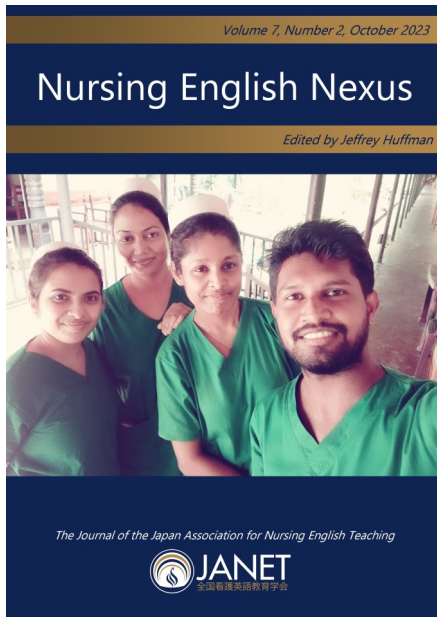


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A Review of *The Cambridge Guide to OET Nursing*

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About the Author: Sean Thornton teaches at Hamamatsu University School of Medicine as an Assistant Professor of English for both nursing and medical students. His current research is concerned with language assessment in the medical context and the suitability of standardized tests therein. Beyond that he has a sustained interest in the nature of compulsory education, and language policy. Outside of work he rather enjoys karaoke.

Book information: The Cambridge Guide to OET Nursing Student's Book with Audio and Resources Download. *Cambridge University Press*. ISBN 978-1-108-88164-7 R.R.P.: GBP 44.88 (approximately JPY 8,000 as of July 2023).

The Cambridge Guide to OET Nursing is a 254-page book that serves as a comprehensive preparatory course for people intending to take the Occupational English Test (OET) for nurses. OET is a test of English competence across four skills for medical professionals in a medical workplace context. It was originally developed by the Australian government to screen the communicative English ability of international candidates seeking to work in healthcare in Australia. It is now a recognized and valued qualification in an additional 17 countries, including the UK, Spain, and the US. There are 12 variations of the test, each targeting specific professionals including nurses, doctors, dentists, and pharmacists. This book begins with a 20-page introduction that outlines various details about the test including extensive rubrics and guidance on scoring. The main part of the book features a section for each part of the OET: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Each of these sections begins by explaining the structure and typical content of the test components for that skill before offering strategies and tactics for that part of the test, followed by practice activities, often with supplementary guidance for handling specific types of questions. The book ends with two full

practice tests.

This book, as the title indicates, is for the nursing version of OET, and primarily targets nurses who already feel ready to work in an English-speaking country or facility. It thus presumes a high level of both English ability and formal training in nursing. The publisher (Cambridge) describes this book as being CEFR B2 to C1 level, or upper intermediate to advanced. There are no vocabulary lists or grammar boxes, and no translations. This is a book about a test, not primarily a language-learning book.

Free online audio can be streamed or downloaded, along with other supplementary material such as answer keys. The sign-up process to access the extra content was simple and took less than a minute. The audio is high quality and well performed, with a refreshing variety of accents and dialects. It has been my observation over the years that there is often a mismatch between the level of a textbook and the related listening content. That is not the case here, as the dialogues have a natural pace and difficulty level that matches that of the written content.

Additionally, registered teachers can access and download the full 127-page teacher's guide PDF for free. The content includes general guidance on preparing students for the OET, detailed lesson plans and teaching strategies for the different sections, and detailed breakdowns of the answers to the practice tests. One of the things that surprised me about this extra content

is that when I initially examined the student version of the book, I had felt that it already had a teacher's guide built into it. The student book contains a high level of guidance and support, with content that seems to be directed at teachers as much as students. The separate teacher's book adds a level of detail that enables a teacher leading this course to be particularly well prepared.

I initially became familiar with this book while searching for OET learning materials to use in an elective English course for nursing students (primarily but not exclusively first year). Although I was impressed with the production and the content of this resource, I felt that it was not something that I could realistically use in my own context. The nursing students I teach are first-year students who are only with me for a one-semester course of fifteen 90-minute lessons, so I could not imagine getting through the whole book comfortably within that time frame, even with students who were at a high enough level to consider working overseas. A year-long course would seem much more feasible; under those circumstances, full use could be made of the whole book.

Alongside this book, I also considered two others: the *OET Nursing: Official Practice Book 1* by Boxhill and *The Official Guide to OET* by Kaplan. The Kaplan book is very comparable in style and structure to the Cambridge guide, but it is a lighter and more stripped-down version. It is also for the OET generally, not the nursing version specifically. Boxhill's OET practice book consists of a few pages of guidance followed by 2 replica OET tests that fully simulate the test, even down to the format and layout of the test pages. Given that OET is typically a high-stakes test, I would suggest that anybody preparing to do it take the time to work through this Boxhill book if their test date is looming. However, it would not be well suited as a coursebook to use with a group of students on an ongoing basis.

If I had a group of dedicated and capable students who were not more than a year or two away from finishing their nursing studies, were intent on pursuing international careers, already had a high level of English, and had enough time to work steadily and thoroughly through a course that would comprehensively prepare them to take the OET test, then I would not hesitate to assign *The Cambridge Guide to OET Nursing*. It is as good as any book currently available for potential OET nursing candidates. In the meantime, for the individual teacher it is an excellent source of insights and understanding of what the OET involves and how to work towards it.

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