Academic Guide
Get Started with Picaro
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What is Picaro?

Picaro takes children on a language learning adventure. Children enter the magical realm of Picaro to learn English in an enchanting online world. As the course progresses, so do the children, building confidence and enthusiasm for language learning as they go.

Overview

Picaro is an interactive, multi-level, language-learning course tailored to the Cambridge English : Young Learners (YLE) Curriculum and the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

Picaro offers a comprehensive English curriculum for children aged 5-9 with over 300 hours of tuition. It provides step-by-step instruction for teaching 1175 English words from the Cambridge English: Young Learner (YLE) curriculum.

Picaro has been developed by experts in education and entertainment, so you can be assured children will have fun while they learn a new language.
Picaro is primary years course spread across 4 levels that makes learning English fun. Picaro helps children to learn and practise English using games that promote replay and reinforce learning.

**Skills Involved**

**Picaro helps develop:**

- English Language skills (Vocabulary, Reading/Writing and Speaking/Listening)
- Problem-solving skills
- Independent Learning
- IT skills acquired in a secure environment

‘(Kids) really like the game and will behave well to receive game play time as a reward.’
- Italy, GGS Scuole
Practice, repetition and praise ensure children have their best chance at learning in a fun, interactive way. The online course promotes engagement, so learning and repetition are painless, promoting English language learning in a safe environment.

Online Course

Picaro is much like any other planet, although everything is a little different from what you would expect. Picaro is home to many interesting creatures, has odd looking buildings and is a peaceful world to live in. Everyone in Picaro is happy and lives together in harmony.

Although Picaro is a fun, fantasy planet, much of the game-play time is grounded in reality. Games feature real-world scenarios and objects such as clothing, food and animals to promote natural communication in real, everyday language situations.

Picaro’s online course exposes children to native speakers who model new language and present it in meaningful situations. Vocabulary is modelled, both in isolation and in full sentences.

Throughout the game, the focus is on enjoyment, ensuring that repetition and practice are painless. Players are also rewarded and encouraged throughout gameplay and always have new challenges ahead of them to keep young learners motivated.
Playing Picaro:

Each topic in the Picaro curriculum is broken down into three online games. These present new language in context, provide structured practice and then follow up with an activity to consolidate learning.

Tasks begin at an easy, intuitive level and progressively build to give fun practice in listening, reading and writing tasks, such as those that are found in the Cambridge English: Young Learners exams.

All games contain a clear indication for...

- Correct answers for reinforcement
- Incorrect answers with motivational feedback

This will ensure that the child is encouraged to continue playing and will develop a strong foundation of language skills with lots of positive affirmation and encouragement on their language-learning journey!

‘They really enjoy the graphics, which are colourful and cute... they like replaying games up to three or four times.’
- Italy, GGS Scuole
Picaro Components:

Student Activity Books

Picaro Student Activity Books reinforce and extend classroom learning, while also promoting cooperative work. Graded tasks in the books range from pre-reading to reading and writing activities.

Student Activity Books

Picaro Student Activity Books contain activities for each topic. The activities are designed to practise and extend the language learned in the lesson, but also help children practise and develop other skills, such as collaboration and cooperation, fine motor skills, sharing resources and communication.

In the classroom, teachers and parents can use the activities alongside the lessons in the Teacher’s Book or as self-study, early finisher tasks or homework.

For young learners using Picaro at home, they can be used for self-study with as much involvement from parents as they wish to give.
16 Picaro Student Activity Books

Each book contains 20 activities, all linked to the online game and teacher books.

Activity Book exercises can be completed as part of the school curriculum or at home for extra practise and revision, to help engage parents in the English curriculum.

Activities continue to increase in difficulty as children continue to grow and develop, ensuring young learners remain stimulated and engaged.
**Picaro Components:**

**Teacher’s Book**

Teacher Books help tie the whole Picaro curriculum together. They offer innovative ways of introducing language topics to a class and help bridge the gap between online and offline learning.

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**Teacher’s Book**

Teacher’s Books accompany each unit of learning in Picaro. Teacher’s Books offer step-by-step instruction for teaching the Cambridge English: Young Learners curriculum.

They offer learner-centred, interactive activities for whole class, group and individual learning.

The Teacher’s Books also offer tips to help teachers personalise lessons to their learners and classroom situations.

Picaro Teacher’s Books are the perfect companion for teachers who are time-pressed and want detailed instruction on running their English language classes, but can also be used for tips and extra activity ideas.

Teacher with students doing an activity from Teacher’s Books in Hungary, 2012
The Teacher’s Books contain curriculum maps, detailed lesson plans, teaching tips, downloads (including assessment sheets) and unit specific dictionaries, all of which provide a clear guide to using Picaro as part of a fully blended classroom experience.

We have designed our Teacher’s Books to be as flexible as possible, to account for differences in:

- Teaching time
- Technology
- Methodology
- Resources
What does the LMS do?

The LMS allows parents and teachers to monitor children’s progress and access a wide variety of additional printable materials for the children to work on.

Every time a child completes an activity, the score is transferred from the game into the LMS, accessible via the reporting functions. The LMS is always accessible via your browser, so you can check scores as often as you like.

The detailed mapping of the learning activities to our curriculum plus a clear and transparent structure means that teachers and parents can easily identify the strengths, weaknesses and overall progress of their children.

For teachers or parents who are not proficient English speakers, and who would like extra support, language information and models are available.
What types of reports are there?

Within the LMS, reports are available for teachers, parents and institutions. Graphs, charts and progress reports can be seen for individuals and groups as a whole.

Resources available on the LMS:

- Flashcards
- Photocopy material
- Downloadable activities

These reports are clearly presented, printable and update every time the user logs in. They can be created for different time periods, specific children or groups of children and can even report on a larger scale with detailed information for an institution.

Large Scale Reporting for Districts, Institutions and Schools

The Picaro LMS is also effective for Larger-scale organisations such as districts, institutions and school year groups, effectively showing trends of learning.
Picaro and Cambridge English Language Assessment

Picaro prepares children to study towards the Cambridge English: Young Learners (YLE) Exams the world’s leading assessment of children’s English ability. The Cambridge YLE tests come in three stages of difficulty: Starters, Movers and Flyers.

University of Cambridge English Examinations

Cambridge English has developed a system of tests designed to put children on the path to learning English.

Cambridge English: Young Learners (YLE) is a reliable and consistent tool for measuring a child’s progress in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Tests are designed to make learning fun and children are given the incentive of earning ‘shields’ that record their progress.

There are three levels for children to work through: Starters, Movers and Flyers.

Once children gain the Flyers certificate, they are well placed to study for the Cambridge English: Key (KET) or the Cambridge English: Preliminary (PET) in the General English range of certificates, qualifications the will be of great value for further study or in the workplace.

Attaining each certificate is a step that leads naturally onto taking a more challenging test. Cambridge English exams test candidates on what they know, rather than penalising them for what they don’t know; as a result learning is a positive and confidence-building experience.

Cambridge English certificates are recognised by thousands of educational organisations, employers, government agencies, immigration authorities and professional bodies all over the world. Government agencies, immigration authorities and professional bodies in many countries also recognise the qualifications.
Certification and Examination

Picaro is committed to continual student assessment. This ensures that the flow of Learning is not disrupted and that teachers can constantly access student progress reports.

Assessment and monitoring

We are committed to continual assessment (the ongoing monitoring of achievement) as the best way to monitor the developing English language skills of young learners. This is especially the case as poor summative results can be very discouraging, especially to young learners. Whilst summative assessment can be useful in some learning situations, it can also disrupt the flow of learning and lead to learners concentrating on the mark rather than the content of the work and, as a result, losing their sense of achievement.

Picaro offers sheets to monitor progress, which allow detailed tracking of individuals or groups of children. These can be used alongside the Picaro LMS to chart what children have accomplished at and what they need to practise. This detailed level of continual assessment means that there is no need for spot checks of children’s progress.

Picaro Diploma

Children receive Picaro certificates after each unit has been successfully completed. They receive a printable award from Picaro to motivate them to continue learning.
The Common European Framework of Reference and Picaro

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) is a guideline that sets standards of language proficiency and recognises, as well as describes, the achievements of foreign language learners on an international level. It provides a basis for the mutual recognition of language qualifications, thus facilitating educational and occupational mobility.

It is increasingly used in the reform of national curricula and by international consortia for the comparison of language certificates. The Common European Framework of Reference divides learners into three broad divisions which can be divided into six levels:

**The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)**

- **A Basic Speaker**
  - A1 Beginner
  - A2 Elementary

- **B Independent Speaker**
  - B1 Intermediate
  - B2 Upper Intermediate

- **C Proficient Speaker**
  - C1 Advanced
  - C2 Mastery

After Cambridge English: Young Learners (YLE) Movers, children should be at the equivalent of A1 Breakthrough/Beginner, a firm foundation for skilled language proficiency.

After Flyers, children should be at the equivalent of A2 - Elementary, equivalent to the level of the Cambridge English: Key (KET) exam. This is an effective first step in preparation for the Cambridge English examinations, such as the Cambridge English: Preliminary (PET), designed for young people and adults.

**Units in Picaro correspond with the Cambridge curriculum and the CEFR as follows:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Picaro</th>
<th>Cambridge YLE</th>
<th>CEFR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Units 1-8</td>
<td>Starters</td>
<td>A1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Units 9-12</td>
<td>Movers</td>
<td>A1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Units 13-16</td>
<td>Flyers</td>
<td>A2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following picture maps the Picaro content against the Cambridge English Young Learners (YLE) Curriculum and the Common European Framework.
Learning Methodology

Picaro helps children learn in an immersive world using gamified learning and blended learning methods. Children are immersed in the game world and learn through repetitive gameplay and the combination of online and offline materials.

Overview

Picaro’s course materials have been developed around the concept of Presentation, Practise and Consolidation. Each topic includes these three key stages, with further review throughout the course.

Methods of Learning

In Picaro, new language is continuously introduced at an individual child’s own pace. Once they complete a unit, new games, locations, activities and units will be unlocked, with the units increasing in difficulty as they progress through the game.

Observational challenges will also be included to add variety to gameplay and encourage the child to explore each area of Picaro World.

Games are quick, fun and exciting. The game encourages replayability and always presents something new to strive for. The duration of a game is dictated by its learning goals. For example, a game that practises spelling will move at a slower pace than a vocabulary revision game.

Blended Learning

Blended Learning is the combination of online resources with classroom activities, providing comprehensive tuition.

Online and Offline Learning

Benefits of Blended Learning include:

1. A seamless link between home and the classroom
2. Successfully accommodates different learning styles
3. Closer links between children, parents and teachers
4. Develops skills and knowledge in different and challenging ways
5. Delivers a personalised learning experience where children progress at their own pace. Individual monitoring allows individual feedback
6. High level of engagement in learning via a virtual world promotes a deeper learning experience
**Gamification**

Gamification is the method of motivating users through gaming techniques. For example, a simple ‘race to the finish’ or stopwatch activity shifts the focus from the work to play, but continues to promote learning.

Picaro uses this in a familiar space for young people – online gaming – to motivate and encourage young learners.

**Picaro Reward System**

Picaro’s reward system gives players instant feedback that both encourages them to keep coming back and also makes it clear how to get better scores.

There are several reward systems in Picaro, which are all presented within the ‘Heads Up Display’.

Each of these systems will react in different ways and give the player clarity on every click, ensuring they always know what they are doing, what they should be doing and how well they are doing it.
Picaro Curriculum

Picaro’s comprehensive curriculum allows for easy integration into any other English curriculum around the world. It is structured alongside the Cambridge English: Young Learners curriculum. Picaro can be used for any child’s first steps on their English learning journey - no pre-existing knowledge is required.

Units, Content and Structure

If children play all of the games in Unit 1-16 of Picaro World, they will have been introduced to all of the language in the Cambridge English: Young Learners tests.

- Units 1-8 in Picaro are aligned with Starters
- Units 9-12 in Picaro are aligned with Movers
- Units 13-16 in Picaro are aligned with Flyers

![Graph showing courses completed and cumulative vocabulary count across Picaro units]

Number of words

Courses completed
Cumulative vocabulary count

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Courses completed</th>
<th>Cumulative vocabulary count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>2500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Picaro Unit

www.vantage-siam.com
Picaro Content - Curriculum Overview

Picaro Units 1-8 - Starters Topics

Vocabulary Topics
- animals
- the body and the face
- clothes
- colours
- family and friends
- food and drink
- the home
- numbers 1-20
- places and directions
- school
- sports and leisure
- time
- toys
- transport
- weather
- the world around us

Starters Grammar and structures list

★ Nouns
  Singular and plural including irregular plural forms, countable and uncountable and names

★ Adjectives
  Including possessive adjectives

★ Determiners

★ Pronouns
  Including demonstrative, personal and possessive, interrogative pronouns and ‘one’

★ Verbs
  (Positive, negative, question, imperative and short answer)
  - Present simple
  - Present continuous
  - Can for ability
  - Can for requests/permission
  - Have (got) for possessions

★ Adverbs

★ Conjuctions

★ Prepositions of place

★ Question words

★ Have + obj + inf

★ -ing forms as nouns

★ Let’s

★ Like + v + ing

★ There is/there are

★ Would like + n or v

★ Happy Birthday

★ Here you are

★ Me too

★ So do I

★ Story about +ing

★ What (a/an) + adj + n

★ What now?
Picaro is a 3–5 year course spread across 4 levels that makes learning English fun. Picaro helps children to learn and practise English using games that promote replay and reinforce learning.

Picaro is broken into four levels. Each level contains 4 Units. Each Unit Contains 20 Topics. Each Topic Contains:
- 1 Lesson Plan
- 1 Activity Book Exercise
- 3 Online Games
- Downloadable picture resources and extensions

Picaro is a blended learning solution, combining online materials with classroom learning.

- Online Course
- Student Activity Books
- Teacher Books
- Online Learning Management System (LMS)

Indirect objects
Comparative and superlative adjectives
Verbs
(Positive, negative, question, imperative and short answer forms, including contractions)
- Past simple regular and irregular forms
- Verb + infinitive
- Verb + ing
- Infinitive of purpose
- Want/ask someone to do something
- Must for obligation
- Have (got) to/had to
- Shall for offers
- Could (past form of can)

Adverbs
Comparative and superlative adverbs
Conjunctions

Prepositions of time
Question words
Relative clauses
What is/was the weather like?
What’s the matter?
How/what about + noun or ing
When clauses (not with future meaning)
Go for a + noun
Be called + noun
Be good at + noun
I think/know …

Vocabulary Topics
(Topics new at this unit are in bold)

animals          health          time
the body and the face the home        toys
clothes           numbers 1-100     transport
colours           places and directions weather
family and friends school        work
food and drink    sports and leisure the world around us

Movers Grammar and structures list
Picaro Content - Curriculum Overview

Picaro Units 13-16 - Flyers Topics

Vocabulary Topics
(Topics new at this unit are in bold)

- animals
- the body and the face
- clothes
- colours
- family and friends
- food and drink
- health
- the home
- materials
- numbers 1-1000
- places and directions
- school
- sports and leisure
- time
- toys
- transport
- weather
- work
- the world around us

Flyers Grammar and structures list

★ Verbs
(positive, negative, question, imperative and short answer forms, including contractions)
- Present perfect
- Be going to
- Will
- Might
- May
- Shall for suggestions
- Could
- Should

★ Where clauses
★ Before/after clauses (not with future reference)
★ Be/look/sound/feel/taste/smell/like
★ Make somebody something + adjective
★ What time....?
★ What else/next?
★ See you soon/later/tomorrow/etc.
★ Be made of

★ Tag questions
★ Adverbs
★ Conjunctions
★ If clauses (in zero conditionals)
Picaro Units, Content and Structure

Picaro offers many hours of interactive playing and learning, designed to introduce children to different sets of vocabulary and language skills gradually. At the beginning, children will receive audio information and instructions. Later, information and instructions take the form of text as their reading and writing skills develop.

What do you need to do to acquire the knowledge for Cambridge English: Starters, Movers & Flyers?

- Units 1 - 8, each comprised of 20 topics (160 in total), need to be completed to be ready for the Cambridge YLE Starters test.
- Units 9 - 12, each comprised of 20 topics, should be completed in preparation for the Cambridge YLE Movers test.
- Units 13 - 16, each comprised of 20 topics (40 in total), should be completed in preparation for the Cambridge YLE Movers test.
- Within a topic the player can play at least three games. Each game lasts several minutes and can be played as many times as users desire.
- The Level System ensures that all structures and the full exam vocabulary list are covered and practised in a variety of ways.
- In line with Cambridge English: Young Learners (YLE) recommendations, we suggest around 240 hours tuition (100 hours for Starters, 70 for Movers and 70 for Flyers) to cover the entire curriculum (depending on the age and development of children).
What is Picaro?

Picaro is an interactive, multi-level, language-learning course tailored to the Cambridge English: Young Learners (YLE) Curriculum and the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

Picaro offers a comprehensive English curriculum for children aged 5 – 9 with over 300 hours of tuition. It provides step-by-step instruction for teaching 1175 English words from the Cambridge English: Young Learner (YLE) curriculum.

Picaro has been developed by experts in education and entertainment: University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations, Kaplan International Colleges and Fox International Channels' BabyTV, so you can be assured children will have fun while they learn new language.

How do you progress?

Pass marks for each game are set individually depending on the:

- Type of game
- Language covered
- Learning objective

Teachers can either follow the set sequence of topics which align with the teachers notes and activity books or they can skip topics to fit with their local curriculum.

Successful completion of all the activities in a topic is required to pass the unit and move onto the next. Once a topic is completed, it can be repeated at any time. As the student completes each Topic, they will unlock the next; when they complete all Topics they will unlock the next Unit.
Picaro Academy offers product training to ensure that schools and resellers fully understand Picaro and maximise its potential. Picaro Academy sessions can be completed via video conferencing or face-to-face.

We introduce Picaro to give you an overall understanding of the product and the companies behind it. Vantage will take you through a comprehensive product overview and training that includes:

1. **Picaro Lesson**
   To help you understand Picaro in action, we present Picaro to you as a classroom lesson. You get to take part in the lesson so you understand the product first-hand. You will see all of the components in action, including: Teacher Guides; Activity Books; Online Game; Online LMS; Extra Resources.

2. **LMS Training**
   We provide training on how to use the Online Learning Management System, so teachers can confidently assess their students.

3. **Academic Philosophy**
   We take you through the theory behind Picaro. This includes looking at:
   - Early Learner Theory
   - Picaro Learning Philosophy
   - Picaro Curriculum & Structure
   - Cambridge Exams
   - Introduction to Phonics

4. **Cambridge English**
   For anyone whose clients take the Cambridge English Language tests, we offer an extended session that shows how to make the most of Picaro as a test prep resource for Cambridge YLE tests.

5. **Teacher Training**
   We can run teacher training with schools to help prepare teachers for using Picaro and to ensure they make the most of the product.