between visual clues, the memory process and the recall of new language points. Moving images and sound help to communicate a topic, allowing the book material to become more engaging and insightful. The use of animations will expose the children to spoken English in the form of storytelling, as well as encourage them to act out dialogues from the story.

There is strong evidence that using videos in the classroom can inspire and engage children through:

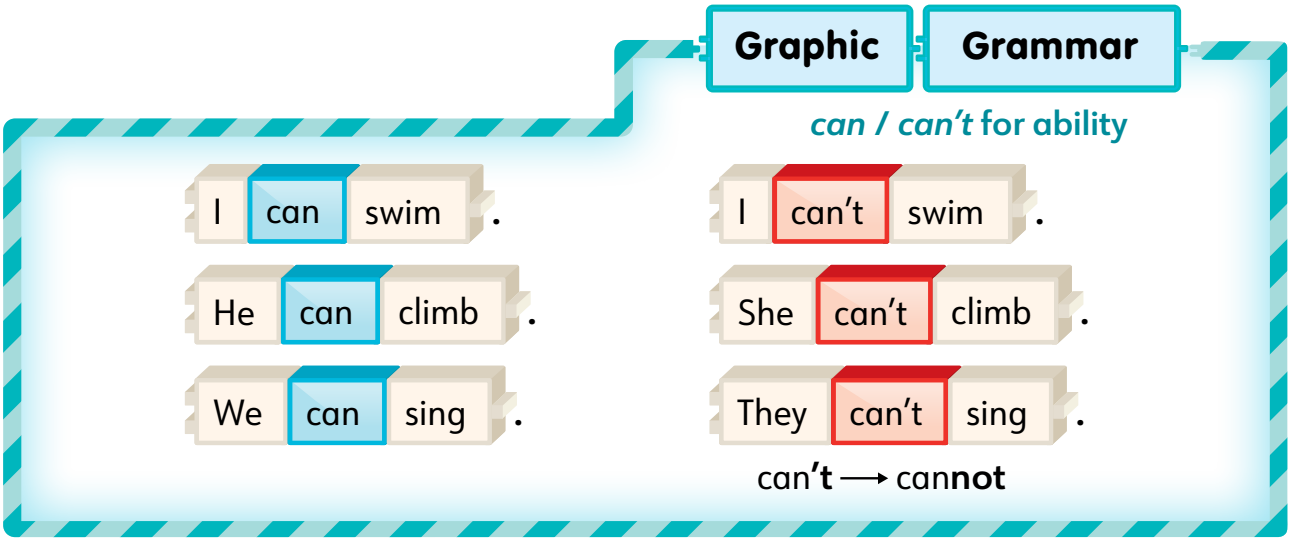
- Developing a deeper understanding of a story's subject.
- Enhancing the learning experience.
- Increasing motivation.
- Providing a sensory experience to allow for concepts and ideas to become more easily understood.
- Making lessons more enhanced and interactive.
- Creating a common experience for the children.

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Course summary

Graphic Grammar

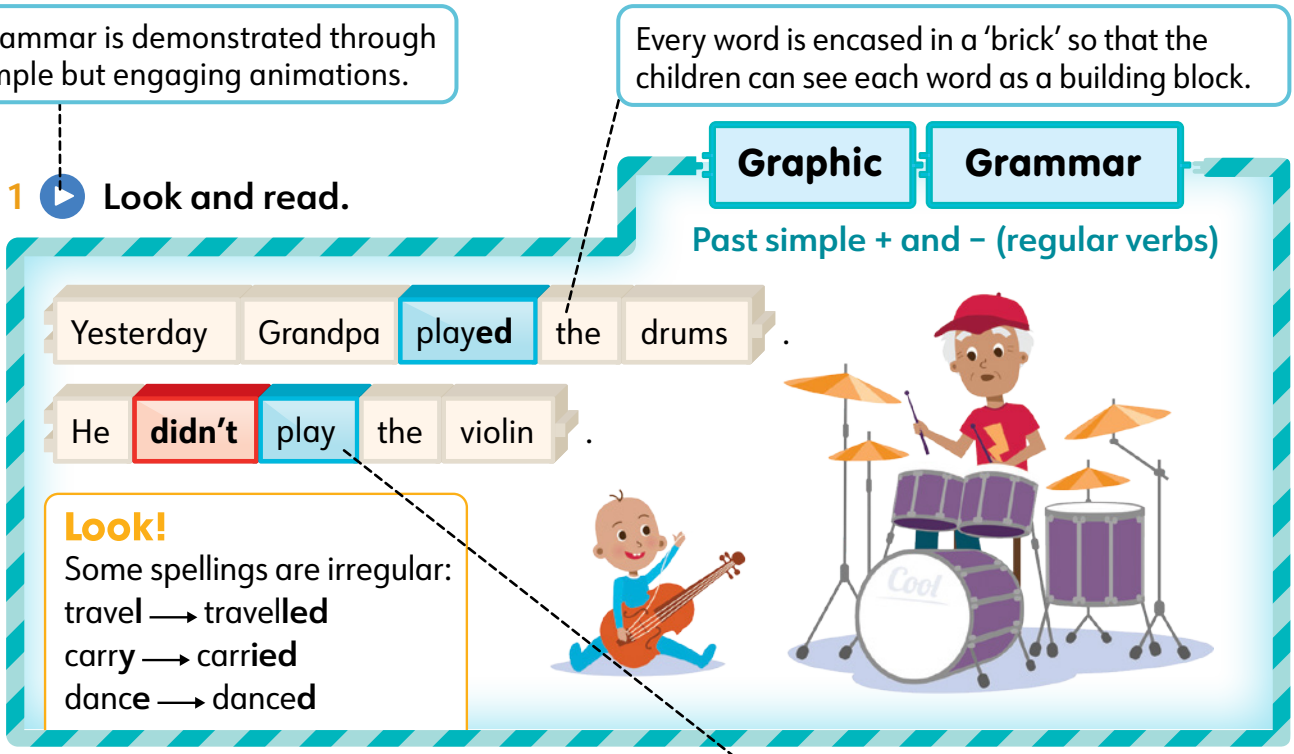
An innovative approach to grammar helps the children engage with language in a motivating and effective way. Structures are presented visually using appealing graphics and colour-coded building blocks to highlight and reinforce patterns. Supporting animations bring language to life through memorable presentations and clarify meaning, use and form.



The visual approach to grammar in *Academy Stars Second Edition* is defined as follows:

Grammar is demonstrated through simple but engaging animations.

Every word is encased in a 'brick' so that the children can see each word as a building block.



Each part of speech has a colour (e.g. verbs are blue, nouns are yellow, etc.), which is used consistently in *Graphic Grammar* boxes throughout the course.

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Course summary

Understanding literacy

Literacy is the ability to communicate through reading and writing. In *Academy Stars Second Edition,* the children develop their **literacy** skills and **oral communication** skills at the same time. The children will also learn to read through a variety of whole class, **shared reading** activities that involve simultaneously hearing and seeing a word, and associating it with its meaning. This will help the children learn to say and spell words. Explicit teaching of **sound / spelling relations** and **word formations rules** will help support the children in decoding words.

The children are exposed to a variety of text **genres** that are appropriate to their age and interests. They cover stories, poems, plays, informational texts, blogs, e-mails and newspaper articles. These texts increase in length and difficulty and build on the children's growing language and reading proficiency. The children are encouraged to analyse and interpret texts and give a personal response to them. The illustrations help develop visual literacy and engaging animations bring the *Reading time* texts to life.

The aim of developing reading fluency and literacy is to encourage a love of reading and build motivation and confidence in processing longer texts, all of which will make the children more effective language users.



A pre-reading activity gets the children thinking about the content of the story before reading.

A range of engaging fiction and non-fiction texts develop reading skills and enjoyment of reading. Pre-reading activities develop prediction skills to help understanding. Critical thinking activities encourage the children to give a personal response to the text and develop inferential skills.

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Course summary

Understanding Learning to learn

Learning to learn is about how we learn. This provides the children with a set of strategies and skills that will enable them to learn more effectively. The children will become confident, able and independent learners once they understand **how** and **what** to learn, which can give them the necessary tools to manage their learning.

Here are some examples of how *Learning to learn* is implemented in *Academy Stars Second Edition*:

- Teach strategies for understanding new words and concepts.
- Develop strategies for understanding and creating different kinds of texts and visuals.
- Introduce strategies for organising study and learning.
- Reflect on learning.

A *Learning to learn* or *Learning about language* box is included in each unit to help develop the children's autonomy. The information in these boxes offers a set of strategies and skills that will enable the children to learn more effectively.

Learning to learn

Researching information

The internet is a great place for researching information, but it's not the only place.

Here are other ways you can find different information:

- Ask people (teacher, parents, grandparents)
- Use a library (books, encyclopaedias, newspapers, local history / community)
- Watch TV programmes like the news or documentaries.

Internet searches are quick and easy. But when you look on the internet, remember:

- Some articles are true; some articles are false. Check your information. If a story is difficult to believe, look for another article that says the same thing.
- Official websites made by governments, newspapers, encyclopaedias and big TV companies are good places to look.

Where would you look for information on these topics?

1 your town 20 years ago

2 leopards

3 things to do in Mexico

4 the moon

5 China

6 how to make a dish from your country



Learning about language

You can make a weather **noun** into an **adjective** by adding ***y***.

Noun	Adjective
wind	windy
sun	sunny

Can you make these nouns into adjectives?

rain _____

cloud _____



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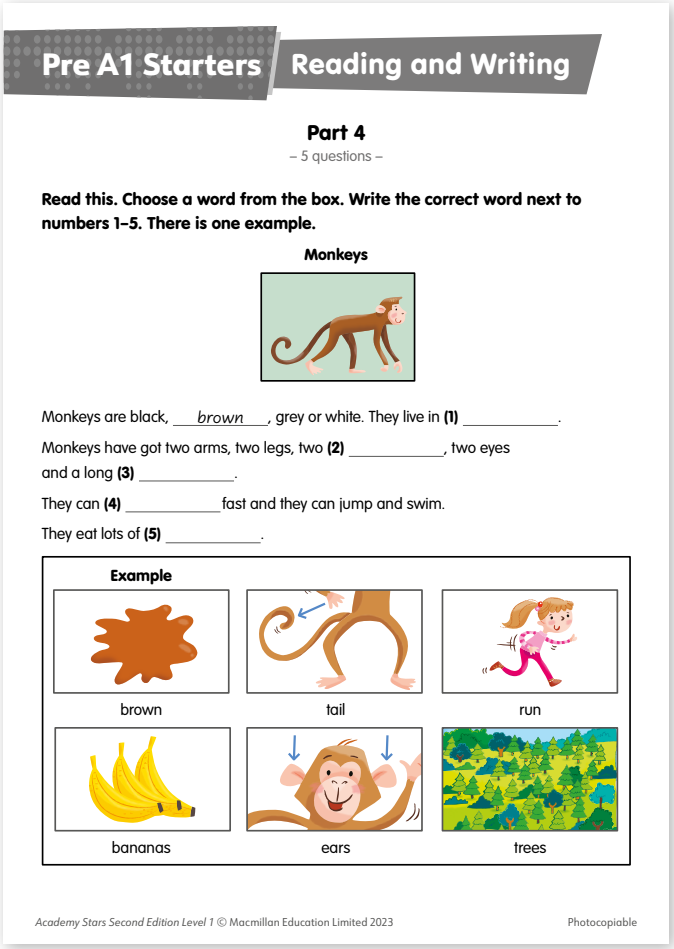
Course summary

Assessment

Academy Stars Second Edition comes with a comprehensive assessment pack to measure the children's progress and achievement throughout the course. Recognising the increasing popularity of external exams, *Academy Stars Second Edition* is mapped to the updated *Cambridge English: Qualifications* tests (*Pre A1 Starters*, *A1 Movers*, *A2 Flyers* and *A2 Key for Schools*), and includes regular test-style activities throughout the Pupil's Book and Workbook.

The comprehensive assessment pack includes:

- A **test builder** which teachers can use to create and print tests from a wide variety of pre-written activities.
- Pre-written **downloadable** unit, mid-year and end-of-year tests which teachers can print as they need them. These tests are to check the children's knowledge after each unit, and at the middle and end of the course. They are short and concise to assess the children without creating too much pressure.
- *Cambridge English: Qualifications* sample tests for *Pre A1 Starters*, *A1 Movers, A2 Flyers* and *A2 Key for Schools* which teachers can use for those children who wish to prepare for external exams. These tests will provide concise practice, so that the children are ready for *Pre A1 Starters* at the end of Level 2, *A1 Movers* at the end of Level 4 and *A2 Flyers* or *A2 Key for Schools* at the end of Level 6.



Pre A1 Starters Reading and Writing

Part 4

– 5 questions –

Read this. Choose a word from the box. Write the correct word next to numbers 1–5. There is one example.

Monkeys

Monkeys are black, *brown*, grey or white. They live in **(1)** _____.

Monkeys have got two arms, two legs, two **(2)** _____, two eyes and a long **(3)** _____.

They can **(4)** _____ fast and they can jump and swim.

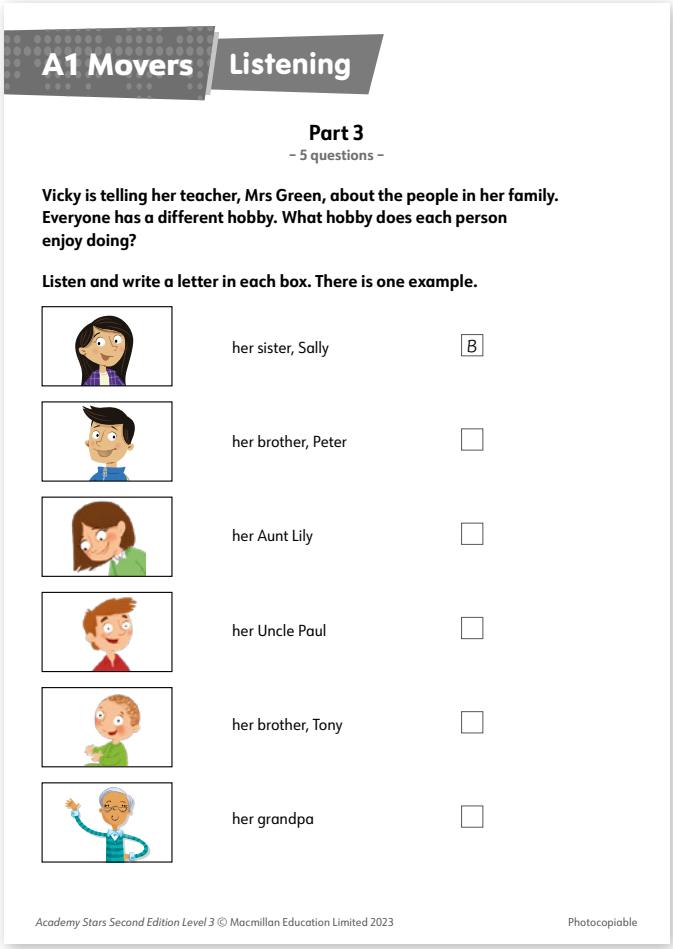
They eat lots of **(5)** _____.

Example

brown | tail | run

bananas | ears | trees

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A1 Movers Listening

Part 3

– 5 questions –

Vicky is telling her teacher, Mrs Green, about the people in her family. Everyone has a different hobby. What hobby does each person enjoy doing?

Listen and write a letter in each box. There is one example.

her sister, Sally [B]

her brother, Peter [ ]

her Aunt Lily [ ]

her Uncle Paul [ ]

her brother, Tony [ ]

her grandpa [ ]

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Tips for parents

Parent involvement is very important for your child's success. You should stay informed about what your child is learning and be supportive. The more you're involved in your child's learning, the more they will have a positive learning experience and eventually succeed. Below are some tips for you that will help your child further develop their English skills inside and outside of the classroom.

- Practise English with your child in a fun and informal way, e.g. naming foods in the supermarket or singing English songs in the car.
- Use the *Academy Stars Second Edition* Pupil's App at home with your child. You can find songs from the course to sing at home, and flashcards and activities for you to look at together.
- Set up an English corner at home with English story books, English songs and photos of cultural references from English-speaking countries.
- Introduce English phrases into your day, e.g. say *Good morning*, *Good night*, *Hello*, *Have a nice day*, etc.
- When your child learns to read and write, ask them to label objects around the house.
- Focus on what your child does well in English. Praise them by saying *That's great!* or *Well done!* when they learn new words, phrases or songs in English.
- Stay in contact with your child's teachers and ask if you and your child can do any additional work to practise at home.
- Provide a quality work space at home.
- Start a home library, which will help your child develop a collection of, and connection with, books.
- Read books aloud in English, or engage in storytelling using the language from the book.
- Engage in meaningful English-language conversation with your child.
- Have your child make a personal dictionary with the vocabulary words they are learning.
- Establish a good study routine.
- Tell your child that it's OK to make mistakes.
- Ask your child's teacher about how to help with homework and check that homework is completed.
- Volunteer in your child's classroom.

Have fun! Your child will soon be an Academy Star!

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