

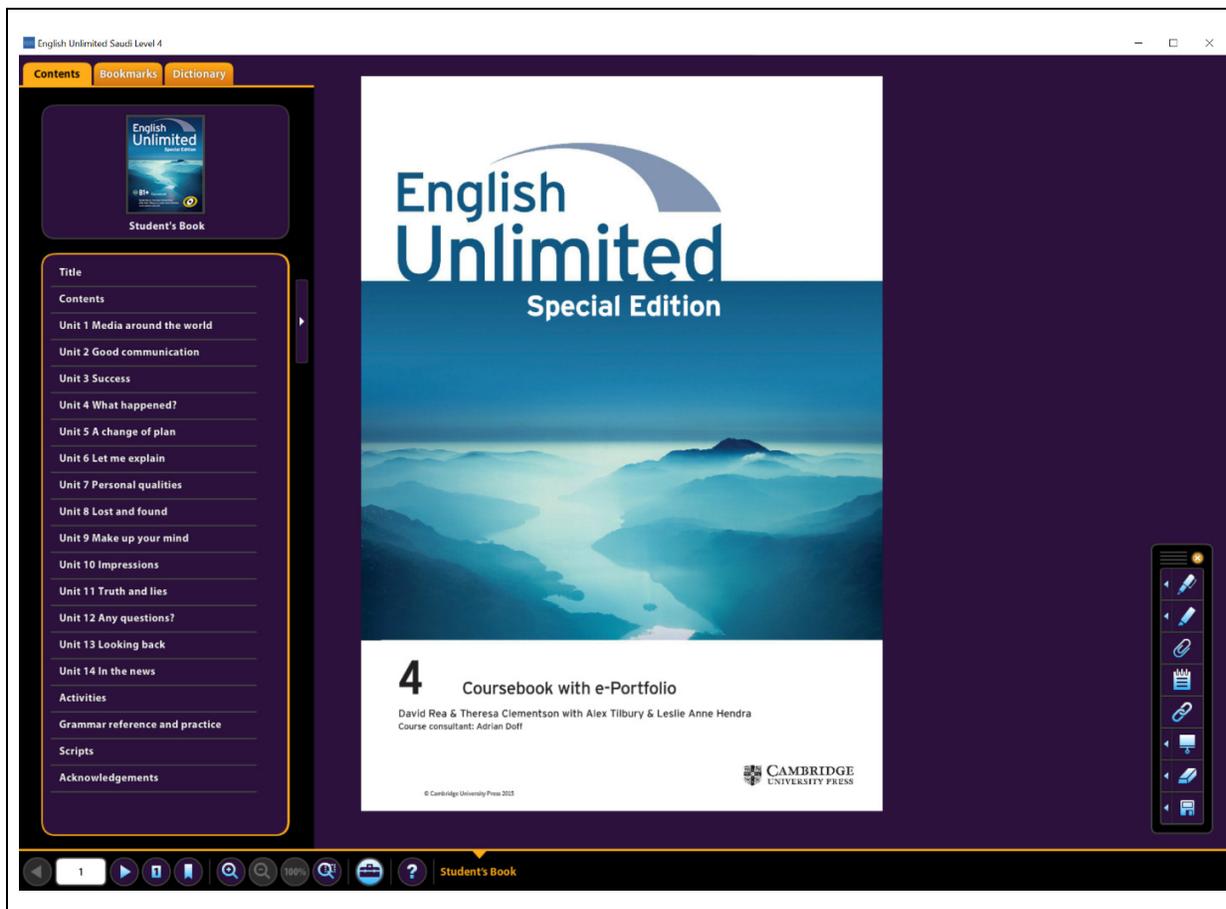


Title	 <i>English Unlimited Special Edition Presentation Plus</i>
Publisher	Cambridge University Press <i>Contact Information</i> Address: University Printing House, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 8BS, United Kingdom Email: information@cambridge.org Phone: +44 (0) 1223 358 331 Website: https://cambridge.org
Platform	Microsoft Windows
Minimum System Requirements	2 GB of RAM, 500 MB Free Storage
Target Languages	English
Target Audience	Preparatory year university students in the Middle East
Price	Included when purchasing a license for institutional use by language instructors
<i>Reviewed by Shadi Alzahrani & John I. Liontas</i> University of South Florida	

Published by Cambridge University Press, *English Unlimited Special Edition Presentation Plus* is a companion software for *English Unlimited Special Edition* English programs can use in the Middle East transcontinental region. This edition addresses the cultural concerns stakeholders had expressed at the institutions in which the companion textbooks were used. The series ranges from CEFR A1 to CEFR B2 (two books for each level; one student book and one workbook). The software has two versions, one for Microsoft Windows and another one for Apple's Mac OS. The software requires a Microsoft Windows machine with at least two gigabytes of RAM and a 500-megabyte of available storage. The Mac OS version requires similar technical specifications. For the purposes of this review, a high-end Windows 10 PC was used. In addition, a MacBook Air 11-inch was used for purposes of comparison only. In terms of operation and interactivity, both versions ran identical and both cover the student book. They are both available on a CD format or as a digital download. The software size is around 350 megabytes. The installation process is straightforward and similar to other Microsoft Windows programs installations. It requires a system with administration privileges as it does not run from external storage devices, including thumb drives and external hard drives.

Once the program starts, the user is greeted with an animated splash screen that is followed by the main program. The main interface provides users several options when browsing the material (e.g., choosing the topic or going page-by-page). Once a page or a topic is selected, the user can then

begin to interact with the content by clicking on the corresponding buttons next to the sections. The listening sections, for example, offer the corresponding audio clip and can even display the audio script which, in turn, helps learners to listen and read at the same time. The reading sections offer a similar interactivity interface feature. Along similar lines, the vocabulary, grammar, and exercises sections allow users to view answers to most questions. Those can be particularly useful for the revision sessions. Other important features and tools included in the software include mark ups, highlighters, text box inputs, bookmarks, zoom in and zoom out, and a dictionary. In particular, the dictionary feature, while it allows users to look up words from Cambridge's dictionary, requires an active internet connection, which is certain to limit classrooms without access to the web. The omission of a digital version of the workbook is likely to force users to go back to the physical medium in order to access its rich content. Moreover, the help section within the program offers a variety of topics on how to access and use the functions of the program. Unfortunately, the embedded help topic links do not work. Those technical "symptoms" were present on three different machines: a laptop running Windows 7, a desktop running windows 10, and another laptop running windows 10 Pro. Customer support can be reached via email or by calling the listed phone number. Important to note here is that customers may incur international phone call rates as there is no local phone number to call. Local customer support is available to those institutions that adopt the companion textbooks through their trained teachers. Yet support is only limited to technical difficulties with either the installation or access process.



As *English Unlimited Special Edition* is used in authorized institutions, its operating license can only be obtained from within those institutions. Licensing is limited to one license per user. Additional licenses can be obtained via the local technical support. Although students' books are sold at major bookstores at around \$35 each, licensing costs for institutions can only be obtained through the Cambridge University Press. The program offers a wide variety of tools to interact with the content of the textbook. The ability to view the book in digital form and follow along is a feature students will readily employ. Additionally, the ability to play the listening sections without the need of an audio CD is a definite plus. The sticky note tool is equally useful for situations where the teacher needs to type a quick response to a question or where leaving a note on the current page for future reference appears most conducive to learning. The sticky notes stay on the page until the user deletes them or the user quits the software without saving them. Because the program layout is similar to that of the students' book layout, following along with the lesson in question should find much support among students. Furthermore, the quick access menu enables teachers to effortlessly go back and forth between units and sections, which may be used most profitably during targeted revision sessions seeking to address students' correction needs. The ability to display the answer keys is especially suitable when teachers need to quickly go over the answers to an exercise.

Despite these noteworthy features, the software does exhibit some graphical glitches when displayed in 'unconventional' screen resolutions or low resolutions, in some cases. Those issues come in the form of scalability where the bottom toolbar does not display correctly. When displayed on an external display, such as a projector, the picture is mostly overblown, especially when displayed in an 800x600 resolution. Additionally, the lack of basic functions, such as print and export to other programs may proven to be an inconvenience, especially when the printing of particular handouts is most needed indeed. The shortcomings noted herein notwithstanding, *English Unlimited Special Edition Presentation Plus* is, nonetheless, a great instructional tool that offers language instructors a solid variety of tools to achieve meaningful interactivity with digital content and learning. Those instructors who have the needed resources to apply it in their classrooms will find much benefit in its use and purposeful application. Learners are certain to benefit from the many built-in features, tools, topics, and functions, even when the level of interactivity may at times be limited at best.

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