

Practice English on Your Own

Self Study Ideas and Resources for
English Language Learners in Nova Scotia



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Introduction

Welcome to Nova Scotia!

This booklet, Practice English on Your Own, was developed for adult immigrants who are learning English as a Second Language (ESL). It has been modified from a resource originally developed by the Adult Language Training Branch, Department of Immigration & Multiculturalism, Government of Manitoba. HILC would like to thank Margaret Pidlaski and her team for their generosity in allowing us to share and modify this resource for ESL learners in Nova Scotia.

There are many classroom based and tutor programs for immigrants in Nova Scotia (see page 28), but in this booklet you will also find the following:

- ideas to practice English on your own, at home and in the community
- websites that can help you learn English on the internet
- resources to help you learn English
- information about tests of English as a Second Language
- ESL programs in Nova Scotia
- information about the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB)

The internet is a valuable resource for practicing English on your own. This guide contains many helpful websites and resources. If you do not have a computer, contact your local library for information about public access internet use. The Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre accepts no responsibility for the content or maintenance of the web sites listed in this resource. At the time of printing, they were all active and useful for the purposes identified here.

Learning English is not easy and can take a long time. We hope that this resource helps you in your journey to improve your English communication skills.

Good Luck!

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Email: info@hilc.ns.ca

Ideas for Practicing English – CLB 1-4

Speaking Activities

When you know you will have to ask a question to get important information, practice what you will say first.

After someone answers your question or gives you information, check that you understand. Repeat important information. If they say, "Take bus number 68.", ask:

- "Bus number 68?"
- "Did you say bus number 68?"

Practice saying the letters of the alphabet in English. Practice writing the letters. Then do the same with numbers.

Aa (ay)	Bb (bee)	Cc (see)
Dd	Ee	Ff
Gg	Hh	Ii
Jj	Kk	Ll
Mm	Nn	Oo
Pp	Qq	Rr
Ss	Tt	Uu
Vv	Ww	Xx
Yy	Zz	

Phone a friend that is learning English and speak in English.

Speak in English with friends and family for 10 minutes everyday.

Talk to people when you are shopping.

Invite someone to tea or lunch (a neighbour or classmate) and speak about your hobbies or children in English.

Volunteer at a community centre or at your children's school.

Get to know the parents of your children's friends and talk to them.

Meet a classmate once a week to review what you did in English class.

Very quietly repeat English that you hear everyday. Try to speak just like they do. Now everyone is your teacher!

Speak English to people everyday. Speak to someone at the bus stop or the receptionist at the doctor's office.

Practice reading in front of a mirror. When you get comfortable with this, speak louder and with more feeling.

Read directions on how to get somewhere and practice saying them so the words are familiar.

Record yourself on a tape or CD and listen.

Talk English to yourself. Talk about anything and everything. Do it at home.

Watch an English movie and then say out loud what happened in the movie.

Ideas for Practicing English – CLB I-4

Put everything into the past tense. What happened? Who said what? What did each person do?

Read out loud to yourself. Read with punctuation. Stop longer at periods (.). Read sentences ending in question marks (?) and exclamation marks (!) differently than sentences ending in periods.

When you want to go to a restaurant, call them on the phone first. Make a reservation. Ask for directions and then say them to yourself.

Learn the following phrases and use them whenever you talk with an English speaker:

- “Can you say that again please?”
- “What does that mean?”
- “How do you spell that?”

Practice asking for more information when you don't get the information you need:

- “I don't understand.”
- “Where can I get the information that I need?”

Listening Activities

Watch movies in English. Listen carefully to what people say to each other in social situations. Rewind the DVD and watch again.

Watch TV using “closed captions”

Watch the news in English on TV.
Watch the weather channel on TV.

Listen to English songs. Look up the words on the internet and sing the songs aloud.

Tape a sitcom (situation comedy) on TV. Look up the transcript on the internet and read along. Listen for idioms and slang.

Listen to English radio, especially if you travel by car.

Call businesses or government offices after business hours and listen to their taped messages.

Borrow books on tape from the library.

Listen to people speak. If possible, make friends with people who speak English. Listen to them speaking, and ask questions when you do not understand.

Use the internet to listen to English language radio and television programs.

Go to a public place. In a restaurant, listen to what the waiter asks the customers and what they reply.

Reading and Vocabulary Activities

Read something every day.

Read flyers in the newspaper.

Read a short article in a newspaper and

Ideas for Practicing English – CLB I-4

write a short summary of the story.

Read the short stories that are often on one side of a newspaper page or on the back page.

Look at a picture and read an article about it in a newspaper or magazine.

Read books to your children and talk about the pictures in the book.

Write sentences or questions that you use a lot on flashcards. Practice them whenever you have a chance, i.e. on the bus or waiting in line

Ask an English speaker to help you label things you use every day. Put the labels on things, i.e. fridge, mirror, pen. Make sentences with your words, i.e.:

- The apples are in the fridge.
- The car is in the driveway.

Make a vocabulary list of new words and phrases. Read your list everyday. Write new words and phrases every week. Put the list in a place that you will see everyday, i.e. on the fridge or by your dresser.

Read signs on the street and on the bus.

Borrow books from the library for free.

Borrow a bilingual book from the library. Read the story in both languages.

Read a map and learn the names of the streets in your neighbourhood.
Read newspapers online.

After you read something, ask yourself the questions, "Who, What, Where, When, Why", for each story you read. Who is it about? What happened? Why did it happen? When did it happen? Where did it happen?

Record new vocabulary in a personal dictionary and write it in a sentence. An address book works well because it has the letters of the alphabet. Look at it every night before bed.

Talk to yourself in English while you clean or do the dishes.

Go around the house and try to name everything in English (furniture, clothes, etc). Look up words you don't know.

Writing Activities

Write something everyday - write three things that happened that day.

Write a message in a card in English

Write responses in English over and over again.

Write sentences about an interesting family activity.

Write sentences about your favourite family

Ideas for Practicing English – CLB I-4

photographs.

Learn one new word or phrase every day and write it in a notebook.

Learn how to use a computer and send e-mails to your friends.

Try out the ESL learning websites listed in this resource or others on the internet using a Google search of "learning English".

Write your grocery list in English.

Practice filling out a form with your name, address and other personal information.

Write emails in English. Write to teachers or other students.

Keep a daily or weekly journal. Write about whatever you want in it.

Ideas for Practicing English – CLB 5-8

Volunteer at a school, club or organization. This is a great way to meet new people, practice English and gain valuable work skills. Call or visit a community centre, hospital, senior centre, etc. in your area and ask about volunteer opportunities.

To practice your public speaking, join a Toastmasters club. They can help you become a confident public speaker. To find the location of a club, go to www.toastmasters.org. There are many Toastmasters clubs in Nova Scotia.

Contact MISA at (902)423-3607 and ask for a professional mentor. You will be matched with a Canadian in the same employment field who will meet with you on a regular basis to discuss employment practices in Canada.

Take a course in cooking, sports, art, crafts, first aid, dance, etc. at a local community centre. Classes are not expensive and you can meet people and speak English with them. For more information in Halifax, look at the Halifax Regional Municipality recreation guide. View the guide online at www.halifax.ca/recreation or pick up a copy at the Library. Outside Halifax, ask for information at your local library.

Listen to CBC Radio One to improve your listening skills. This radio station has more dialogue than other stations and you will hear a lot of interesting topics. Listen with a friend or family member, and then dis-

cuss the topic afterwards. Go to www.cbc.ca/frequency/?NS to find the radio channel for your town/city.

Take a continuing education course. Classes are often available in the evening, on weekends or online:

- Nova Scotia Community College
www.nsccl.ca or (902) 491-4911.
- Mount Saint Vincent University
www.msvu.ca or (902) 457-6243.
- Saint Mary's University
www.smu.ca or (902) 420-5492.
- Nova Scotia College of Art and Design
www.nscad.ns.ca or (902) 494-8185.
- Dalhousie University
www.dal.ca or (902) 494-2211.
- Cape Breton University (Sydney)
www.cbu.ca or (902) 539-5300.
- St. Francis Xavier University (Antigonish)
www.stfx.ca or (902) 863-3300.
- Acadia University (Wolfville)
www.acadiau.ca or (902) 585-2201.

Audit a regular university course. This means you attend classes and do the assignments, but you do not get an official credit. This costs about half the price of taking the course. Contact the above listed schools for more information.

Listen to the Information Station in HRM (97.9 FM). This station has news stories, weather, and community information that repeats every hour. If you do not understand the first time, you can listen again.

Ideas for Practicing English – CLB 5-8

Use the “closed captions” feature on your TV. You can practice listening and reading comprehension at the same time.

Read English stories, cartoons, news articles and books. Write down new vocabulary. Practice reading to yourself and aloud. After reading ask yourself the “wh” questions about what you have read: who, what, when, why, where and how?

Set goals for learning English and write them down. Create a plan or agenda for your learning. Use a journal or a calendar to help you plan your study time. If you are in class, remember to practise after class.

Keep a journal, diary or dictionary. Write down new words you hear, look them up in a dictionary and record the meaning. Try to learn a new word each day. Use the new words in a sentence you have created.

Form a book club with some friends to practice reading. Read and discuss the book with your group. Practice reading some parts out loud to help you improve your pronunciation and reading comprehension.

Use a tape recorder and record yourself speaking English. Imitate native English speakers. Pay attention to pronunciation, stress and intonation.

Make an English speaking friend. Practice conversation, create dialogues, read together, etc.

Visit a public library in your area. There are many things you can do at the library to improve your English:

- Borrow a “talking book”. This is a book on a cassette tape or CD. Read and listen at the same time. This will help you with your reading and listening comprehension, and help you understand stress and intonation.
- Read a newspaper or magazine. ‘Saltscapes’ is a local magazine that highlights the Nova Scotian lifestyle.
- ‘Touch Base’ is a free Halifax newspaper that is written for immigrants. Outside HRM, check www.altstuff.com/newsns.htm to find a newspaper for your area.
- Attend an activity, lecture or presentation at the library. These are free and there are many to choose from for parents and children.

Listen to English music. Try reading song lyrics as you listen. Singing is an excellent way to practice intonation and stress.

Learn the words to ‘O Canada’ - the Canadian national anthem. Sing along when you hear it on TV, at sporting or other events.

Rewrite fairytales, jokes or instructions in English.

Ideas for Practicing English – CLB 5-8

Listen to sports on the radio or TV and write down words you don't understand. Ask an English speaker who likes sports what they mean. Many Canadians don't understand sports words either!

Join an English Club with friends. The YMCA Centre for Immigrant Programs in Halifax has conversation groups for newcomers, friend-to-friend matches, social activities and a women's group. Check www.ymcahm.ns.ca or call (902) 457-9622 for more information.

Create your own conversation group to practice English. Make an English only rule. Keep an English dictionary handy and record new vocabulary in a notebook. Phone people from your group to practice your telephone skills. Send emails to each other or write letters. Go on field trips, watch English movies, listen to English music, etc.

Use English recipes - try cooking using an English recipe. Check Canadian Living Magazine at www.canadianliving.com for some excellent recipe ideas. Write your favorite recipes out in English. Invite friends to an English only dinner party.

Start reading magazines and publications that are easy to understand: 'Reader's Digest', 'People' and 'Chatelaine'.

Later read more challenging news magazines such as 'MacLeans' and 'Newsweek'. These publications use a higher level of

English. They are a good way to improve your vocabulary and spelling. They also keep you informed of world events from a North American perspective.

Play a board game in English, such as Monopoly, Scrabble, Boggle, Pictionary (great for practicing idioms), Scattergories, A Question of Scruples, etc.

Try playing card games in English. Go to www.pagat.com for an index of games and instructions.

Try reading out loud so you can improve your pronunciation. Ask a friend to listen and correct your pronunciation right away.

Have an "English only" day: you can only speak, read or write in English.

Reading and Study Tips

Reading and Study Tips

a dictionary, a notebook, pens/pencils/highlighters, a computer, etc.

Organize Your Time

Make a detailed schedule of your week and book some study time into your schedule.

If possible, plan to study at the time of day when your brain works best.

Give yourself short breaks and reward yourself when you've studied well.

Use a daily or weekly planner to help you schedule activities and events.

Make your own study schedule. Make a chart (put the seven days of the week at the top and the hours of the day from 6:00 am to 11:00 pm on the left side). Create and use a chart for each week.

In your chart, write down all the things you must do, such as work, classes, meals, etc. Schedule in study time each day.

Don't forget to schedule in some exercise and free time too! Try to find a balance between study, work, family and recreation.

Carry your schedule with you so you don't forget your activities and study time.

Find a Good Place to Study

Study in a quiet place that has enough room for everything you will need: a book,

Find a Study Partner

Sometimes it helps to study with someone else. You can ask each other questions and quiz each other. Discuss what you have read with your study partner to help you clarify your thinking.

How Do You Learn Best?

When you know how you learn, you can choose study techniques that will help you to study better. Do the quizzes at these websites to determine your learning style:

- About.com Homework/Study Tips: http://homeworktips.about.com/library/quizzes/bl_lstylequiz1.htm
- Online Teaching: Learning Styles Quiz: <http://members.shaw.ca/mdde615/lmstysquiz2.htm>
- What's YOUR Learning Style? www.usd.edu/trio/tut/ts/style.html

Auditory Learners :

Some people remember things better when they hear it. They enjoy reading aloud or studying with others, listening to recorded books or information, or listening to class presentations.

Visual Learners:

Some people remember what they see and prefer written instructions. They like visual information such as videos or the

Reading and Study Tips

internet. They learn better when they see charts, diagrams, posters, flashcards or pictures.

Tactile Learners:

Some people learn better when they do a task themselves. They understand directions best when they write them down. They learn better from drawing pictures and diagrams, making models, solving puzzles, or using their hands.

When You First Open Your Book

Decide what you are going to study.

Skim the section you are going to read by reading headings, subheadings, bold and italic print, and looking at pictures and diagrams. After skimming, read in detail.

Ask yourself what you need or want to learn about this subject.

Write down notes or important points in point form.

Keep a list of difficult words that you want to remember.

When You Find an Unfamiliar Word

Look again at the word, and say each letter. When you pronounce the word out loud, you will sometimes realize that you already know the word.

Read the sentence containing the word.

This might help you to figure out what it means and what part of speech it is.

Look for prefixes (i.e. 'dis' means opposite, like in the words 'disloyal' or 'discomfort') and suffixes (i.e. 'al' means pertaining to, like in the words 'logical' or 'electrical'). There are many prefixes and suffixes. Check www.betterendings.org/homeschool/Words/Root%20Words.htm for more information.

Look for the stem or root of the word. This is what is left of a word when you take off the prefix and or the suffix (i.e. if you remove "de" and "ing" from "demystifying", you have the word "mystify").

Use a dictionary. Sometimes you will find several definitions for one word. Choose the one you think fits the best in the sentence you are reading.

If you still don't understand what the word means, ask a co-worker or a friend.

Draw a Picture or Diagram

Drawing a picture or diagram can help you to organize the information in your mind.

Highlight or Underline Important Information

Underlining, circling, and highlighting can help make important facts stand out.

Use different coloured highlighters or pens.

Reading and Study Tips

Make short notes in the margins of the page.

When you review later, you may only need to read the highlighted or underlined parts.

Use Tricks to Memorize Facts

When there is some information you want to memorize, begin by telling yourself that you will remember it. Think positively and choose to remember.

Break the information into small chunks.

Use mental or hand drawn pictures.

Repeat, repeat, repeat!

Use Flash Cards or Posters

When you are learning new words, you can use small "index" cards to help you remember them. Put the new word on one side and the definition on the other. These are easy to carry around with you, and you can read them while you are on the bus or on your coffee break at work.

Talk Out Loud

If it helps, you can study by reading out loud. Hearing yourself say it out loud will reinforce the information and help you to remember it.

Test Yourself

Each time you study, try testing yourself. You can also invent questions as you read and answer them yourself.

Look, Cover, Write and Check:

Write down the points you want to remember, then cover them up with your hand. Try to remember them, and write them out. Check to see if you got it right.

Review

There are many ways to review something. You can read the information again or work with a partner and ask each other questions.

Review new information as soon as possible. When you have learned new information, the sooner you review it, the better you'll remember it.

Reduce Your Stress

Plan your schedule, and be realistic about what you can accomplish.

Go for a walk or play a sport. Exercise helps clear your brain and it helps you breathe more deeply. This reduces stress.

Visualize your success. Imagine your life after you achieve your goal. Tell yourself "I can do this!"

Websites for Practicing English

HILC has a number of resources on its website to help you practice English:
www.hilc.ns.ca

There are many other good websites for learning English as a Second Language. Try the following to practice your skills.

General ESL

a4esl.org - quizzes, tests, exercises and puzzles
<http://a4esl.org>

About.com - resources for improving your English in class and at home
<http://esl.about.com/?once=true&>

BBC - news stories, listening practice, vocabulary and scripts
www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/index.shtml

Dave's ESL Cafe - a variety of ESL activities
www.eslcafe.com

E.L. Easton - a variety of ESL activities
<http://eleaston.com>

EnglishClub.com - grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation activities
www.englishclub.com

Karin's ESL PartyLand - a variety of ESL activities
www.eslpartyland.com

Ohio University ESL Student Resources - ESL activities for all levels
www.ohiou.edu/esl/english

The Tower of English - a variety of website links to help you practice your English
www.towerofenglish.com

University of Victoria's English Language Centre Study Zone - grammar and interactive practice exercises
<http://web2.uvcs.uvic.ca/elc/studyzone/grammar.htm>

1-language.com - a resource site for learning English
www.1-language.com

5 Minute English - short lessons for learners with intermediate English skills
www.5minuteenglish.com

Speaking

EnglishClub.com - activities for learning and practicing your speaking skills
www.englishclub.com/speaking/index.htm

focusenglish.com - everyday English in conversation
www.focusenglish.com/dialogues/conversation.html

talkenglish.com - speaking skills to help you speak English well
www.talkenglish.com/default.aspx

Websites for Practicing English

Toastmasters International - find out how a Toastmasters club can improve your speaking and presentation skills
www.toastmasters.org

Listening

ello - over 1,000 listening activities
www.ello.org

Learning Resources - news stories from CNN you can see and hear with transcripts
<http://literacyworks.org/learningresources>

Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab - listening exercises to test comprehension
www.esl-lab.com

Simply Scripts - links to TV/movie scripts
www.simplyscripts.com

Voice of America: Special English - news stories with transcripts
www.voanews.com/specialenglish

Reading

Bangkok Post - learn to read a daily English-language newspaper
www.bangkokpost.com/education/index.htm

BBC Skillswise - reading factsheets, worksheets, quizzes and games
www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/words/reading

EnglishEnglish.com - links to reading quizzes, tests, exercises and puzzles
http://englishenglish.com/reading_skills.htm

ESL Reading - links to readings with comprehension activities
<http://iteslj.org/links/ESL/Reading>

Extensive Reading - information on extensive reading
www.extensivereading.net

Skimming and Scanning - article on skimming and scanning with links to reading websites
www.42explore.com/skim.htm

Writing

BBC Skillswise - writing factsheets, worksheets, quizzes and games
www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/words/writing

Colorado State University Writing Resources - resources to improve writing skills
<http://writing.colostate.edu/learn.cfm>

Gallaudet University English Works - the writing process and types of writing
<http://depts.gallaudet.edu/englishworks/writing/main/index.htm>

Mark's ESL Cottage Writing Room - links to websites to help improve your writing
www.marksesl.com/writing_center.html

Grammar

Websites for Practicing English

English Grammar Lessons - a resource for grammar explanations and practice
www.english-grammar-lessons.com

Englishpage.com - quizzes and explanations for grammar and vocabulary
www.englishpage.com

Guide to Grammar and Writing - rules, sentence, paragraph, and essay writing
<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>

Net Grammar ESL/EFL - activities and explanations with reading and listening
<http://netgrammar.altec.org/main.html>

Spelling

Spelling: A Key to Good Communication - spelling rules and tips; practice tests and word lists
<http://literacy.kent.edu/Midwest/Materials/ndakota/spelling/toc.html>

ESL Desk - spelling quizzes
www.esldesk.com/esl-quizzes/index.htm

BBC Skillswise - spelling factsheets, worksheets, quizzes and games
www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/words/spelling

Slang and Idioms

Cool Slang: Canadian Slang Dictionary - Canadian slang expressions
www.coolslang.com/in/canadian/index.php
Directory of Canadian Slang & Phrases - Canadian slang and phrases

www.unbf.ca/isao/documents/directoryslang.htm

Settlement.Org - listen to Canadian idioms
www.settlement.org/site/ED/ESL/idioms.asp

Slang City - website with slang for many categories (contains offensive language)
www.slangcity.com

The Idiom Connection - a comprehensive list of idioms with definitions and examples
www.idiomconnection.com

The Tower of English - a list of popular idioms with examples
<http://towerofenglish.com/idioms.html>

Songs, Stories and Poetry

Antimoon.com - stories that you can download and listen to (no transcripts)
www.antimoon.com/other/shaggydog.htm

Book Pop - listen and read along fairy tales
www.web-pop.com/flashindex.html

EnglishClub.com - poetry that you can listen to and read along
www.englishclub.com/listening/poetry.htm

Lyrics.com - song lyrics to popular music
www.lyrics.com/index.php

Isabel's ESL Site - songs with related activities to practice vocabulary, grammar

Websites for Practicing English

and sounds

www.isabelperez.com/songs.htm

Pronunciation

English Pronunciation Workpage - a resource for intonation and stress patterns with links to other websites

www.e-pron.com

Sounds of English - pronunciation practice

www.soundsofenglish.org

Reference Material

AskOxford.com - online dictionary

www.askoxford.com/?view=uk

Cambridge Dictionaries - online dictionary

<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>

Merriam Webster Online Dictionary - online dictionary, thesaurus, and medical dictionary; audio files

<http://m-w.com>

Wikipedia - online encyclopedia

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page

Yahoo Directory: Dictionaries - source of online dictionaries

<http://dir.yahoo.com/Reference/Dictionaries>

YourDictionary.com - online dictionary

<http://yourdictionary.com>

Resources for Professionals

Professional English

Web Resources

Arlyn Freed's English for Specific Purposes provides links to a variety of professional English websites.

www.eslhome.com/esl/esp

Online Technical Writing is an online technical writing textbook.

www.io.com/~hcexres/textbook

Writing Guidelines for Engineering and Science Students helps with writing for engineers and scientists.

www.writing.eng.vt.edu

Business

Web Resources

The BBC has an audio news bulletin section as well as a written news bulletin section. This is great for listening and reading practice.

www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/index.shtml

The Times 100 site offers thorough case studies with vocabulary definitions.

www.thetimes100.co.uk/index.php

About.com has articles and lessons in business English; resumes, job interviews and cover letters.

<http://esl.about.com/od/englishforbusiness->

work/English_for_Business_Work_and_other_Special_Purposes.htm

Business English offers links to a wide variety of business English websites.

www.rong-chang.com/business.htm

Business English Exercises has a variety of business English grammar lessons.

www.better-english.com/exerciselist.html

Business English Links for ESL has links to business English websites.

www.geocities.com/kurtracy

EnglishClub.com has examples and activities for business English.

www.englishclub.com/business-english/index.htm

OWL has examples of all different kinds of writing.

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/681/01/>

Engineering

Professional Associations

The Association of Professional Engineers of Nova Scotia (APENS) has information on registration instructions, professional practice and employment.

www.apens.ns.ca

Engineers Canada (formerly CCPE) has information on the national organization of

Resources for Professionals

the provincial and territorial associations. This organization regulates the practice and licensing of engineers in Canada.
www.engineerscanada.ca

Tech Nova has information on the Society of Certified Engineering Technicians and Technologists of Nova Scotia. They help certify and support technical professionals.
www.technova.ca

IEEE is a professional association for the advancement of technology.
www.ieee.org/web/aboutus/home/index.html

Web Resources

'The Engineer Online' is a UK engineering magazine with articles on engineering. It is good for reading practice.
www.theengineer.co.uk/Home/Default.aspx

Biothinking.com is a website that looks at developing ecology-derived techniques for industrial, organisational and sustainable design.
<http://www.biothinking.com/pd.htm>

Books

Strategies for Engineering Communication. Stevenson, Susan & Whitmore, Steve. Toronto: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2002.

Technical Writing for Engineers and Scientists. Rosenberg, B.J. Toronto: Addison-

Wesley, 2005.

ESL Resource Book for Engineers and Scientists. Campbell, E. Toronto: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 1995.

Finance

Professional Associations

Chartered Accountants of Canada
www.cica.ca

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nova Scotia
www.icans.ns.ca

Web Resources

The Globe & Mail's Report on Business
www.reportonbusiness.com

CBC Money
www.cbc.ca/money

TSX.com is a website for the TSX
www.tsx.com

Books

Effective Writing - A Handbook for Accountants. May, Claire & Gordon, S. 5th ed. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1999. ISBN-10: 0131496816.

The Accountant's Guide to Professional

Resources for Professionals

Communication. McKay, Melanie & Rosa, Elizabeth. Fort Worth: Harcourt, 2000. ISBN-10: 0030252520.

Medicine

Licensure

Medical Licensure Information from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia
www.cpsns.ns.ca

The Clinician Assessment for Practice Program (CAPP).
www.capprogram.ca

Licensure in Nova Scotia
www.img-canada.ca/en/provinces/nova-scotia/img-training-programs.html

Web Resources

Medline provides tutorials which are useful for practicing listening skills, checking new vocabulary, and using the encyclopedia and medical news section.
www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/tutorial.html

English Med provides exercises and animated dialogues/video clips. You can get limited access from the website without a membership or gain full access to the site with a membership.
www.englishmed.com

The Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ) is online. You can read articles,

view videos, find information about health alerts and search for information.
www.cmaj.ca

Medicine Net has reading and listening segments from conferences, health news, medical topics from A-Z, information on procedures and tests, a medical dictionary, a monthly newsletter, etc.
www.medicinenet.com/script/main/hp.asp

The W.K. Kellogg Health Sciences Library at Dalhousie University in Halifax is a good resource for dentistry, health professions, medicine, and related disciplines. To sign out a book, you need to have a university library card. However, anyone can go in and read the medical literature. For an online collection of electronic books:
www.library.dal.ca/Kellogg/?page=E-books.

About.com provides access to the 'invisible web' - medical databases and specialized medical sites that don't show up in a quick search.
<http://websearch.about.com/od/invisibleweb/a/medical.htm>

Capital Health- Halifax Region Health Facilities
www.cdha.nshealth.ca

Nova Scotia Department of Health
www.gov.ns.ca/health

Health Canada- Government of Canada

Resources for Professionals

www.hc-sc.gc.ca/index-eng.php

Websites for Medical English

About.com has articles on English for medical purposes.

http://esl.about.com/lr/english_for_medical_purposes/290864/1/

TALK the TALK 101 is a website of medical terminology for veterinarians.

www.lib.purdue.edu/vetmed/inst/svmleader/talk101.html

Health idioms and verbs.

www.musicalenglishlessons.org/vocabulary/health.htm

Hospital English provides free online materials for medical professionals.

www.hospitalenglish.com

Medical vocabulary and great links to other English for medical professionals.

www.eslall.com/learn_english_496.html

Books

Building a Medical Vocabulary. Leonard, Peggy and Mosby. A Saunders Title; 7 edition, 2008. ISBN-10: 1437701639.

English in Medicine: A Course in Communication Skills. Holmström, Beverly. Cambridge University Press; 3 edition, 2005. ISBN: 052159569X.

Grammar and Writing Skills for the

Health Profession. Villemaire, Lorraine. Delmar Learning; 2 edition, 2005. ISBN: 140187374X.

Television and Radio

Watching television and listening to the radio can be good ways of practicing your English. You can improve your listening skills, expand your vocabulary and practice your pronunciation.

You can see medical news stories on television stations such as CBC and Global News. There is more detailed information on the CBC and Global websites. The CBC website has a section called Health and Science where you can listen to live broadcasts of current headlines and news stories.

www.cbc.ca

There are several medical dramas and documentaries on television, which use medical terminology and medical situations. Some of these medical dramas are listed below:

- E.R. (Emergency Room)
- House
- Medical Investigation
- Gray's Anatomy
- Scrubs

Bookstores

Resources for Professionals

The Dalhousie University Health Sciences Bookstore in Halifax offers a wide selection of health specialty books. There are books related to medicine, dentistry, nursing, and other health specialties. Phone: (902) 494-3020

Most large bookstores carry bilingual dictionaries and ESL grammar books. They do not always stock books to help with functional English. Bookstores will order books for you. Teachers, language assessors and librarians can suggest other books for you.

Libraries

Public libraries are valuable places for ESL learners. You can borrow books and find a quiet place to read, you can use other services or programs to help you and your family make friends, and you can become more aware of community activities.

Public libraries provide many free services to children, families and the literacy community. In the Halifax Regional Municipality, there are fourteen library locations, as well as a mobile library and a home delivery service (www.halifaxpubliclibraries.ca). Most towns in Nova Scotia have a public library. To find your local library, check the Nova Scotia Directory of Libraries or the Canadian Library Directory.

Halifax Regional Libraries have a variety of materials you can borrow including books, audio books, magazines, CDs, videos, and DVDs. If there is a book you would like but it is not available at your branch, you can ask for the book to be sent to the branch closest to you. Some branches of the library also have collections of dual language books for children (stories in English and another language, including Spanish, Arabic, French, and more).

Your library card lets you use services at the library or on the library website. www.halifaxpubliclibraries.ca

ESL books and materials are located at different branches of the library. In addition to ESL materials, six of the branches of the Halifax Public Library have ESL

classes for adults:

- Alderney Gate (902) 490-5745
- Bedford (902) 490-5740
- Captain William Spry (902) 490-5818
- Halifax North (902) 490-5723
- Keshen Goodman (902) 490-6407
- Spring Garden Road (902) 490-5700

These libraries may have additional ESL materials that are not included on the main database. The material is available if you ask.

At the Library

You can search for a book on the computer terminals or ask the library staff for help.

Some phrases you can use are:

- “I’m looking for an ESL book, can you help me?”
- “Where are the books to learn English?”
- “Can you help me locate the English self-study books?”

If the book you need is not available at your local library, you may be able to have it sent from another library:

- “I’d like to order a book from another library.”
- “How do I place an inter library loan?”

Libraries

Halifax Public Libraries

www.halifaxpubliclibraries.ca

Alderney Gate
60 Alderney Drive, Dartmouth
(902) 490-5745

Bedford
15 Dartmouth Road, Bedford
(902) 490-5740

Captain Spry
Captain William Spry Community Centre
10 Kidston Road, Halifax
(902) 490-5818

Cole Harbour
51 Forest Hills Parkway, Cole Harbour
(902) 434-6177

Dartmouth North
Dartmouth North Community Centre
134 Pinecrest Drive, Dartmouth
(902) 490-5840

Halifax North Memorial
2285 Gottingen Street, Halifax
(902) 490-5723

JD Shatford
10353 St. Margaret's Bay Road, Hubbards
(902) 857-9176

Keshen Goodman
330 Lacewood Drive, Halifax
(902) 490-6407

Musquodoboit Harbour
Village Plaza 7900
#7 Hwy, Musquodoboit Harbour
(902) 889-2227

Sackville
636 Sackville Drive, Lower Sackville
(902) 865-8653

Sheet Harbour
Blue Water Business Centre
Sheet Harbour
(902) 885-2391

Spring Garden Road
5381 Spring Garden Road, Halifax
(902) 490-5700

Tantallon
3646 Hammonds Plains Road, Upper
Tantallon
(902) 826-3330

Woodlawn
Woodlawn Centre
114 Woodlawn Road, Dartmouth
(902) 435-8352

Mobile Public Library
32 Glendale Avenue, Lower Sackville
(902) 869-4464

Library Directories

Nova Scotia Directory of Libraries:
<http://dnsl.ednet.ns.ca>

Canadian Library Directory (national):
http://lists.webjunction.org/libweb/Canada_main.html

Recommended Resources to Buy or Borrow

Grammar

Grammar in Use Intermediate with Answers: Self-study Reference and Practice for Students of English. Murphy, Raymond. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2 edition, 2000. ISBN-10: 052162598X.

An excellent grammar resource with explanations, exercises and an answer key. A version with a CD Rom is also available.

Basic Grammar in Use with Answers, with Audio CD: Self-study Reference and Practice for Students of English. Murphy, Raymond. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2002. ISBN- 10: 0521626005. An excellent grammar resource with explanations, exercises and an answer key.

Oxford Learner's Grammar: Grammar Finder. Eastwood, J. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

The New Well-Tempered Sentence. Gordon, K.E. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1993.

Dictionaries

The Oxford Picture Dictionary: Canadian Edition. Toronto: Oxford University Press Canada, 1999. ISBN-10: 0194352706. This is a picture-based dictionary. CDs, audiotapes and student workbooks are also available.

English for Everyday Activities: A Picture Process Dictionary. Zwier, L., Syra-

cuse: New Readers Press, 1999. ISBN-10: 1564202224.

This book describes the things you do every day step-by-step, with many pictures and simple sentences. CD and student workbook are also available.

The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English. Pearson ESL; 4 edition, 2006. ISBN-10: 1405811269.

An excellent learners' dictionary with CD Rom for beginner and intermediate ESL students.

Longman Advanced American Dictionary. Longman Pub Group, 2007. ISBN-10: 1405820292.

An excellent academic dictionary for advanced ESL students.

CD ROMs and DVDs

Pronunciation Power - a resource to help you improve your pronunciation skills. www.englishlearning.com

Rosetta Stone - a technology based resource for learning languages. www.rosettastone.com
1-800-788-0822

Tell Me More Pro - programs for learning language. www.auralog.com
1-888-388-3535

Pronunciation for Success - a course

Standardized Tests of English as a Second Language

designed to improve your pronunciation.
www.eslvideos.com
1-800-805-0631

Canadian Language Benchmarks

The Canadian Language Benchmarks Assessment (CLBA) and Canadian Language Benchmarks Placement Test (CLBPT) are used for placement in many adult immigrant English as a Second Language programs in Nova Scotia.
www.language.ca
www.clba.ca

In Nova Scotia, Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA) ((902) 423-3607) offers assessments in the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). Metro-Region Immigrant Language Services (MILS) ((902) 464-2032) offers assessments outside HRM. All immigrants to the province are eligible for one free CLBA or CLBPT assessment. Call to make an appointment.

The CLBA and CLBPT are not grammar or vocabulary tests, but assessments to find out what a person can do in English. There is no need to prepare or be nervous about taking either test. After the test, an assessor will discuss the results with you and you will decide together which program or class is the most appropriate.

Many adult ESL programs use the CLB as a guide for teaching. Upon completing the course work for a CLB level, the student

may receive a certificate showing the CLB level completed.

English Proficiency Tests

Here is information about some of the more commonly used English proficiency tests and where they are accepted. It is not a full list as there are other tests. It is also not an endorsement of the tests or their use. Please look at the websites for the most current information about cost, test sites, descriptions and scoring.

CanTEST - Canadian Test of English for Scholars and Trainees. There are several versions of this test. It is for academic and professional purposes such as university admission, professional accreditation and vocational training. It includes all four skill areas and takes about three hours to complete. It is available at the TESL Centre at Saint Mary's University in Halifax.
www.cantest.uottawa.ca

TOEFL - Test of English as a Foreign Language. TOEFL measures the ability of non-native speakers of English to use and understand North American English used in college and university settings. It is required by many universities in Canada. HILC provides a TOEFL preparation course in Halifax. Call (902) 443-2937 for more information.
www.ets.org/toefl/

TOEIC - Test of English for International Communication. TOEIC measures the everyday English skills of people working in

Standardized Tests of English as a Second Language

an international environment. There are two sections to the test, listening and reading. TOEIC preparation books are available. The East Coast School of Languages ((902) 491-1526) in Halifax is a test site.
www.etscanada.ca/toeic/index.php

IELTS - International English Language Testing System. There is a speaking/listening section, a reading section and two writing tasks. The test is available in Halifax at English Canada World Organization ((902) 429-3636).
www.ielts.org

TOWES - Test of Workplace Essential Skills. TOWES assesses essential skill competencies in the areas of reading text, document use and numeracy. TOWES is different from other tests because it uses authentic documents - such as catalogues, order forms, labels, and schematics - as source material.
<http://www.towes.com>

CELBAN - Canadian English Language Benchmarks Assessment for Nurses. This is the first national, occupation-specific, CLB-referenced assessment tool. CELBAN is endorsed by most of the licensing bodies that license nurses in Canada. There is a readiness self-assessment available online.
www.celban.org

Nova Scotia College and University English Admissions Requirements

You can check at the universities directly to see their requirements:

Saint Mary's University
www.smu.ca/prospectivestudents/international-apply-require.html

Dalhousie University
<https://discover.dal.ca/dal/intlstud/english.ezc>

Mount Saint Vincent University
www.msvu.ca/Admissions/international-LanguageRequirements.asp

Nova Scotia College of Art and Design
www.nscad.ns.ca/study/fndn_international.php

Nova Scotia Community College
www.nsccl.ca/admissions/admission_requirements.asp

University of Cape Breton
www.cbu.ca/cbu/_main/default_main.asp?topic=prospective_students&menu=International_students&id=admission_requirements

Saint Francis Xavier University
www.stfx.ca/services/international-student-office

Acadia University
www.edgeip.com/acadia4U/admiss/index.jsp

English Language Programs for Newcomers in Nova Scotia

Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)

LINC programs have free English language classes for newcomers to Canada. Before entry into a LINC program you must have a Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) language assessment. In the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), call the Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA) for a CLB language assessment ((902) 423-3607). Outside HRM, call Metro-Region Immigrant Language Services (MILS) for a CLB language assessment ((902) 464-2868). The following organizations offer LINC classes:

Halifax Regional School Board Adult ESL (902) 421-7779

LINC classes CLB 1-5. Onsite childcare may be available.

Full time classes: Quinpool Education Centre, 3rd Floor, 6067 Quinpool Road, Halifax.

Part time classes: St Agnes, 6903 Mumford Rd, Halifax.

Metro-Region Immigrant Language Services (MILS) (902) 464-2868

Literacy and LINC classes CLB 1-6. Onsite childcare may be available.

Part time classes: Forsyth Adult Learning Centre, 36 Pinecrest Drive, Dartmouth.

Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre (HILC) (902) 443-2937

Literacy, LINC classes CLB 1-5, Transition and Work Start classes. The Transition Language Program is for people who can learn better in small groups with a curriculum adapted to their special needs. Onsite childcare may be available.

Full time and part time classes: 7105 Chebucto Road, Suite 201, Halifax.

Academic English

Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) (902) 491-3588

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is a program to develop skills needed for entry into an academic program at college/university. CLB 6-8.

Institute of Technology Campus - 5685 Leeds Street, Halifax.

Evening Classes

Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre (HILC) (902) 443-2937

Ongoing program for newcomers who cannot attend daytime classes. Tuesdays and Thursdays: 6:30-8:30, CLB 4-7.

7105 Chebucto Road, Suite 201, Halifax.

English Language Programs for Newcomers in Nova Scotia

Workplace Language

HILC offers classes in workplace language. There are classroom based and onsite at work language classes, as well as distance classes. There are programs for working newcomers, and also for newcomers who are preparing for work. Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre (902) 443-2937. 7105 Chebucto Road, Suite 201, Halifax.

Computer Assisted Language Learning

Computer assisted language learning and courses on basic computer skills.

English for Work and Business

A twelve-week workplace language program for professionals from different backgrounds. Includes employment preparation, CLB 6-8.

English in the Workplace

Language training delivered onsite at the workplace and customized to the needs of the employee and the workplace. For employed and self-employed newcomers. All language levels.

Language Learning Strategies

An eight-week program for independent high-level learners to develop learning strategies to improve their language skills, CLB 7-8.

Professional Series

Evening language workshops to increase communication skills for the workplace, e.g. public speaking, writing emails, etc. CLB 5-8.

Pronunciation at Work

Sessions twice a week for 8 weeks to improve pronunciation and strengthen listening skills. Basic and advanced courses, CLB 6+.

Work Start

This program teaches employment language to clients in LINC 2 and 3 who are looking for work, CLB 2-4.

Writing Clinics

Develop writing skills. Practice writing business letters, memos and emails, CLB 5+.

English Language Programs for Newcomers in Nova Scotia

Writing for the Workplace

Learn about and practice basic writing skills, the process of writing, and business and technical writing, CLB 6-8.

Practice Idioms for the Workplace (online)

A course on workplace idioms everyone can access through <http://misa-hilc-online.ns.ca>

Pronunciation (online)

A self-access online program to learn how to reduce common pronunciation errors and develop more natural intonation and stress patterns, CLB 6+. <http://misa-hilc-online.ns.ca>

Workplace Culture (online)

A series that helps clients identify and discuss cultural challenges in Canadian workplaces and increase their understanding of cultural differences, CLB 6-8.

Write Right! Professional Writing Skills (online)

An online course focusing on the basics of writing and writing styles, CLB 6-8.

Profession Specific Language

Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre (HILC) (902) 443-2937, www.hilc.ns.ca

Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA) (902) 423-3607, www.misa.ns.ca

7105 Chebucto Road, Suite 201, Halifax

HILC and MISA offer sector/profession specific programs. There are a wide variety of programs for professional newcomers.

English for Engineers

A language skills development and orientation program to the engineering profession in Nova Scotia for internationally educated engineers, CLB 6-8.

English for Financial Purposes

An intensive course focusing on the language skills needed in a Canadian financial work environment, CLB 6-8.

English for Internationally Educated Healthcare Professionals

A sixteen-week communication course for language skills to practise effectively in a

English Language Programs for Newcomers in Nova Scotia

Canadian healthcare workplace, CLB 7-8.

Orientation to Teaching in Nova Scotia for Internationally Educated Teachers

A series of workshops designed to provide an overview of the teaching profession and the public education system in Nova Scotia. CLB 6-8.

English Programs Outside HRM

Metro Region Immigrant Language Services (MILS) (902) 464-2868, www.milsns.info
Forsyth Centre. 136 Pinecrest Drive, Dartmouth.

Teaching Immigrants English (TIE)

TIE provides English as a second language instruction to newcomers living outside the Metro Halifax area, CLB 1-5.

Valley Community Learning Association-Valley ESL (902) 679-5252, www.vcla.ca
22 Cornwallis Street, Kentville, Nova Scotia.

The Valley Community Learning Association (VCLA) offers English language classes in the Annapolis Valley region.

HILC (902) 443-2937, www.hilc.ns.ca

Distance English in the Workplace (online)

Language classes are offered via computer technology in the employee's workplace and are customized to the needs of the employee and the workplace, CLB 5+.

Videoconferencing Class

The videoconferencing class provides employment-related English language training for professionals from different employment backgrounds. Offered at NSCC campuses in Halifax, Bridgewater, Truro and Kentville via videoconference technology, CLB 6-8.

Volunteer Programs

MISA (902) 423-3607, www.misa.ns.ca

Volunteer Tutor Program

A one-on-one volunteer tutor program that helps newcomers in the Halifax region build on their English communication skills.

Halifax Public Libraries

Adult ESL (902) 490-5990, www.halifaxpubliclibraries.ca

One-on-one tutoring program for adults learning English is offered at the following libraries: Alderney Gate, Halifax North, Bedford, Keshen Goodman, Captain William Spry, and Spring Garden Road.

YMCA Centre for Immigrant Programs (902) 457-9622, www.ymcahrm.ns.ca

YMCA Conversation Groups

Volunteers lead informal conversation groups to help newcomers build language skills.

Canadian Language Benchmarks

Canadian Language Benchmarks

In Nova Scotia, government funded adult English as a Second Language schools use the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) for teaching and testing. The CLB is used in Adult ESL schools all across Canada. It gives information about 12 levels of English listening, speaking, reading and writing. CLB 1 students have little or no English. CLB 12 students are like native speakers of English. Students at CLB 9 or above usually have enough English for university, college or professional communication. Many post secondary institutions and employers also refer to CLB levels.

The Canadian Language Benchmarks describe what people can do in English in daily communication. Can you answer questions about your name, address and phone number? Can you make a doctor's appointment by yourself? Can you understand a news report on the radio? Can you find a phone number in the phone book? Can you fill out an application form or write a memo in English? Can you write a report for your boss? These are things people can do at different levels of the Canadian Language Benchmarks.

The CLB assessment tools are described in the standardized tests section of this document.

CLB Checklists

Included in this resource are summary checklists of CLB tasks at each level. This is the same content that is on the CLB posters that you will see in many Nova Scotian adult ESL classrooms. These summaries help ESL learners check language learning progress, describe learning goals and understand the Nova Scotian adult ESL system. For more information about the levels, refer to www.language.ca for the 'CLB 2000: English as a Second Language for Adults' document.

Canadian Language Benchmarks Level I

Speaking 1

I can greet people:

Hello!

How are you?

I'm fine, thank you.

I can ask some questions:

What time is it?

Pardon me?

I can give some information:

M-A-R-I-A.

555-6729.

I'm from India.

Listening 1

I can understand greetings:

Hello! How are you?

Please come in!

I can understand questions:

What is your name?

How do you spell it?

What is your telephone number?

I can understand information:

I am from Colombia.

It's ten o'clock.

Level I

Reading 1

I can read the alphabet.

I can read some words that I see often.

I am learning the sounds of letters.

I can read a short sentence with the help of a picture.

I can read:

Name

Address

Phone number

Writing 1

I can write the alphabet.

I can write numbers.

I can write my name and address.

I can write my telephone number.

I can fill out a simple form.

I can write a short list.

Canadian Language Benchmarks Level 2

Speaking 2

I can answer greetings:

Hello, I'm fine. How are you?

Nice to meet you.

I can ask for help:

Speak slowly, please.

Can you help me please?

I can give information:

I can talk about my family.

I can describe things.

I can answer questions about myself.

Listening 2

I can understand more instructions:

Can you show me some ID?

Please write your name on the line.

Go upstairs to Room B5.

Could you repeat that please?

I can understand parts of conversations:

I understand numbers and letters.

I understand the time.

I understand some of the words.

Level 2

Reading 2

I can read words that I see often.

I can read a simple greeting card.

I can read a simple form.

I can read the amount of a bill.

I can match a list to pictures or real things.

I can read very simple, step-by-step instructions.

I can read a simple text and answer questions.

I understand simple maps, labels and diagrams.

Writing 2

I can write in a birthday card.

I can copy prices at the store.

I can fill out a simple application form.

I can write a cheque.

I can copy information from a schedule.

I can write complete sentences about myself and my family.

I can describe a picture.

My spelling and handwriting are easy to read.

Canadian Language Benchmarks Level 3

Speaking 3

I can say a few simple sentences about familiar, everyday topics: my work, family, daily activities, health, the weather, etc.

I can answer simple questions with single words or short sentences.

I can ask for help or permission.

I can ask short, routine questions.

I use words like 'yesterday' and 'today', but I don't always use the correct verb tenses.

I know a few words about health and feelings.

I can give basic information about familiar subjects, such as family, weather or daily activities.

I can connect parts of sentences, for example, with 'and' and 'but'.

Listening 3

I know when a greeting is formal or informal.

I can understand short sentences when you speak slowly.

I can understand questions about myself.

I can understand instructions including place and measurements.

I can follow directions in the street.

I can get the most important words in a story.

I understand when a person asks me for something.

I have trouble understanding people on the phone.

Level 3

Reading 3

I can read and understand a short story or simple news item.

I can follow simple instructions with 1 - 5 steps when there are pictures to help me understand.

I can read about the weather.

I can understand a store flyer and make a list of key points.

I can read words I know in a new context.

I can sound out words in English.

I can read some new words.

Writing 3

I can write a short note or message.

I can write short, simple sentences about my family or a familiar place.

I can fill in a short, simple form.

I can write an invitation.

I can write a greeting.

I can copy information from lists or schedules.

I can describe my daily routine.

Canadian Language Benchmarks Level 4

Speaking 4

I can introduce two people to each other.

I can participate in conversations that are about what I need and what I have done.

I can ask and answer many simple questions.

I can use short sentences to buy something or talk to the doctor.

I can give someone simple directions.

I can use the past tense with many common verbs.

I have enough vocabulary for everyday conversation.

I use some connecting words between my sentences, like 'and', 'but', 'first', 'next', and 'because'.

I can use the phone for a very short conversation.

People usually understand me, but sometimes I have to repeat.

Listening 4

I can understand a conversation on a familiar, everyday topic when you speak slowly.

I know what you are talking about because I understand some words and phrases.

I can understand many simple questions.

I can follow simple oral instructions.

I can use connecting words like 'and', 'but', 'first', 'next' and 'because.'

I can follow instructions to find something on a map or picture.

I can understand a short phone message if I know what the topic is.

I ask people to repeat when I don't understand.

Level 4

Reading 4

I can read a simple story of 2 - 3 paragraphs.

I can read simple news items.

I can follow simple instructions.

Sometimes, by looking at a whole sentence, I can find out what a new word means. Most of the time, I use my dictionary for new words.

I can get information from charts and schedules.

I use a bilingual dictionary.

I can understand if I read silently.

I still read slowly.

Writing 4

I can write a paragraph about a personal experience.

I can write a paragraph about my future plans.

I can write a short note, message or letter.

I can fill out a simple application form of up to 20 items.

When I write, I can use whole sentences.

I can copy information from dictionaries, catalogues or manuals.

I can take slow, simple dictation with several repetitions.

I can spell and punctuate my sentences.

It is easy to read my printing or handwriting.

I can write whole sentences with few errors.

Canadian Language Benchmarks Level 5

Speaking 5

I can join in conversations on familiar topics.

I am beginning to use longer sentences, but sometimes I hesitate or pause.

I know a lot of common, everyday vocabulary and some idioms.

I use connecting words between my sentences, like 'and', 'but', 'first', 'next', and 'because'.

I can use the phone for a simple conversation, but I still find it difficult.

I feel comfortable using English with people I know in social settings.

I can use formal and casual language.

I ask for clarification when I don't understand.

Listening 5

I can understand conversations if people speak slowly.

I can follow simple, repetitive and predictable speech.

I can catch many words and phrases in informal conversations at a normal speed in audio recordings and on the radio. I can follow the general idea if the subject is personally relevant.

I can understand a range of common vocabulary and a few idioms.

I often have to ask people to repeat, especially when they speak quickly.

I can identify the situation, emotional state and relationship of speakers.

I can understand a simple, predictable phone message.

I catch some inferred meaning in advice, offers, compliments and suggestions.

Level 5

Reading 5

I can understand the main ideas, some details and some inferred meaning of a text 2 - 3 paragraphs long. The topics are familiar and personally relevant.

I can read information that I receive regularly, such as a gas bill, or some items in a newspaper.

Usually, I have to read something more than once to understand it.

Sometimes, by looking at a whole sentence, I can understand what a new word means. However, most of the time, I use my dictionary for new words.

I can follow instructions with 7 - 10 steps. Sometimes I need the help of pictures.

I understand facts and some inferred meaning in everyday texts, such as memos and e-mails.

I can locate specific details in extensive directories, charts and schedules.

I can use tables of contents, indexes and glossaries.

I can see the connection between paragraphs. I can predict what will come next.

My vocabulary is mostly concrete, but I know some abstract, conceptual and technical words.

Writing 5

I can write a paragraph about an idea or an opinion and give details.

I can write a short letter, note, or e-mail using appropriate language.

I can fill out an application form with 20 - 30 items.

I can take a phone message with 5 - 7 details.

I can write a paragraph with a main idea and supporting details.

I can write sentences with good control of simple structures, spelling, punctuation and vocabulary.

I can write a paragraph describing an event or an incident.

I choose language and content that are appropriate and relevant to the occasion.

Canadian Language Benchmarks Level 6

Speaking 6

I can participate in small group discussions where I express my opinion and ask for clarification.

I can provide accurate and detailed information.

I can interrupt politely when it's necessary.

I can keep a conversation going and can hold my own when speaking to a group.

I use a range of vocabulary, including idioms, phrasal verbs, and common expressions.

I can explain a process or sequence of events.

I can use a variety of complex sentences.

I sound fluent when I speak, and I speak at almost normal speed.

Although I make mistakes, people don't usually have trouble understanding my grammar and pronunciation.

I know how to express and respond to regrets and excuses in a variety of situations. I can make, cancel, or rearrange an appointment. I can give my reasons or apologies.

I use eye contact, tone of voice and volume familiar to Canadians.

I am comfortable talking on the phone in familiar situations, but I sometimes find it hard to talk to strangers.

I can change my style of speaking for different situations and people.

Listening 6

I can follow a conversation about a familiar topic at a pace slightly slower than normal.

I can listen to a short instructional talk and remember 7 - 10 points.

I can pick out the main ideas, key details and inferred meaning from listening texts of up to 10 minutes.

I can understand some idioms.

I can understand the mood and attitude of the people I am listening to.

I can understand short sets of instructions or directions and follow the sequence of the steps even if they are not in step-by-step form.

I still often ask people to repeat what they have said.

I can understand a short, predictable phone message.

Level 6

Reading 6

I can read a text written in plain English that is 3 - 5 paragraphs long and a little difficult. I can understand the main idea, key details and some inferred meanings.

I can scan an extended chart or schedule for specific information. I can compare information from different texts.

I am beginning to understand the writer's purpose, intent and attitude.

I can read handwritten notes, memos, letters and schedules.

I can learn new information from a text on a familiar topic. The text is well-organized and sometimes has pictures.

The dictionary I use is for ESL learners, but it is only in English, not my first language.

I read mostly about facts and things I can see, but I sometimes read about abstract or technical issues.

When I see a new word, I can sometimes guess its meaning from the context.

I am able to predict what will happen next in the story and retell or summarize the story.

Writing 6

I can write a detailed description or comparison of people, places, objects and routines. I can describe a simple process.

I can write a short letter, note or e-mail using appropriate language and layout.

I can fill out a longer application form with 20 - 30 items.

I can take a phone message with 5 - 7 details. When I write, I have a clear message.

I include details to support the message.

I think about who I am writing to.

I can take notes from a short presentation without missing important details.

I can write simple sentences with only a few errors in spelling, punctuation and vocabulary.

I can write a structured paragraph in which I give an accurate description, comparison or sequence of events.

Canadian Language Benchmarks Level 7

Speaking 7

I can participate in a small group discussion and express my opinions, feelings and reservations about a topic.

I can express and respond to gratitude, appreciation, complaint, disappointment, dissatisfaction, satisfaction and hope.

I can give clear instructions and directions related to moderately complex, familiar, technical and non-technical tasks.

I am comfortable speaking about almost any topic that comes up in normal conversation.

I am comfortable speaking formally or informally, on topics involving problem-solving or decision-making. I can make a detailed comparison.

I can research, develop and deliver a 10-minute presentation.

I can use a variety of sentence structures and idioms.

I sound fluent when I speak. When I know that people do not understand me, I can correct myself or rephrase what I said.

I am comfortable talking on the phone about familiar and routine matters. I can take a message for someone else and pass it on with specific details.

I use a number of strategies to keep the conversation going. I can change the topic.

Listening 7

I can understand the main points and important details of a conversation as well as inferred meanings.

I can identify the situation, relationship, mood and attitude of the people I listen to.

I can understand a formal or informal conversation on familiar topics at a descriptive level, especially if I am involved in the conversation.

My vocabulary is expanding, and I know more idioms.

I can predict consequences and outcomes.

I can understand more complex, indirect questions about personal experience, familiar topics and general knowledge.

I can understand routine, work-related conversation.

I can understand a phone message if I am familiar with the topic.

I sometimes require slower speech, repetition and rewording, especially on unfamiliar topics.

I might still have trouble understanding native speakers when they speak quickly to one another.

Level 7

Reading 7

I can read authentic text that is 1 - 2 pages long and moderately complex.

I can locate and integrate, or compare and contrast information from a variety of visually complex sources.

I read for information, to learn English and develop reading skills.

I am also beginning to read for pleasure.

I can follow everyday instructional texts containing 10 - 15 steps.

I use an English dictionary for ESL learners. Mostly, I use it for confirmation and to be precise. The language I read is both concrete and abstract, dealing with facts, opinions and feelings.

When I see a new word, I can sometimes infer its meaning by the context or by the use of prefixes and suffixes in the word.

I can paraphrase and summarize the main points of a story.

Writing 7

I can respond in writing to appreciation, complaint, disappointment, satisfaction and hope.

I can write personal and routine business letters.

I summarize longer texts without losing essential information.

I write coherent paragraphs on familiar, concrete topics with clear main ideas and some supporting details.

I have a developing sense of audience.

I can write 2 - 3 paragraphs to narrate a sequence of events or give a detailed description.

I have fairly good control over complex structures, spelling and sentence mechanics although my sentences may sound 'foreign' to English readers.

I can write down 7 - 10 points from a clear, pre-recorded phone message.

I can complete moderately complex forms (40 items).

I can write a report comparing two products or describing a process.

Canadian Language Benchmarks Level 8

Speaking 8

I am comfortable speaking about almost any topic that comes up in normal conversation in social situations or at work.

I can manage a conversation, check comprehension, encourage others and handle minor conflicts.

I am able to address large groups or participate in group discussions.

I can speak on familiar topics at both concrete and abstract levels (15 - 20 minutes).

I can present information, give instructions, propose and recommend.

I can provide descriptions, opinions and explanations.

I can synthesize abstract complex ideas and hypothesize.

I can ask questions, analyze and compare information in order to make decisions.

I have an expanded inventory of concrete, idiomatic and conceptual language.

People rarely have trouble understanding me.

I am comfortable talking on the phone.

Listening 8

When someone is speaking, I can understand the main points, details, purpose, and attitude.

I can recognize different levels of formality.

I can understand some technical conversations, especially about my line of work.

I can understand abstract and complex ideas on a familiar topic.

I recognize other people's moods, attitudes and feelings.

I can understand many local idioms and expressions and can follow detailed stories of general interest.

I can follow detailed and extended instructions if they are clear and coherent.

I can usually understand phone messages, even on unfamiliar, non-routine subjects.

I might still have trouble understanding native speakers when they speak quickly to one another.

Level 8

Reading 8

I can follow main ideas, key words and important details in a text of 2 – 3 pages on a familiar topic.

I can read popular newspapers, magazine articles, popular easy fiction, as well as academic and business materials.

I can find relevant points in a text, but sometimes I need clarification of idioms or cultural references.

I can locate and integrate several specific pieces of information in a table or a directory, or across paragraphs.

I am able to follow an extended set of multi-step instructions for an established process.

I read in English to get information, to improve my English and develop my reading skills.

I use a unilingual dictionary for vocabulary building.

I can read about abstract, conceptual or technical topics.

I can infer the writer's intention in messages containing general opinions and assessments.

Writing 8

I can write routine business letters and personal and formal social messages.

I can link sentences and 3 – 4 paragraphs to form coherent texts to express ideas on familiar, abstract topics with some support for main ideas and an appropriate sense of audience.

I can write down a set of simple instructions based on clear oral communication or simple procedural text of greater length.

I can fill out complex forms.

I can extract key information and relevant detail from a page-long text or 10 - 15 minute oral presentation, and write an outline or a one-paragraph summary. I reduce information to the main points with no major omissions.

I demonstrate good control over common sentence patterns, grammar, and spelling. I have occasional difficulty with complex structures and style.

I can write an effective resume and cover letter.

I can write an incident report or memo.

Your Comments

This is the second version of Practise English on Your Own: Self Study Ideas for English Language Learners and we intend to revise it for future editions. Please send, email or fax your feedback to:

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