

ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE CUSTOMIZING INTERNATIONAL TEXTBOOK SERIES

July, 2023

THE CHALLENGE

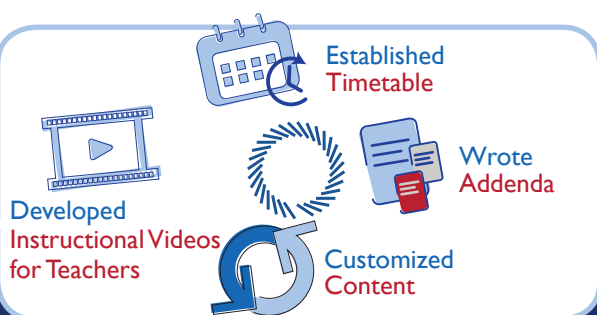
Uzbekistan has embarked on a new phase of English language instruction that will enable students to acquire the skills and competencies necessary for success in the 21st century. At the onset of the Uzbekistan Education for Excellence Program (UEEP) in 2019, the Ministry of Preschool and School Education (MoPSE) expressed its vision for Uzbekistan of becoming an English-speaking nation by 2030. English as an adopted international language can help open doors and opportunities for international cooperation, trade, and cultural exchanges with other nations.

Steps
taken to
Adapt
Materials to
Uzbekistan

DEVELOPMENT OF EFL TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS FOR GRADES 1-11

As a means of reaching that goal, it became a priority of the MoPSE to procure and customize a set of internationally recognized instructional materials. UEPP in collaboration with the Ministry procured the license to use the Cambridge series *Guess What!* for grades 1-6 and *Prepare* for grades 7-11. The Cambridge materials were adapted and developed to meet the unique needs and aspirations of teachers and students in Uzbekistan. During this customization process, the Program accomplished four tasks.

**Assess and
Select**
International
English Language
Textbook
Series



All teaching and learning
materials developed by the
program can be accessed at:
[link](#)

1 TIMETABLE TO GUIDE TEACHERS

Due to a mismatch between the number of instructional hours in the Uzbekistan academic year and the number of units and lessons in the Cambridge series *Guess What!* for grades 1–6 and *Prepare* for grades 7–11, teachers found that there was not enough time in the academic year to teach all lessons included in most of the books. In addition, for grades 7–8, there were fewer lessons than instructional hours available. To address this mismatch, a timetable was developed to guide teachers through the academic year so they could cover all the essential content and have time to administer mandatory exams.

The timetable in Table 1 outlines the academic year by quarter, week, lesson, theme, and unit. It indicates page numbers for corresponding lessons and homework assignments as well as provides space for teachers to write in the date each lesson is taught. The timetable also indicates when mandatory exams fall within the academic year and how those exams correspond to themes and lessons in the book.

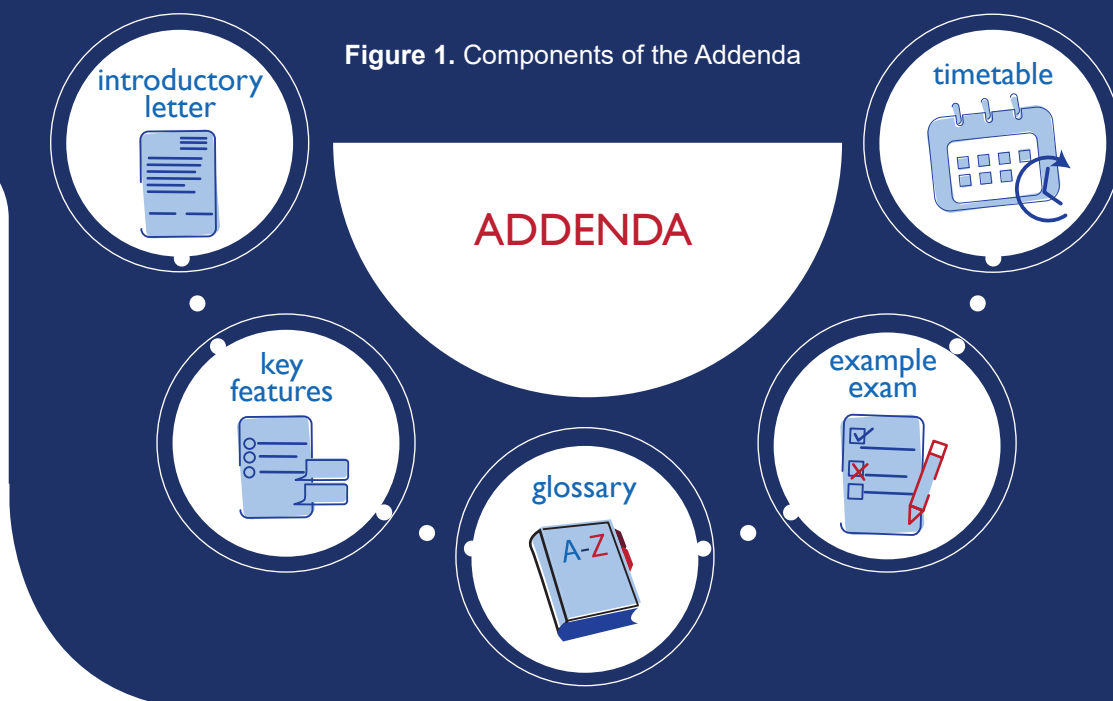
Table 1. Excerpt of the Timetable from the Grade 3 Teacher's Book

Quarter	Date	Week	Lesson	Theme	Unit	Student's Book page #	Workbook page #	Teacher's Book page #	Homework (Workbook)
I		1	1	Introductions	0	6	4	TB5-6	p4 ex1
		1	2	Questions	0	7	5	TB7	p5 ex4
		2	3	Months	0	8	6	TB8	p6 ex5
		2	4	Email and friend	0	9	7	TB9	p7 ex9
		3	5	Work together	0	10	8	TB10	p8 ex12

2 ADDENDA TO FACILITATE THE ADOPTION OF NEW TEXTBOOKS

After further analysis of the Uzbekistan education system and comparison with what is available in the *Guess What!* and *Prepare* materials, the Program identified certain items and concepts for which teachers might need extra explanation to use the new books effectively. To this end, the Program wrote an addendum for inclusion in each teacher's book to facilitate the adoption and effective use of instructional resources and supplementary materials in the classroom. These addenda give specific information and advice for using the textbooks and understanding some of the methodology

as well as show how to use the resources of the textbook package effectively. The addenda include a letter to the teacher, the timetable, information about unit lessons, reviews, assessments, cultural considerations, homework, supplementary materials, a glossary of technical terms, and an example exam created with the digital test generator, a component of the Cambridge books package. Figure 1 shows the contents of the addenda.



3 CUSTOMIZATION

Textbooks created for international use are not always suitable for large government educational systems without customization that brings them into alignment with the pedagogical, content, and cultural expectations of that system. The *Guess What!* and *Prepare* series were customized to do just that.

Pedagogical

Pedagogical customization happened on two levels: global, which addressed the larger context, and specific, which got into day-to-day teaching. Global pedagogical customization happened through the creation of the addenda. Specific pedagogical customization was very localized, for example changing or providing explanations within the teaching notes on foreign language teaching jargon or terminology occasionally used, such as the use of “L1” for first language. It also addressed teaching procedures for learning tools like games and chants.

Cultural

Cultural customization took into consideration important cultural norms and expectations in Uzbekistan. Photographs and texts were analyzed for conformity with MoPSE’s specifications, and several images, such as those in Figure 2, were replaced with images that are aligned with specified cultural expectations.



Figure 2. Example of Cultural Customization

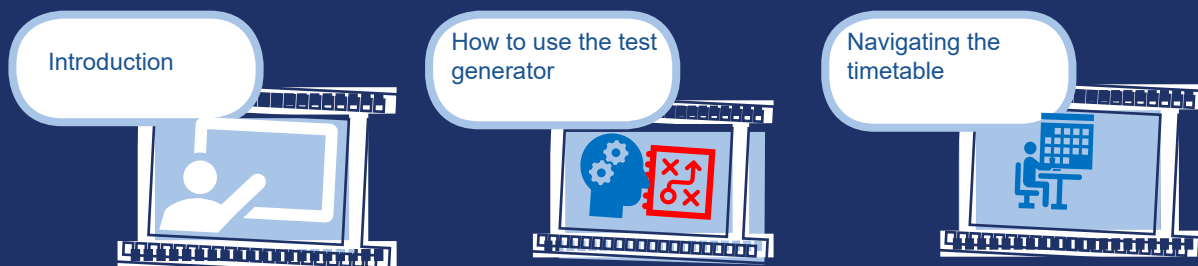
Content

Content customization refers to changing the content of topics and themes within the book. This was approached in two ways: decreasing the United Kingdom (UK) focus and increasing the Uzbekistan focus. To lighten the UK focus, a larger representation from other English-speaking countries, including the United States, was incorporated into reading passages and activities. Similarly, representations of cultural and historical aspects of Uzbekistan were increased. Names of places were changed, and activities popular in Uzbekistan were referenced, including local festival celebrations.

4 SUPPORT VIDEOS

The Program developed support videos to help teachers navigate the timetable and understand how to use the test generator that is part of the Cambridge packet of supplemental resources. In total, seven support videos were created as shown in Figure 3: one introductory video that gives an overview of the Program and the materials being provided, two videos that walk teachers through how to use the test generator (one for the *Guess What!* series and one for the *Prepare* series), and four videos showing teachers how to navigate the timetable (one each for grades 1-4, 5-6, 7-8, and 9-11).

Figure 3. Topics of Teacher Support Videos



IMPACT

The development and adoption of the Cambridge series *Guess What!* for grades 1-6 and *Prepare* for grades 7-11 have significantly supported the Ministry's goal of improving English teaching and learning in Uzbekistan.

Program Summary:

USAID partners with the Government of Uzbekistan to enhance student learning in English, information and communication technology, reading and mathematics. The USAID UEEP supports the MoPSE to revise student learning standards, provide new teaching and learning materials and comprehensive teacher training aligned to these standards, and conduct rigorous monitoring and research. Working closely with the Ministry, our consortium – led by RTI International includes Florida State University and Mississippi State University – brings the experience and expertise of international and local experts to drive effective Program implementation. Together, we aim to foster student engagement and improve learning outcomes.