Practise English on Your Own

Self-study Ideas for English Language Learners



Manitoba my new home

Manitoba

Practise English on Your Own:

Self-study Ideas for English Language Learners

Now that you are living in Manitoba, you have many reasons to improve your English. Communicating in English will help you to be successful at work and in your community.

English classes are available for free in Manitoba for permanent residents. You can choose from full-time or part-time classes during the day or evening. However, not everyone can go to English classes. If you are working at a job every day and also taking care of a family, it can be very difficult to take time to go to classes. If you are able to take the time to go to English classes you may also want to learn faster and study at home. For these reasons it is useful to know some strategies for practicing English on your own.

There are many ways to learn English outside of the classroom. The ideas you will read about here are from adult EAL teachers and learners. You will find out about some of the many internet websites where you can learn for free as quickly or as slowly as you like. You will also find out more about the Canadian Language Benchmarks and think about what your level of English is right now, and what level you want it to be in the future. Information is also provided about some internationally recognized English language standardized tests.

Good luck as you practise your English communication skills!

Ideas for Practising English

Here are some ideas for practising English. Some of the ideas come from newcomers to Canada who have learned to speak English. Others come from English language teachers.

1. **Make everyone your teacher.**
   When other people are speaking in English, think about how they say something. Repeat what they said silently in your mind. Then repeat what they said quietly to yourself. First say it slowly and clearly, then say it to yourself at the same speed and rhythm as the person you were listening to.
   You can do this anytime, anywhere…when you're with people, while watching a movie, at work, at school…the world is your classroom!
   Don't worry if people think you're crazy, just put on headphones or earbuds while you're talking to yourself and everyone will think you're talking on your cell phone.



2. **Talk to people**. You could talk about:

   …the weather

   In Manitoba, it's OK to talk about the weather every day, and many people do this in almost any situation to open a conversation. We create friendships by suffering together!

   Snow again, I miss summer! Crazy mosquitoes, we need winter!

   …the neighbourhood

   Hi, I'm your neighbor, I just moved in last week …(names, etc…)
   Have you lived in this area for a long time?...(years, etc.)
   Seems like a friendly area, I like it…

   …work

   Do you work close by? What kind of work do you do?

   …your children, your children's' school

   How old are your kids? What school do they go to? Are you happy with the teachers over there?



3. **Ask a workmate to join you for coffee break**.

   Let's get out for coffee sometime, maybe Friday?

   People like it when you are interested in them. Ask them about:

   - their job *How long have you worked here? What do you do?*
   - their family *Do you have family here?*
   - things they like to do *So what's up for the weekend?*

   You could talk about:

   - life in your country,
   - your family,
   - your life and goals in Canada,

- your job,
- your free-time interests.

4. **Make a study group**. Meet with other English learners once a week to study together. Do exercises from your English class together or try some of the on-line learning websites recommended in this document.

5. **Make an English club**. Meet once a week or once a month with other English language learners. You could have a supper club or a movie club. You could go to a park, a museum, or just sit and listen to music together. You could show pictures and talk about your country. Make sure you speak English most of the time, or if you can, all of the time! Challenge yourself at the first meeting to speak only English for 30 minutes, then 60 minutes the next time, then 2 hours the next time.

6. **Volunteer**. Go to a community centre or your children's school. Ask if you can volunteer. You can be helpful and practise English at the same time.

7. **Watch television and movies, listen to the radio and listen to English music**. Relax and try to understand the general meaning even if you don't know every word.



8. **Record yourself** speaking English. Listen to your voice. Do you sound different than a first language speaker? Pretend that you are an actor in a movie and you are speaking English with an Italian accent…now try a Russian accent…a British English accent…now try a Canadian English accent! Whenever you think people don't understand you, try out that Canadian English accent, it just might work.

9. **Use Google**. Go on the internet to search for information about stores that you want to go to. Find out location, store hours, search for products and prices. Find the telephone number and call it…ask what time the store is open until, or ask if they sell something and what the price is.

10. **Use the Library** and borrow books for free. Ask about EAL books and kits and bilingual books. Ask for a tour of the library. There is more information about libraries here: http://wpl.winnipeg.ca/library/libraryservices/newcomers.asp

11. **Understand the main idea of what you read**. After you read for a few minutes, tell yourself the important ideas. Don't worry if you don't understand everything.



12. **Read children's books** with your children and talk about the pictures in English. After they have gone to bed read more children's books in English…nobody has to see how much you are enjoying reading them! There are many high quality award winning children's books you can borrow from the library for free. While you're at the library make sure to take out some children's books to read to your children in your first language too, there are many languages available.

13. **Use maps**. Learn the names of the streets you use. Use Google maps to practice following directions. Use Winnipeg Transit Navigo to choose a bus route.

14. **Write a note to friend or teacher.** Tell him or her what you did today, or what you are going to do tomorrow.

15. **Keep a journal**. Write about your day. Write directions to get from home to downtown.
    - Write about one of the pictures you have saved on your cell phone.
    - Write a recipe for how to make your favourite food.
    - Write about your memories of your country.
    - Listen to a song on YouTube and write about how it makes you feel.
    - Look at old and famous art, or new and controversial art and write about your thoughts.
    - Write to your mother, even if she is not alive anymore. Tell her about your life.

16. **Write new words or expressions.** Review them, use them!



17. **Send an email.** Ask someone that you trust who speaks English as his or her first language if you can practice your English by sending them emails. Tell them they don't even have to answer if they don't have time, you're just practicing.

18. **Write a shopping list** in English. Talk to the cashier at the grocery store. Try easy English recipes.

19. **Use these phrases:**
    "*Please repeat that. What does* _____ *mean?*
    How do you spell _____*? Sorry, I don't understand."*

20. **Practise other phrases** you will use in your life.

21. **Speak English with your family** a little bit each day.

22. **Think of other ways** you like to practise English.

For Higher Level Learners

1. If you want to practise your public speaking, try joining a Toastmasters club. This club focuses on members becoming confident public speakers. Manitoba Start offers weekly Toastmasters sessions where the other participants are also newcomers to Canada. For more information about the Manitoba Start Toastmasters group, see:
   http://manitobastart.com/development-programs/public-speaking.html
   There are Toastmasters clubs in 90 countries around the world.
   For more information about Toastmasters, see:
   http://www.toastmasters.org/

2. Volunteer with a school, club or organization. This is a great way to meet new people, practise English, and gain valuable work skills. Volunteer Manitoba can connect you with many different opportunities. http://www.volunteermanitoba.ca/

3. Call or visit a community centre, school, hospital, or senior centre in your area and ask about volunteer opportunities.

4. Look through the City of Winnipeg's Leisure Guide. There are many classes about things like cooking, first aid, home renovation, or dance. You can pick up a copy of the Leisure Guide at Winnipeg public libraries or look at the guide online:
   http://www.winnipeg.ca/cms/recreation/leisure/leisureguide.stm

5. If you live outside of Winnipeg, ask your local community centre about classes.

6. Take a Continuing Education Course at:
   - Red River College, http://www.rrc.ca/index.php?pid=384,
   - the University of Winnipeg, http://pace.uwinnipegcourses.ca/,
   - the University of Manitoba, http://umanitoba.ca/extended/,

   or another college in your area. You can sometimes take these courses during the evening or on weekend.

7. Audit a regular university course. When you audit a course, you can attend all the classes but you don't have to write exams and you don't get a grade for the course. Auditing a course costs about half the price of taking the course. Ask to speak to a student adviser to get advice about courses and registration.

8. Listen to the radio and watch English television and movies. Sometimes the speed will be too fast for you and the speakers will use expressions that you don't understand, but you need to get used to it. Try to let your mind follow the meaning and the message and don't worry about understanding every single word.

9. Play English games, and speak English with friends while playing. Find free games on the internet or look for board games in a department store or a thrift store. Buy a deck of cards and look up the rules for playing different games.

Study Tips

Make a plan…

Think about your week. You might be very busy with work, classes, meals, taking care of your children, or special events. It can sometimes be hard to find time to study English. Making a schedule can help. Schedule some study time each day. If you like to study with a partner or a group, set a regular meeting time. Find a time and a place where you will not be interrupted often.

Set goals…

Use the Canadian Language Benchmarks to set goals for yourself. Look at descriptions of a person one benchmark higher than yourself and make that your goal.

Keep a record of your goals and your progress. Reward yourself when you achieve a goal! One cookie ☺

Decide what you want to learn and when you want to learn it. For example, you could say to yourself:

"Before the parent-teacher interview in February, I want to know 20 words and phrases for talking to my son's teacher."

"Two months from now, I will use the past tense correctly when I talk about something that happened."

"When summer comes, I will talk with my neighbors."

"In 3 months, I want to be able to read and understand most of the articles in an English newspaper."

How do you learn best?

Some people learn best by listening. Try listening to recorded books or information and people talking.

Some people learn best by seeing. Try watching videos, looking at posters, flashcards, or textbooks with pictures.

Some people learn best by doing. Try drawing pictures and diagrams and making things with your hands, then describing what you have done.

There are many good ways to learn. Choose activities that work for you.

Tips for understanding and remembering what you read…

Before you read, look at the title, pictures, and headings. Can you guess the topic and main ideas? This prepares your mind to learn.

Underline or highlight important ideas.

Draw pictures and diagrams about important ideas.

Write notes about the text. Read a paragraph. Cover the paragraph and tell yourself what it was about.

Read groups of two or three words together. Groups of two or three words have more meaning than single words.

If you don't know a word, say the word out loud. Maybe you will know the meaning if you hear it.

If you don't know a word, read the sentence it comes from and try to guess the meaning.

Remember that you don't always need to understand every word.

Tips for learning new vocabulary…

Write down important new words you hear and read. Keep a vocabulary journal.

Use flashcards to practise; write a new word or expression on one side of a piece of paper or an index card. Write the definition, or draw a picture on the other side. Review your words regularly. You can even practise on the bus or during a coffee break.

Use your new words in conversation and in writing.

Public Libraries

If you live in Winnipeg, you can borrow books for free from any branch of the Winnipeg Public Library. If you live outside of Winnipeg and want to borrow resources from the Winnipeg Public Library, you can get a Non- Resident Card for an annual fee. Some rural municipalities will give some or all of this fee back to you.

The library has a variety of materials you can borrow including books, audio books, magazines, CDs, videos, and DVDs. Some branches have books in different languages.

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 books about learning English. Can you help me?"
>
> "Where are the books for learning English?"
>
> "Can you help me find the English study books?"

If the book you need is not available at your local library, you can 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 in Winnipeg

Millennium Library
251 Donald Street

Charleswood
5014 Roblin Boulevard

River Heights
1520 Corydon Avenue

St. Boniface
100 – 131 Provencher Boulevard

St. James – Assiniboia
1910 Portage Avenue

West Kildonan
365 Jefferson Avenue

Westwood
66 Allard Avenue

Windsor Park
955 Cottonwood Road

Munroe
489 London Street

Cornish
20 West Gate

St. John's
500 Salter Street

St. Vital
6 Fermor Avenue

Osborne
625 Osborne Street

Pembina Trails
2724 Pembina Highway

West End
823 Ellice Avenue West

Henderson
1-1050 Henderson Highway

Louis Riel
1168 Dakota Street

Sir William Stephenson
765 Keewatin Street

Transcona
111 Victoria Avenue West

Fort Garry
1360 Pembina Highway

Libraries in Manitoba

For libraries outside of Winnipeg, see the Manitoba Library Directory
https://mb.countingopinions.com/memberlist_details.php

Resources to Buy or Borrow

Most large bookstores carry English grammar books and other resources. University bookstores usually carry language study books. You can also ask a bookstore to order in a book that they do not usually carry. You can also look at some publishers' websites and buy books, CDs and software online. Teachers, language assessors, and librarians can help you pick a good book for your studies.

Basic vocabulary

The Oxford Picture Dictionary: Canadian Edition.
available at the library
Toronto, ON: Oxford University
Press Canada
This is a picture-based dictionary. (The dictionary alone is about $25.00) CDs, audio tapes and student workbooks are also available.

English for Everyday Activities: A Picture Process Dictionary
available at the library
Zwier, L., Syracuse, NY: New
Readers Press
This book describes the things you do every day step-by-step, with many pictures and simple sentences. (The book alone is about 19.00) A CD and student workbook are also available.

Conversational English and Living in Canada

Each of these books integrates the study of grammar and vocabulary with the many other important aspects of speaking, listening, reading and writing. All have CDs or videos available to go along with the book.

Canadian Concepts
available at the library
Berish, L. & Thibaudeau, S., Scarborough, ON: Prentice-Hall Canada, Inc.
This series focuses on English for use in Canadian communities. There are 6 books that range in level from a benchmark 2 (the 1st book in the series) to about a benchmark 7 or 8 (the 6th book in the series).

Person to Person: Communicative Speaking and Listening, 3rd edition Richards J., Bycina D., Wisniewska I., New York, NY: Oxford University Press

This series is very good if you want a lot of listening and conversational practice. For self-study, it is important to buy the "class CD", which has the conversations and listening exercises that go with the book. In this series there is a "starter level", "level 1" and "level 2". They range from a benchmark 2 to about a benchmark 5 or 6.

Canadian Snapshots

available at the library

These excellent books will help you work on your speaking, listening, reading and writing skills while learning about Canadian culture. They are based on the Canadian Language Benchmarks. There are only 2 levels right now. The first book is a Benchmark 3 level: Canadian Snapshots: Linking to the Community by Angst, Bertram, Davis, Johansson and Bonkowski. The second book is a Benchmark 6 level: Canadian Snapshots: Raising Issues by Kingwell, Stephenson, Bonkowski and Holmes.

For Pronunciation

Pronunciation for Success Meyers, C.& Holt S. Burnsville, MN: Aspen Productions

The kit includes a book, videos, and CDs. It is very good for students working without a teacher. It is suitable for benchmarks 5 and higher. (The complete kit is about $120.00)

To Learn or Review Grammar

Grammar Dimensions Platinum Edition: Form, Meaning and Use Riggenback, H. & Samuda, V (2000). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle

This series has 4 books. They range from a benchmark 2 to 8+. The explanations on grammar are very clear and the books give you many chances to apply the grammar in a communicative, realistic way. (Each book is about $38.00)

Standardized Tests of English as a Second Language

Canadian Language Benchmarks Placement Test (CLBPT)
www.language.ca

This is an assessment tool for CLB levels 1-8. Results should not be used as the only assessment tool for hiring or post-secondary admissions. Results from the CLBPT can help organizations make good decisions about readiness of the learner and be included as one of several indicators for potential success on the job, in an academic setting, or in vocational training.

In the CLBPT, the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) are assessed through a number of task-based activities. This is the tool used for placement in Adult EAL classes in Manitoba. Test takers are reminded that the assessment is not a grammar or vocabulary test. It is a test to find out what a person can do in English. There is no need to prepare or be nervous about taking the test. In Manitoba, after the assessment, an assessor will discuss the results with the test taker and together they will decide which program or class is the most appropriate for the student. CLBPT test results are used by classroom teachers as a starting point for the lessons. All government funded Adult EAL programs use the CLB as guide for teaching. Classroom teachers will assess student's proficiency periodically throughout the term. At the end of the course or at the end of the school year, the student receives a report. It gives CLB exit scores. If a student leaves the course before the end, he/she can ask the teacher for exit scores.

Do CLB levels predict success?
Although CLB levels can assist in making informed decisions about readiness and potential for success on the job and in post secondary programs, it is important to be aware that CLB levels are only one indicator of success. The CLB was meant to open doors; to allow immigrants access to educational and employment opportunities that may have been denied to them due to an unclear expectation of the level of English language proficiency required. Other factors can compensate for lack of language skills such as supports while in training or on the job, skill level (background knowledge in the subject matter, trade or profession), motivation, and the opportunity to use the first language.

Academic English Program for University and College Entrance
Academic English Program for University and College Entrance (AEPUCE) is not a test but a high level English for academic purposes course offered at the University of Winnipeg, the University of Manitoba and Red River College. It is a

bridge course to university and college admissions. The course enables potential college and university students to improve their academic communication skills. After successful completion, students will have met the English requirements for the University of Manitoba, the University of Winnipeg and Red River College.

English Proficiency Tests

The following summary provides some basic information about some of the most commonly used English proficiency tests. It is not a comprehensive list and it is intended as an introduction to language proficiency tests and not as an endorsement of the tests or their use. Please refer to the websites for the most current information about costs, test sites, descriptions and scoring of the standardized language tests.

The University of Winnipeg admission requirements are found at:
http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/future-student/international/lang-req.html

The University of Manitoba entrance requirements are on this website:
https://www.umanitoba.ca/student/admissions/international/english-language-proficiency.html

CanTEST - Canadian Test of English for Scholars and Trainees

www.cantest.uottawa.ca

There are several versions of this test. The Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks endorses the CLB aligned versions of the CanTEST. These versions establish a relationship between achievement on CanTEST and CLB levels 7-11. The test is suitable for academic and professional purposes such as university admission, profession accreditation and vocational training. It includes all four skill areas and takes just less than three hours to complete. It is available at Red River College (institutional version), the University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg.

CELBAN - Canadian English Language Benchmarks Assessment for Nurses

www.celban.org

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.

TOEFL - Test of English as a Foreign Language

www.ets.org/toefl/

TOEFL measures the ability of non-native speakers of English to use and understand North American English as it is used in college and university

settings. This test is required by many universities in Canada. TOEFL has recently changed the test to be more communicative, i.e. to measure someone's effectiveness in using the language. It is now the TOEFL Internet Based Test (TOEFL iBT). There are numerous preparation courses and resources available.

TOEIC - Test of English for International Communication
www.ets.org/toeic
TOEIC measures the everyday English skills of people working in an international environment. There are two sections to the test, listening and reading. There are TOEIC preparation books available.

IELTS – International English Language Testing System
www.ielts.org/
This is an Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) approved test used by universities to assess the proficiency of applicants whose first language is not English. There is a speaking/listening section, a reading section and 2 writing tasks. Study materials are available.

CAEL - Canadian Academic English Language
www.cael.ca
CAEL assessment approximates the experience of joining a first year introductory university course. There is an oral assessment, a taped lecture to listen to, some reading tasks and essay writing task on the topic of the test itself. There are practise materials online.

MELAB - Michigan English Language Assessment Battery
www.lsa.umich.edu/eli/melab.htm
The MELAB consists of three parts: a composition, a listening test, and a written test containing grammar, cloze, vocabulary, and reading comprehension problems. An optional speaking test is also available.

TOWES - Test of Workplace Essential Skills
www.towes.com
TOWES assesses essential skill competencies in the areas of reading text, document use and numeracy. Test results are correlated to the 5-point scale used in the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) and by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) to determine the complexity or difficulty of tasks associated with specific occupations. TOWES is different from other tests because it uses authentic documents - such as catalogues, order forms, labels, and schematics - as source material. Questions range in difficulty and mimic actual workplace tasks by having the test taker assume the role of a worker who needs to use information embedded in documents. To support the development of essential skills, the creators of TOWES have developed curriculum and training plans designed to address skill gaps.

CPE - Certificate of Proficiency in English
www.cambridgeesol.org/index.htm
Cambridge ESOL exams include a range of assessment tools. The exams are linked to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, published by the Council of Europe. There are several general English tests as well as the CAE (Certificate in Advanced English), an advanced exam, and the CPE (Certificate of Proficiency in English) which is a very advanced level exam. Cambridge also has a skills-based assessment called CELS (Certificates in English Language Skills), which provides modular assessments of the four English language skills (listening, reading, writing, speaking). There are some Business English certificates and the YLE (Cambridge Young Learners English Tests) which is assessment of English of children between the ages of 7 and 12.

CELPIP - Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program
https://www.celpiptest.ca/
The CELPIP-General Test is designated by Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) as proof of English language proficiency for those applying for permanent resident status in Canada under the following immigration streams:

- Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP),
- Federal Skilled Trades Program (FSTP),
- Canadian Experience Class (CEC),
- Start-up Visa Program, and
- Various Provincial Nominee Programs.

For specific language requirements, please visit the IRCC website at www.cic.gc.ca.

The **CELPIP-Academic Test** assesses a higher level of English language proficiency. This test is made up of the following sections:

- Listening
- Speaking
- Academic Reading and Writing

All components of the CELPIP-Academic Test are computer-delivered. The test is completed in just one test sitting, offering a unique test-taking experience that requires no additional appointments with a human examiner. The CELPIP-Academic Test uses the English variety spoken in Canada.

Websites for Learning English

There are many excellent language learning websites on the internet. When you learn on-line, you can progress as fast as you want to, and learn at any time of the day. You can study for 10 minutes one day and 4 hours the next day. You can listen, speak, read, and write. You don't have a teacher to guide you, but you can make everyone you meet your teacher if you ask people questions. Now you can make the world wide web your library!

The following list of websites are recommended. There are many more that you will find once you start looking, these have been chosen because they are well-organized and have good opportunities for you to practice independently. Try as many of them as you can and return to the ones you like as often as you can. Enjoy!

General English language study

https://www.englishclub.com/learn-english.htm
Language learning activities for all levels

http://www2.issbc.org/janis-esl/links.html
Language learning activities for all levels

https://quizlet.com/help/what-is-quizlet
Create learning quizzes and memory cards

https://www.youtube.com/user/italkilanguage
Find free on-line language teachers using the "italki" site

http://www.manythings.org
Interesting things for EAL learners to try

http://www.1-language.com/
A one-stop resource for language learning

http://a4esl.org/
Language learning activities for all levels

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/
News stories developed into language learning (U.K.)

http://www.eslgold.com/
Language learning activities for all levels

http://www.english-zone.com/
Language learning activities for all levels

http://www.davidappleyard.com/english/bookshelf.htm
Language learning activities for advanced level

http://www.learn-english-today.com/wordgames.html
Language games and activities

Canadian

English On-Line: Live and Learn and LINC Home Study
http://youliveandlearn.ca/learn/self-study/
http://youliveandlearn.ca/linc-home-study-registration/
To use English On-Line and LINC Home Study you must first register. See website for eligibility and other details.

http://wpl.winnipeg.ca/library/libraryservices/newcomers.asp
Large selection of EAL learning resources, library card needed

http://www.cbc.ca/manitoba/eal
News stories developed into language learning lessons

http://www.noslangues-ourlanguages.gc.ca/quiz/index-eng.html
Language learning quizzes

http://web2.uvcs.uvic.ca/elc/studyzone/
Language learning activities for all levels

http://www.learntheworkplace.ca/en/
Workplace language

https://www.nfb.ca/
Watch short Canadian videos to practice listening skills

Listening

https://www.englishlistening.com/
Audio and video activities with transcripts and lessons at all levels

http://www.elllo.org/
Audio and video activities with transcripts and lessons at all levels

http://www.esl-lab.com/
ESL listening lab

http://www.englishcentral.com/videos#!/index/all/all/trending/0
9,000 short video clips with lessons

http://www.cbc.ca/player/Radio/
Current CBC Radio clips

http://www.real-english.com/new-lessons.asp
Audio activities with lessons

http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/
News stories developed into language learning (U.K.)

http://www.cbc.ca/player/Radio/
Radio listening

http://www.learnenglishfeelgood.com/eslvideo/videos3.html
Movie trailers and activities

Speaking / Pronunciation

https://www.englishclub.com/pronunciation/index.htm
Audio lessons and pronunciation activities

http://www.rachelsenglish.com
Videos and pronunciation activities

http://www.uiowa.edu/~acadtech/phonetics/
Phonetics website

http://www.manythings.org/pp
Minimal pair practice

Reading

http://www.bestofthereader.ca
Guided reading with audio and activities

http://www.cdlponline.org/
Guided reading with audio and activities

Writing / Grammar/ Spelling

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/

http://www.spellitright.talktalk.net/

Idioms

http://www.learn-english-today.com/idioms/idioms_proverbs.html

http://a4esl.org/q/h/idioms.html

https://www.englishclub.com/ref/Idioms/

Dictionaries

http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/

http://dictionary.reference.com/wordoftheday/

http://www.learnersdictionary.com/word-of-the-day

Health professions

http://vsearch.nlm.nih.gov/vivisimo/cgi-bin/query-meta?v%3Aproject=medlineplus&v%3Asources=medlineplus-bundle&binning-state=group%3D%3DVideos+and+Tutorials&query=&x=13&y=19

http://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/hp.asp

http://www.celbancentre.ca/

Free Apps

Pronunciation Power 2 -
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f783xRRZ5To

Dictation Dragon
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fTQDEOEsj0Y

SpeakAp - https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.aventusoft.speakap&hl=en

Iowa University Phonetics lab –
http://www.uiowa.edu/~acadtech/phonetics/

Canadian Language Benchmarks

The Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) is used for teaching and testing in many adult EAL schools in Canada. The CLB describes what people can do in English. For example, if you are at a CLB level 1, you can write your name and address. If you are at a CLB level 4, you can write a paragraph about your future plans. If you are at a CLB level 8, you can write a business letter.

The Canadian Language Benchmark Placement Test
Newcomers who want to take an EAL class will first take the Canadian Language Benchmark Placement Test (CLBPT). The test usually takes 2-1/2 or 3 hours. It has three parts: a listening/speaking test, a reading test, and a writing test.

Listening/speaking test:
You will discuss some familiar topics with a Canadian Language Benchmarks Assessor. You may also listen to a CD and tell the assessor what the speaker said.

Reading:
You will read words, sentences, paragraphs, and longer texts and answer multiple choice questions.

Writing:
There are three parts to the writing test. In the first part, you will copy some information. In the second part, you will write a paragraph. In the third part, you will develop your ideas more in an essay.

Can Do Statements
The next few pages describe what EAL learners can do at each CLB level. Make goals for yourself. As your English improves, the number of new things that you can do in English will increase.

Decide for yourself now what you think your English levels are. If you think your levels are 3, look at the things a level 4 person can do and practice. If you think your levels are 7, look at the things a level 8 person can do and practice, practice, practice.

You can download the complete Can Do Statements at
http://www.language.ca/documents/CLB_Can_Do_Statements_web.pdf.

You can Practise English on Your Own!

Canadian Language Benchmarks

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.

Canadian Language Benchmarks

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

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.

Canadian Language Benchmarks

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

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.

Canadian Language Benchmarks

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

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.

Canadian Language Benchmarks

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. However, 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 use whole sentences with few errors.

Canadian Language Benchmarks

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 meanings in advice, offers, compliments and suggestions.

Canadian Language Benchmarks

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 email 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

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.

Canadian Language Benchmarks

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

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.

However, 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.

Canadian Language Benchmarks

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

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.

Canadian Language Benchmarks

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

Canadian Language Benchmarks

Speaking 9

I can provide and exchange important information in social and academic situations or at work. I can prepare a 15 - 30 minute formal presentation.

I can help to manage a discussion or debate in a work meeting or academic seminar.

I can participate in business meetings, discussions, and debates on complex, abstract, conceptual and detailed topics to analyze, solve problems and make decisions.

I can provide clear, multi-step instructions for familiar technical or non-technical processes

I can ask questions to get detailed and complex information and respond to questions with needed information.

I am comfortable speaking face to face, in groups, and on the phone , with managers, professors and other authority figures.

I speak at a normal or fast rate with only occasional errors in grammar, vocabulary or pronunciation.

Listening 9

When someone speaks clearly and in a familiar accent, I can understand a broad range of general interest topics and technical topics in my field. I sometimes miss some details and may not always understand humour, infrequently-used idioms, and cultural references.

I can separate facts from opinions and identify a speaker's purpose and point of view; sometimes I
can understand a speaker's personal attitudes and emotions.

I can identify the roles, relationships and status of speakers in formal business and academic settings.

I can understand key information from 15 - 30 minute complex discussions, presentations, and training sessions at work or in academic and social situations.

I can understand information and paraphrase or summarize the key facts and details at work or school.

I can understand lengthy suggestions, recommendations and proposals for solutions to problems.

I can combine a few pieces of detailed oral information to follow multi-step instructions for a familiar process or procedure.

Canadian Language Benchmarks

Reading 9

I can read a wide variety of authentic multipurpose texts: newspaper articles, short stories, novels, academic materials, manuals and business documents.

I can read clearly written texts of 3 - 5 pages on abstract, conceptual and technical topics.

I can identify and explain a writer's intent and point of view.

I can read formal advisory, instructional texts on familiar processes and procedures: policy and procedure manuals, equipment installation manuals, user product guides and health and safety advisories.

I can locate and integrate information across paragraphs or sections of texts to correctly interpret and follow instructions
for a familiar process or procedure.

I can understand flow charts, graphs, pictographs and diagrams and explain them to others in an alternate way.

I can use several complex sources of information (reports, charts, graphs, emails) to complete academic or business tasks

I can find a specific piece of information through a complex search using on-line search engines and libraries.

Writing 9

I can write formal and informal notes or emails to schedule, cancel or reschedule business or academic appointments.

I can write a coherent essay or report of 3 - 5 typed pages to present information on a researched topic.

I can summarize and convey the main ideas of an article and support them with details.

I can fill out complex and detailed forms with over 40 pieces of required information.

I can write summary reports of data, lab inspections or meetings.

I can write outlines or summaries of material taken from several sources.

I use paragraphs but my writing still lacks flexibility in tone and style;

Occasionally I still make errors in grammar and spelling.

I use accepted formats for formal and informal documents such as letters, essays, reports, emails.

I can proofread and make revisions to my own work; sometimes i need input from others.

Canadian Language Benchmarks

Speaking 10

I can obtain, exchange and present information, ideas and opinions for important social and academic tasks or at work.

I can prepare a 20 - 40 minute formal presentation.

I can manage routine meetings and discussions or debates in a small familiar group.

I can actively participate in business meetings and in social and academic discussions on complex, detailed and abstract topics.

I can persuade, counsel, assess basic needs, or evaluate detailed information in one-on-one routine situations.

I can provide complex multi-step instructions for familiar procedures and processes in demanding and sometimes stressful situations.

I can respond appropriately to perceived hostility, blame, putdowns, sarcasm, lies or condescension.

I speak fluently and accurately; any errors in grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation are not a barrier to communication.

Listening 10

When people speak at a normal rate, I can understand most general interest and technical topics in my field. I occasionally miss a topics change and may not always understand cultural references and humour, especially when people speak quickly.

I can identify and explain the personal attitudes, emotions and intentions of speaker to one another and to the topic being discussed.

I can understand 30-60 minute complex discussions, meetings, presentations and training sessions and extract detailed information, ideas and opinions.

I can follow and evaluate the organization, development and reasoning of a detailed argument.

I can understand and critically evaluate a lot of “unspoken” information. I can follow extensive and detailed oral instructions and carry out multi-step complex instructions for a familiar procedure or process.

Canadian Language Benchmarks

Reading 10

I can read a wide variety of complex multipurpose texts in printed or electronic format: charts, tables, forms, letters, and research papers.

I sometimes have difficulty with infrequently-used idioms and cultural references. I can understand 5 - 10 pages of dense complex texts on abstract, conceptual topics, some of which may be new to me.

I can interpret and convert data from documents such as questionnaires, surveys, schedules, programs and timetables.

I can understand and summarize complex instructional texts on familiar processes and procedures, even when they are not sequential: legal and administrative procedures; scientific and experimental procedures.

I can locate and interpret information from several complex texts, forms, graphs: standard legal contracts, formal reports, surveys, complex tables and other documents. I can transfer the data to other business or academic forms or reports.

I can search through several displays of complex information and integrate explicit and implied information.

I can follow and critically evaluate the development of complex arguments.

Writing 10

I can write effectively for most academic and business tasks and for most audiences: detailed minutes of meetings, conferences and symposia; faxes, memos; email and reports.

I can write a complex, research paper or formal report of 10 typed pages. I can write to inform, express opinions and ideas, communicate solutions and decisions, present an argument, and persuade.

I can fill out complex forms with over 50 items of required information.

I can reproduce complex information and ideas from several sources to prepare reports, summaries or abstracts for other people to use.

I organize my writing well with only occasional minor errors in grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation.

I can edit and proofread the work of others.

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