
Adult ESL Resources

A variety of resources are available to teachers and programs working with adult English language learners in print, multimedia, and online formats. Resources are also available for learners themselves. Although the following list is not exhaustive, it highlights some of the most useful resources for teachers and learners. For more in-depth information about adult ESL resources, see the Web sites for the Center for Adult English Language Acquisition (CAELA) at www.cal.org/caela and the CAELA Network at www.cal.org/caelanetwork.

Print Resources for Teachers

Arlington Education and Employment Program. (1994). *The REEP Curriculum: A Learner-Centered ESL Curriculum for Adults* (3rd ed.). This curriculum includes information any serious ESL teacher—whether just beginning to teach, or a veteran of many years in the classroom—needs know about providing instruction to adult English language learners. The curriculum is composed of the following units: learner needs assessment, learner evaluation, needs assessment, instructional units from levels 100 (pre-literate, no English ability) through 550 (high advanced English), and a transitional self-study unit to prepare learners for college level ESL. The appendices contain information on cross-cultural issues; using computers with language instruction; sample lessons, activities, and assessments; and a bibliography of resources. If you could have just one document to help you plan and deliver ESL instruction, this would be the one. The newest version of the *REEP Adult ESL Curriculum* is available online. (www.apsva.us/leep)

Arlington Education and Employment Program (REEP). (1997). *Project based learning and assessment: A resource manual for teachers*. Arlington, VA: Author. This resource manual helps practitioners understand how project-based learning can be a practical and meaningful way for adults to acquire and demonstrate progress in English. Several of the projects described in the manual reflect the goals of the U.S. Department of Education's EL/Civics initiative, which include learning about citizenship, civic participation, and U.S. history and government. (www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/REEPproj.pdf)

Auerbach, E. (1992). *Making meaning, making change: Participatory curriculum development for adult ESL literacy*. McHenry, IL, and Washington, DC: Delta Systems and Center for Applied Linguistics. This book describes the University of Massachusetts Family Literacy Project, a participatory adult ESL civics project, and offers insights for teachers who want to undertake a similar project. Examples are given of how the project sought to use literacy to make changes in the community. (<http://calstore.cal.org/store>)

Bell, J. (2004). *Teaching multilevel classes in ESL* (2nd ed.). Toronto, Ontario: Pippin Publishing. The author describes a variety of features that make a class multilevel including differences in language proficiency, education experience, and situational factors. This book discusses the challenges of planning curriculum and teaching multilevel classes and

offers strategies for classroom management and practical activities to use.

(www.pippinpub.com/index.asp)

Bell, J. & Burnaby, B. (1984). *A handbook for ESL literacy*. Toronto, Ontario: Pippin Publishing. This book was written for both novice and experienced teachers who are teaching initial reading and writing skills to adult English language learners. It provides background information about literacy theory and offers practical suggestions for lesson planning. It is a classic adult ESL education guide. (www.pippinpub.com/index.asp)

Brod, S. (1999). *What non-readers or beginning readers need to know: Performance-based ESL adult literacy*. Denver, CO: Spring Institute for International Studies. This short publication provides teachers with communicative activities to use in the beginning level classroom to help learners get started learning to read.

(www.springinstitute.org/publications.html)

Brown, H.D. (2001). *Teaching by principles* (2nd ed.). White Plains, NY: Pearson Education. This book discusses teaching practices that are grounded in principles of language learning. The book is written for new teachers and covers topics such as the history of language teaching; cognitive, affective, and linguistic principles of language learning; designing and implementing classroom lessons; and assessing language skills.

(www.longman.com)

McKay, H. & Tom, A. (1999). *Teaching adult second language learners*. New York: Cambridge University Press. The authors focus specifically on adults learning English. The book provides a summary of the principles of teaching adults and a variety of activities organized by life skill. (www.cambridge.org/elt)

Nash, A. (1999). *Civic participation and community action sourcebook: A resource for adult educators*. Boston: New England Literacy Resource Center. These stories discuss a wide range of issues from finding a class project and goal-setting to meeting with legislators and advocating for adult education funding. The sourcebook also contains an extensive bibliography of Web-based resources and an appendix of human rights and civics documents. While many of the articles deal with ABE/GED learners and teachers, the themes and activities can be adapted for ESL classes.

(<http://tech.worlded.org/docs/vera/index1.htm>)

Weinstein, G. (ED.) (1999). *Learners' lives as curriculum: Six journeys to immigrant literacy*. McHenry, IL and Washington, DC: Delta Systems and Center for Applied Linguistics. This book describes the philosophical background and the actual process of using learners' needs and concerns to develop curricula and materials to assist them to meet language-learning and life goals while they participate actively in their communities. This volume describes six projects that were undertaken in the late 1990s by community-based organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area. (<http://calstore.cal.org/store>)

Online Resources for Teachers

Adult ESL Fact Sheets. These four concise fact sheets provide an overview of current issues in the field of adult ESL and discuss the trends and best practices. They also suggest pertinent additional resources. The fact sheets are: *Assessment with Adult English Language Learners*, *Family Literacy and Adult English Language Learners*, *Professional Development and Adult English Language Instruction*, and *Uses of Technology in Adult ESL Instruction*. Available from www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/collections/factsheets.html or by contacting CAELA at caela@cal.org or 202-362-0700.

Assessment and Accountability in Programs for Adult English Language Learners: What Do We Know? What Do We Have in Place? What Do We Need? National Center for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE). This online compilation summarizes a symposium held on May 16, 2003 on Issues and Challenges in Assessment and Accountability for Adult English Language Learners. This symposium addressed issues of assessment from many perspectives and featured presentations from Cheryl L. Keenan, Director of the Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL) in the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education. She described the Department's vision for assessment and accountability. Proceedings are available from www.cal.org/caela/accountability.

Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks. Bilingual (English/French) site supporting the development of the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB), a set of national performance standards for adult ESL instruction. In addition to the contents of the benchmarks themselves, descriptions of the Centre's programs and services, links to related sites, and an overview of the CLB process, the publications section contains numerous ESL and CLB-related materials, many online in full-text. (www.language.ca)

Cultural Orientation Resource Center, Center for Applied Linguistics. The *Culture Profiles* series provide concise, informative introductions to the cultural background of refugee populations. Profiles available online include *Muslim Refugees*, *Somali Bantu*, *The Afghans*, *The Iraqis*, *The Haitians*, and *The Bosnians*. (www.cal.org/co/publications/profiles.html)

EL Civics "How to" Manual. Bronx Community College English Literacy and Civic Understanding Demonstration Grant (funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education). (www.bcc.cuny.edu/ELCivics/index.cfm)

Health Literacy Resources for Adult ESL. Health literacy has been gaining increasing attention in the adult literacy, English as a Second Language (ESL), and healthcare fields in recent years. To help professionals working with adult English language learners understand and address health literacy issues, the National Center for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE) has put together the following resources developed by Kate Singleton of Fairfax, Virginia: *Health Literacy and Adult English Language Learners, Annotated*

Bibliography of Health Literacy Resources & Programs For Adult ESL, and Using Picture Stories for Adult ESL Health Literacy. (www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/healthindex.html)

LINCS/National Institute for Literacy (NIFL). The national LINCS (Literacy Information and Communication System) site is a project of the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL). It includes policy updates, grant and funding announcements, a calendar of events, and information about NIFL-sponsored literacy discussion lists including lists discussing family literacy and adult ESL. *America's Literacy Directory*, a searchable database that can be used to find adult education and adult ESL programs around the nation, can also be accessed here. Finally, the Special Collections of LINCS have excellent resources for working with English language learners. (www.nifl.gov/lincs/index.html)

- English as a Second Language (<http://literacynet.org/esl>)
- Family Literacy (<http://literacy.kent.edu/Midwest/FamilyLit>)
- Health and Literacy (<http://www.worlded.org/us/health/lincs>)
- Literacy and Learning Disabilities (<http://ldlink.coe.utk.edu>)

Massachusetts Adult ESOL Curriculum Framework. This is a draft document of the framework for a statewide adult ESOL curriculum. It outlines the core concepts and seven guiding principles behind the framework, as well as the five principle strands for instruction and learning, and the specific learning standards (skills and knowledge) related to each. (www.doe.mass.edu/acls/frameworks)

National Reporting System for Adult Education. This is the primary Web site for information on the National Reporting System, an outcome-based reporting system for state-administered, federally funded adult education programs. The site includes background on the NRS outcome measures and uniform data collection system, current developments in the system, publications, and access to training on the system (software, online modules, print materials, etc.) including the NRS Online Training System. (www.nrsweb.org)

Outreach and Technical Assistance Network (OTAN). Provides a gateway to electronic resources and information on all aspects of adult education, including adult ESL. Full-text documents, opportunities for online networking and training, and links to other Web-based resources are available. You can also register to be notified regularly of new materials related to your area(s) of interest. (While the site has been specifically designed to support practitioners and others in California, the resources are of wide interest. (www.otan.dni.us)

Tennessee Adult ESOL Curriculum Resource Book. This online document defines the language, EL/Civics, and workplace competencies for six adult ESOL levels recognized by the state of Tennessee. It provides descriptions of student learning plans, as well as appendices on materials and resources, samples of student portfolio sheets, and general information and guidelines for new teachers. (<http://aeonline.coe.utk.edu/esolcrg.pdf>)

Other Resources

Crossroads Café. Video series. This video series of 26 episodes -- produced by INTELCOM in collaboration with Heinle & Heinle publishers and several states -- is supported by integrated print materials at several levels and a “wraparound version” for adult English language learners at lower proficiency levels. Without the wraparound video, the videos and materials are most appropriate for intermediate levels. Many public libraries own sets of the series, so adults can learn with the materials at home. (www.intelecom.org)

Hands-on English. Published six times a year, this publication provides classroom activities (often reproducible) for teacher and tutors of adult ESL. Available from Hands-On English, PO Box 256, Crete, NE 68333, or www.handsonEnglish.com.

The New Americans. Video Miniseries. These videos were produced by ITVS. Also available is a series guide and activity book for use with adult learners. This series describes the lives of immigrants and refugees by following them from their native countries and refugee camps (Nigeria, the West Bank, and the Dominican Republic) to their new lives in the United States. (www.pbs.org/independentlens/newamericans)

On Common Ground. This 15-episode video series by INTELECOM (1999) aims to engage learners' interest in a variety of civics-oriented themes such as the separation of powers, freedom of speech, and equality. Each half-hour drama deals with one such theme and is followed by a short historical documentary. Because of the level of language used and the depth of cultural knowledge required, the videos are suitable for high-intermediate or advanced learners only. Workbooks are available for classroom work. (www.intelecom.org)

ESOL Starter Kit. The online version of this kit, produced by the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center, provides an overview of the information most often needed for those beginning to teach adult ESL. Sections provide information on such topics as intake, adult ESL resources, adult learning principles, second language teaching, the four language modes, and curriculum development. Links to online resources and sample lesson plans for reading, writing, listening, and speaking are included. (www.aelweb.vcu.edu/publications/ESLKit/ESLKit_2002.pdf)

Verizon Literacy Campus offers free, short, self-paced online courses on adult literacy and family literacy. Click on online courses. (www.thinkfinity.org)

Program and Content Standards

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), the Canadian government, and several states have developed program and/or content standards, which can aid program improvement. Both content and program standards are included here; they are not always easily separated. These resources may be useful for states and programs that want to develop standards to meet state goals. (See also the standards warehouse in development,

hosted by the U. S. Department of Education. In the future, check the OVAE Web site at www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/index.html for an update to this document.

Arizona Department of Education. *Arizona Adult Education Standards*
www.ade.az.gov/adult-ed/Documents/AEStandards/Adopted/AZAStandards-2006Rev.pdf

California Department of Education. (1992). *English-as-a-second-language model standards for adult education programs*. Sacramento, CA: Author. Available from California Department of Education, Bureau of Publications, P.O. Box 271, Sacramento, CA 95812-0271, 916-445-1260, or at www.otan.us/webfarm/emailproject/standard.pdf.

Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks includes profiles, competencies, and tasks for twelve English language proficiency levels plus literacy level. (www.language.ca)

Florida Department of Education. *English for limited English proficient adults curriculum frameworks*. (www.fldoe.org/workforce/dwdframe/ad/pdf/3201030a.pdf)

Maryland State Department of Education. *Maryland adult ESL program standards*. (www.research.umbc.edu/~ira/ESLstand.html)

Massachusetts Department of Education. (2000). *Massachusetts adult education curriculum frameworks*. (www.doe.mass.edu/acls/frameworks/esol.pdf)

New York State Education Department. *Adult education resource guide and learning standards*. (www.hudrivctr.org/products_ae.htm)

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). (2000). *Program standards for adult education ESOL programs*. Alexandria, VA: Author. This document describes program quality indicators in eight areas: program structure, administration, and planning; curriculum; instruction; recruitment, intake, and orientation; retention and transition; assessment and learner gains; staffing, professional development, and staff evaluation; and support services. Available from TESOL Publications, PO Box 753, Waldorf, MD 20604-0753 or from www.tesol.org (click on publications).

Print Resources for Adult English Language Learners

There are many commercially produced materials for adult English language learners that students can use in class or at home. Learners and teachers often like these materials because they offer a way to structure classes and learning. However, some of the most effective resources are materials that learners find and need to use in real life from safety signs, telephone books and brochures for lower level learners to newspaper articles and non-simplified literature for the higher level learners. From these sources, teachers can find authentic print material that is relevant to their classes' level, needs, and goals.

Developing activities around such materials may be time-consuming, but teachers should consider developing such materials to at least supplement the use of commercial texts (if accessible to learners).

Textbooks are available for learners at all levels, from literacy to advanced. Some books are core texts (e.g., they include content and activities in the four skill areas: reading, writing, speaking, and listening); others concentrate on one or more skills or specific content—such as parenting or workplace. The list below is not exhaustive, but serves to show the breadth of the offerings. For reviews of many adult ESL materials, consult Silliman, A., & Tom, A. (2000). *Practical resources for adult ESL*. Burlingame, CA: ALTA Book Centers. (www.altaesl.com/index.cfm)

Boyd, F., & Numrich, C. (series editors). (1998). *NorthStar*. White Plains, NY: Pearson. <http://www.longman.com/>

Gramer, M. F. (1994). *Basic Oxford picture dictionary*. New York: Oxford University Press <http://www.oup.com/us/?view=usa>

Moss, D., Shank, C., & Terrill, L. (1997). *Collaborations: English in our lives: Literacy*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle. <http://www.heinle.com/>

Newman, C. M. (1998). *LifePrints: ESL for adults* (series). Syracuse: New Readers Press. <http://www.newreaderspress.com>)

Nishio, Y. W. (1998). *Longman ESL Literacy* (2nd Ed.) White Plains, NY: Pearson Education. <http://www.longman.com/>

Shapiro, N., & Adelson-Goldstein, J. (1998). *Oxford picture dictionary*. New York: Oxford University Press. <http://www.oup.com/us/?view=usa>

Online Resources for Adult English Language Learners

There are now many Web sites devoted to English language learning, although many of them are appropriate for learners at intermediate and higher levels. However, as more and more adult English language learners have access to computers in their homes or schools, using the Internet for real-life learning and problem solving may be more useful than just “ESL” Web sites. With or without the assistance of a teacher, tutor, or volunteer, learners can quite easily search for information about the community, work, health, or other topics of interest. Learners can work in pairs or small groups to search for information that is relevant to them (e.g., finding a good deal on a used car, looking for information about a health issue, learning about a holiday celebration, etc). As teachers look for Web sites that may be useful for the learners in their classes, they should remember the power of the Internet for project-based learning.

About.com's Guide to English as a Second Language (<http://esl.about.com>)

Hosted by an English teacher in Tuscany, the site includes quizzes, vocabulary study pages, interactive polls, chat rooms, pen pal information, and a weekly e-mail newsletter. It also has pages of resources for Spanish speakers learning English and for teachers of English. Recommended for intermediate to advanced English language learners.

Activities for ESL Students (<http://a4esl.org>)

Numerous quizzes and puzzles for learners to complete and check on their own. Learners can choose from a variety of activities dealing with vocabulary building, phrasal verbs, slang, idioms, homonyms, and specific grammar points, such as articles and prepositions. The site was developed by *The Internet TESL Journal*.

City Family Magazine Online (<http://www.cityfamily.org>)

Originally a print publication targeting immigrants learning English, *City Family Magazine* is now online. Readers will find articles on a diversity of topics of interest to adults such as health, employment, money, fashion, travel, recipes, and relationships. There are links to translation tools and a dictionary available, as well as opportunities to post comments and engage in discussions with other readers. Most text tends to be at high beginning to intermediate reading levels.

Dave's ESL Cafe (<http://www.eslcafe.com>)

Has many resources for ESL learners (as well as for teachers). In addition to chat rooms, discussion forums, and message boards, there are pages devoted to idioms, phrasal verbs, and grammar and other hints for the day, English language programs worldwide, and quizzes on a variety of topics.

English For All (<http://www.myefa.org/login.cfm>)

Funded by the United States Department of Education, *English For All* is a free Web-based multimedia system for adults learning English as a second language. Adult learners may use this online or CD-based program in conjunction with a class or independently. Learners

view videos and work with supplementary language learning materials available from the Web site. Some of the language used on the Web site may be challenging for beginning and low-intermediate learners.

English Listening Lounge (<http://www.EnglishListening.com>)

Thirty recordings of ordinary English speakers, accompanied by questions, are available at no charge. For a monthly fee, learners can register and have access to many more files and an e-mail discussion feature. RealAudio Player® (a free download) is needed to use this site. Although the pages do not have graphics of speakers or topics, they do provide a good opportunity to hear short recorded passages.

eViews (<http://www.eviews.net>)

Provides recordings of 10-11 minute interviews with native English speakers (U.S., British, Irish, etc). Learners subscribe free of charge and can download interviews, transcripts, and comprehension questions and answers. (Uses RealAudio® and MP3 formats; recommended for intermediate and above learners.)

The Great American Potluck Cookbook

(<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/features/immig/ckbk/index.html>)

This Library of Congress Web site offers a cookbook of recipes from immigrant Americans. Recipes include Indian fry bread, West African pepper soup, and Hungarian butter horns. ESL learners can submit their own favorite recipes, also. If they wish, they also can choose photos to accompany their recipes.

Linguistic Funland TESL Activities for Students

(<http://www.linguistic-funland.com/teslact.html>)

A collection of links to activities that learners can access online, including word games, grammar exercises, writing activities, and idioms. Many links also may be of interest to teachers looking for ideas.

PEAKEnglish (<http://www.peakEnglish.com>)

An online interactive English school. The site offers limited free membership which includes a placement test and English language profile, as well as access to online lessons, exercises, and games. A more extensive program is available for a fee. Teachers will also find TeacherFeatures, a set of tools that enables them to communicate with and manage the experience of students while they study online.

Pronunciation Skills and Activities (<http://www.ohiou.edu/esl/English/PronunciationSkills>)

Compiled for English language learners at the University of Ohio, these pages offer a variety of activities and links to activities targeting basic pronunciation issues. Although highly decontextualized, the activities do provide targeted practice with production of specific sounds and with listening discrimination, as well as traditional exercises such as minimal pairs. Most of the activities require plug-ins that enable audio, but the plug-ins tend to be free downloads, and links for them are provided.

Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab (<http://www.esl-lab.com>)

This site provides a vast collection of listening exercises and activities, including conversations and quizzes. The exercises target high-beginning to low-advanced learners. (RealAudio® Player is required to use this site; links for free downloads are provided.)

U.S. Citizenship Study Pages (<http://www.uscitizenship.org>)

This site offers a Web-based course to help immigrants prepare themselves to take the U.S. citizenship test. The course is free for residents of Minnesota and available for a small charge to others.

Wordsmyth (<http://www.wordsmyth.net>)

Wordsmyth is an online American English dictionary with an integrated thesaurus. Users can type in a word (or in some cases, a two-word term such as “guide dog”) and receive a definition, pronunciation key, related words, synonyms, cross-reference links to synonyms, usage examples, and derivatives of the word. This site will be most helpful to learners at intermediate level and above.