

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)

The English as a second language component of the Midland Need to Read program is directed toward adults who want to learn English and need help developing their English reading, writing, and speaking skills. This section will include effective methods and approaches that are catered specifically to ESL learners.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ESL LEARNERS

- 1.) May not have learned to read and write in English but may have some ability to speak English.
- 2.) Tend to have had few years of formal schooling and may be reluctant to enter or re-enter conventional education programs.
- 3.) May have had little to no opportunities to acquire literacy skills in their native country and may not be literate in their native language.
- 4.) May have received some formal education in their native countries but have had little experience using the English alphabet.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ESL AND BASIC LITERACY INSTRUCTION

English as a Second Language:	Basic Literacy:
<p>Attitude about Participating: It's okay to be learning English.</p> <p>Goal Setting: Sometimes difficult to do because of language barriers.</p> <p>One of the Tutors Roles: Tutors often teach appropriate cultural behavior (e.g. attitudes regarding punctuality).</p> <p>Cultural Issues: Tutor needs to be aware of potential problems caused by cultural differences and work through them.</p> <p>Types of Learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read English but don't speak it • Speak some English but don't read it • Speak some English but have never read in <i>any</i> language • Read/speak their native language, cannot read/speak English • Can understand English but needs help with pronunciation <p>Strategies for Teaching ESL Learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize tutor talking and maximize learner talking (practicing English pronunciation). • Teach the meaning(s) of words or phrases orally before having learners try to understand something in print. • Teach the difference between nouns and verbs. • Use items and pictures when possible while teaching new vocabulary. • Use basic picture cards to teach the English alphabet. 	<p>Attitude about Participating: There is a stigma attached to not being able to read and write as an adult.</p> <p>Goal Setting: Usually easy to do.</p> <p>One of the Tutors Roles: Tutor generally focuses on only reading and writing skills.</p> <p>Cultural Issues: There typically are not many.</p> <p>Types of Learners: Speak English but cannot read or write.</p> <p>Strategies for Teaching Basic Literacy Learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutor does most of the talking while the learner participates in exercises and practices skills. • Tutor teaches learner to decode the <i>written</i> language to improve reading/writing. • Tutor uses basic sight word exercises to teach new words and build vocabulary.

PRINCIPLES OF ESL INSTRUCTION

Tips for Tutors:

1. First, find out where your learner needs help (reading, writing, speaking, vocabulary, etc), and help them set goals to meet while learning ESL.
2. Devise activities that require your learner to use English language expressions, idioms, and vocabulary.
3. Use words and contexts that are relevant to your learner's everyday life.
4. At first, do not put too much emphasis on correct grammar. Practicing English communication is the goal, and grammatical correctness should be saved for intermediate to advanced learners.
5. Try to use fun methods and exercises when teaching your ESL learner.
6. Begin each lesson with something that your learner can do well. This will help lower their level of anxiety and build their confidence.
7. Help your learner leave each tutor session with at least one new thing they have learned that can be applied to their everyday life.
8. Motivate your learner to have more contact with other English speakers and practice their English outside of lessons.
9. Encourage your learner to watch English television and movies in order to gain more exposure to the language.

PRONUNCIATION

Pronunciation is an important element of learning any language. Learning proper pronunciation requires hard work and repetition to train the mouth and the brain to use a new language. The three main language features that affect learning pronunciation include:

1. Understanding how different English sounds are made using the lips, mouth, throat, tongue, and teeth.
2. Accents that are found in every multisyllabic word in English. The stressed syllable is pronounced more slowly and clearly than unaccented syllables. Explaining how to correctly pronounce accented words will help learners with their English speech.
3. The rhythm of words when speaking the English language. ESL learners tend to use the rhythm of their native language when learning to speak English. Clapping out the rhythm of an English sentence will help learners focus on the way words are grouped together when speaking the new language.

IDIOMS

Below is a selected list of idioms that may confuse adult learners who are studying English as a second language:

All ears	Come in handy	Go-getter	On the whole
All in all	Cook one's goose	Go out of one's way	Out of the question
Apple of my eye	Cool as a cucumber	Go to bat for	Paying through the nose
As a matter of fact	Crack a joke	Half-baked	Play with fire
At least	Cream of the crop	Halfhearted	Pull someone's leg
At one's fingertips	Cry wolf	Have a bone to pick	Put one's foot down
At my wit's end	Dead as a doornail	Have a screw loose	Run across something/someone
Back on one's feet	Dirty look	Have cold feet	Save face
Back out	Do away with	Have one's cake and eat it too	See eye to eye
Beat around the bush	Dog-tired	Have one's hands full	Skating on thin ice
Behind one's back	Dolled up	Head over heels	Smelling a rat
Below the belt	Double-cross	Holding back	Stick one's neck out
Beside oneself	Down to earth	Hold your horses	Stiff upper lip
Beside the point	Draw the line	House keeping	Stretch a point
Better half	Drop by (drop in)	In a nutshell	Throw in the towel
Big shot	Drop in the bucket	In one's right mind	Trick up one's sleeve
Birds of a feather	Drop off	In the doghouse	Turning over a new leaf
Bite one's head off	Eat one's heart out	In the nick of time	Under the weather
Blind date	Elbow grease	Jot down	
Blow off steam	Face the music	Jumping to conclusions	
Bone to pick	Fair and square	Keeping in touch	
Break away	Fall apart	Know the ropes	
Break the ice	Far cry	Ladies' man	
Bring home the bacon	Feather in one's cap	Lay off	
Bring to mind	Feather one's nest	Lay out	
Brush off	Feeling blue	Leave no stone unturned	
Bury the hatchet	Feel it in one's bones	Leg to stand on	
Butt in	Fifty-fifty	Lend an ear	
By and large	Fit as a fiddle	Like a fish out of water	
By the skin of one's teeth	Flash in the pan	Make believe	
By the way	Fool around	Make ends meet	
Carry on	Foot the bill	Make eyes at	
Catch fire	Forty winks	Make one's blood boil	
Catch one's eye	From A to Z	Meeting halfway	
Caught red-handed	Full of hot air	Nip in the bud	
Chalk up	Get even	Nose to the grindstone	
Change hands	Get it off your chest	On its last leg	
Change one's mind	Get on one's nerves	On the fence	
Check in	Get the upper hand		
Check out	Get under one's skin		
Chew the fat	Ghost of a chance		
Chin up	Give in		
Chip in			
Chips are down			
Close call			

A GUIDE FOR THE FIRST ESL LESSON

The primary goal of the first lesson is to get to know your learner. Here are some ideas for a successful first session:

1. Introduce yourself, and see if your learner can introduce themselves in English. Then share something about yourself and ask your learner questions to begin getting to know one another.
2. Begin to mentally/informally assess your learner during your introductions based on their English speaking ability. Take mental or written notes on your learner's English ability (what they can do well, what needs improvement, specific difficulties, etc.).
3. The best way to teach English as a second language is to keep your learner engaged in English conversation as much as possible. Therefore, if you are able to speak to your learner in their native language, do your best to keep as much of the conversation in English as possible.
4. Be sure to keep corrections to an absolute minimum while your learner is speaking English (especially if they are beginners). You may need to ask them to repeat something you did not understand, but the goal is to help your learner build their confidence in speaking English.
5. Speak naturally and use complete English sentences, even if you know your learner only understands some of what you are saying. This allows your learner to become familiar with the natural flow of English.
2. From the first moment you greet your new learner, do what feels natural- just as you would if you were meeting a native English speaker. If your learner is at a beginning English level, you might begin the lesson by teaching them an English greeting.

Example: "Hello, how are you?"
"Fine, thank you. How are you?"
"Fine, thanks."

It's important to teach your learner something meaningful during each lesson. When learners are taught something that they can use out in the "real world," they tend to be more motivated to return for further lessons.

ESL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Reading:

- Duet
- Silent
- Oral
- Guided
- Reading along with audio recorded texts

Writing:

- Dictating
- Copying
- Sentence completion
- Freewriting
- Journaling
- Writing letters

Additional Skills:

- Sight words
- Word patterns
- Punctuation
- Spelling
- Phonics
- Vocabulary

TUTORING STRATEGIES FOR BASIC LITERACY & ESL

1. Use a functional word list to teach common words and phrases, and use pictures or graphic representations for words when possible.
2. Use games in order to teach new vocabulary. Play bingo, hangman, Wheel of Fortune, or make crossword puzzles when reviewing words learned from past lessons.
4. Use activities to engage as many of your learner's senses as possible (sight, hearing, and touch/tactile). Examples: viewing pictures/graphics, watching YouTube clips, listening to audio recordings of texts/readings, etc.
5. Try using the "cloze technique" to help your learner practice reading comprehension and language structure. For this technique, take any reading selection of one or more paragraphs and leave the first and last sentences intact. Then, starting with the second sentence, delete/scratch out every fifth or seventh word. Then, have your learner read the edited reading selection and fill in the blanks with a sensible word choice. Lastly, compare the completed selection with its original form.

Sample of Cloze Technique:

Dear Abby,

I am a 17-year-old boy with a problem. My father is 51. He and _____ mom are separated, so Dad moved ____ a singles apartment, and now he _____ a changed person. He let his _____ grow long, he wears strange clothes _____ beads, and he doesn't even look _____ my father anymore.

The majority _____ the people who live in the _____ are in their 20's and 30's, _____ my father must think he fits _____ in with them, which he doesn't. _____ must think he is going through _____ second childhood.

I want to tell _____ how stupid he looks, but I _____ want to hurt him. How can I put it to him gently that he is making a fool of himself?

Sincerely,
Embarrassed

6. Use your learner's favorite recipes (in English) to help them work on the following skills: sight word recognition, following directions, reading comprehension, and English measurements. First, pick out a few recipes with your learner and have them read the recipes to you. Then, help your learner arrange their recipes into categories (e.g., meat dishes, salads, appetizers, etc.) and then file them in alphabetical order for easy reference. Make sure that your learner is familiar with liquid and solid units of measure, (e.g., cup, ounce, pound, etc.) as well as their abbreviations. For a fun, hands on activity, spend a lesson cooking some of your learner's favorite dishes together.

7. Use sales circulars (coupons or advertisements) to help improve your learner's life experience skills, sight word recognition, ability to locate information, and basic knowledge of percentages. First, locate a few sales circulars (either old or new), and write key sight words from the circulars onto index cards such as "sale," "price," "regularly," "now," "save," etc. Next, show your learner where to locate: the sale dates, the store address, the sale prices and original prices of products, and the name of the store. You can also try using store logos and store names in a matching game to help your learner recognize common stores in their area. Finally, you can help your learner understand the idea of percentages and how to calculate sales savings (a life-experience math exercise).

Resource: <http://sk.sagepub.com/video/supporting-els-with-talk-partners>