



Language Companion | Stage II: CLB 5-8



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What is the *Language Companion*?

The *Language Companion* is a binder to help you:

- Learn English
- Monitor your progress and participate in Portfolio Based Language Assessment (PBLA)
- Learn about Canada and the services in your community
- Organize your language learning and settlement material

There are six sections of the *Language Companion*, separated by tabs:

- **The Canadian Language Benchmarks:** This section includes information about the levels of English language proficiency, described as the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB).
- **My Canada:** This section includes information about Canada, such as the education system, health care in Canada, the Canadian government, and information about some of the services Canada offers.
- **Where I Live:** This section includes information about your province or region, as well as various community services. You will be able to record details about your local government representatives and contact information for your local community services. You can also add your own community resources to this section.
- **Helpful English:** This section is a language resource. It includes examples of spoken and written communication in specific contexts as well as some grammar reference sheets. It also has study tips and language learning websites that you can refer to. You can add additional language learning references you find helpful.
- **My Notes:** This section is for you to organize your day-to-day learning activities and homework so that you can study and review your material at home.
- **My Portfolio:** This section is sub-divided into six sections: About Me, Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing and Other. See the next page to learn about the portfolio.



The Language Companion is yours

It's a good idea to put your name and a phone number on it in case your binder is lost. Be sure to:

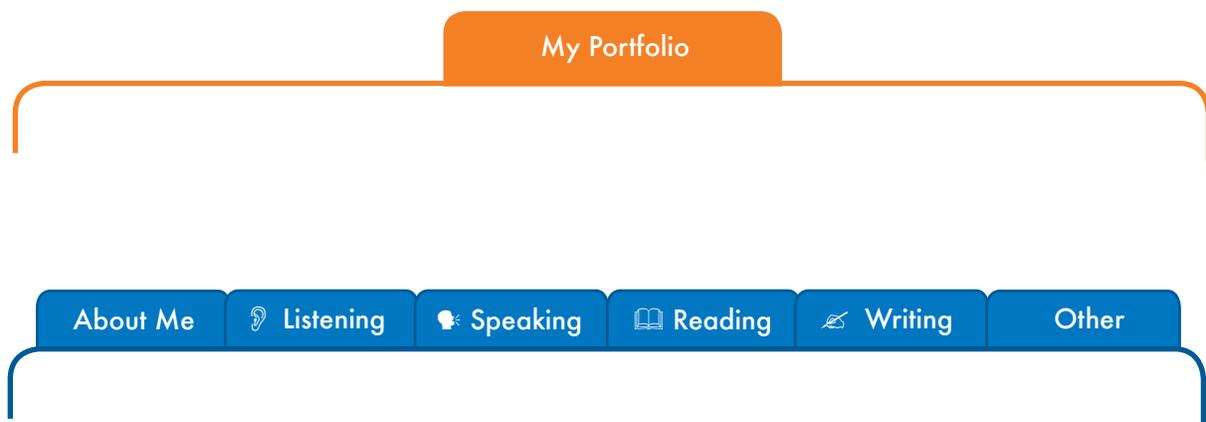
- Have your *Language Companion* available during class time
- Add appropriate content to your portfolio so your teacher can assess your progress and give you a report at the end of the term or course
- Take your *Language Companion* with your portfolio contents in it to new classes or programs

What is Portfolio Based Language Assessment?

Portfolio Based Language Assessment (PBLA) is a way for students and teachers in government-funded language training programs in Canada to document and assess progress in language learning. A portfolio is a collection of examples of your language learning that show your progress over time.

Students receive a *Language Companion* binder to help with the PBLA process and to organize their portfolio contents.

Sections of the Portfolio



The Portfolio is divided into six sections. In each section, you will make an **inventory** of classroom tasks. An inventory is a list of items. The six sections are:

- **About Me** includes information about your learning needs, interests and goals for the course or class. It also includes your Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) in listening, speaking, reading and writing
- **Listening** includes an inventory and some tasks that show your listening progress
- **Speaking** includes an inventory and some tasks that show your speaking progress
- **Reading** includes an inventory and some tasks that show your reading progress
- **Writing** includes an inventory and some tasks that show your writing progress
- **Other** includes an inventory and some tasks *you choose* to do that show your progress

What Goes in Your Portfolio

Your portfolio will include samples of the listening, speaking, reading and writing tasks that you do during the course. These tasks should show what you can *do* in English in real situations. For example, understand a voice message, complete an employment application form, understand a newscast, or write a business message. Over time, this collection of tasks will show your progress in learning English.

Not all of the work you do in the class will be included in your language portfolio. For example, your portfolio will not contain practice exercises, spelling or grammar quizzes. This is because grammar, spelling and pronunciation are only tools for communicating in English. Alone, they do not demonstrate your ability to communicate in real situations in Canada.

Instead, your portfolio will include language assessment tasks and classroom learning activities that resemble real-life tasks, such as making an appointment, following instructions, reading product information or writing a résumé. In class, you will practise the grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and cultural conventions you need to do those tasks. Your teacher will tell you which tasks belong in your portfolio.

How You Will Use the Portfolio

Throughout the term, you and your teacher will discuss your progress towards achieving your goals. You will also discuss strategies you can use to enhance your language learning.

At the end of the term, your teacher will use your portfolio and other records to determine your new CLB levels. If you attend class regularly, you will likely have enough sample tasks for your teacher to assess your progress.

It is a good idea to become familiar with the Canadian Language Benchmarks so you can discuss your Benchmarks and your progress with your teacher.



Did you know?

Portfolios are used in many ways in Canada. For example:

- Some professionals, such as teachers, engineers and architects, use a portfolio to showcase their best work when they apply for a job.
- Some professions, such as pharmacy, require their members to maintain a portfolio to document their professional reading for ongoing accreditation.
- Some post-secondary programs require students to keep a portfolio for assessment purposes.
- Some elementary and secondary schools require children to keep portfolios to demonstrate progress.



Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB)

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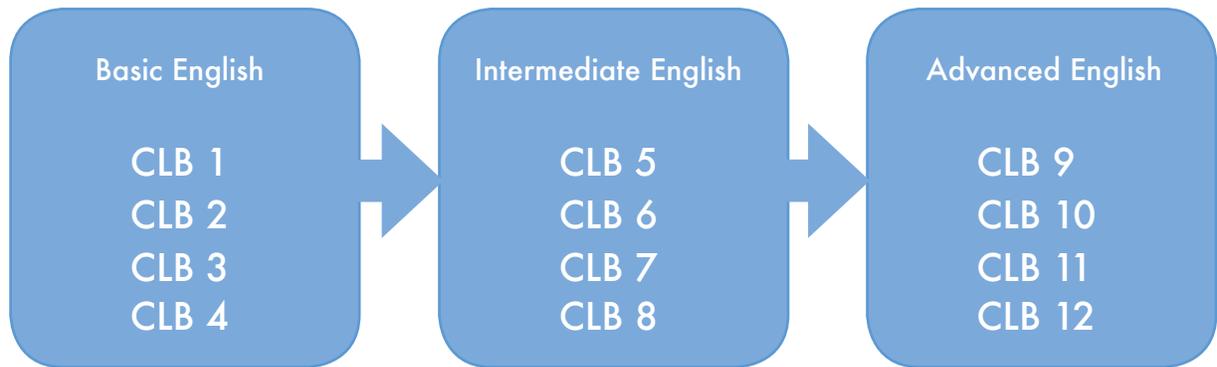
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The Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB)

The Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) are the Canadian national standard for describing, measuring and recognizing learners' knowledge and skills in English. The CLB include 12 benchmarks organized into three stages (basic, intermediate and advanced) for listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Teachers use the CLB:

- To place students in the right English class
- To talk about student progress and achievement
- To assess learning at the end of the class



Here is a brief description of the expectations for each stage:

Stage 1 (CLB 1–4)

These are basic levels of English proficiency. By the end of CLB 4, learners can talk face-to-face about some things. They can read and write short, simple messages. They can understand brief face-to-face conversations and very simple details on the phone.

Stage 2 (CLB 5–8)

These are intermediate levels of English proficiency. At the end of CLB 8, learners may be ready for some post-secondary training but may still need to improve their language skills.

Stage 3 (CLB 9–12)

These are advanced levels of English proficiency. At CLB 12, individuals have native-like English fluency for professional or academic use.

For a detailed description of what a learner can do in listening, speaking, reading and writing at Canadian Language Benchmarks 4–8, see the pages that follow.



At this Benchmark, I can:

- understand, with some effort, moderately complex formal and informal communication

When:

- the communication is face-to-face (one-on-one or in small groups) or on the phone
- the communication is moderate in length
- the information is concrete

Interacting with Others

- Understand common and predictable social conversations.

For example:

- someone's description of his/her interests, likes, dislikes, or preferences
- a friend's offer to help
- a compliment from a co-worker

Getting Things Done

- Understand communication intended to influence or persuade.

For example:

- public announcements
- short product demonstrations
- television commercials

Comprehending Instructions

- Follow 7- to 8-step instructions and directions for familiar procedures.

For example:

- directions to locate something on a map
- instructions for safety or security procedures at work

Comprehending Information

- Understand information about familiar topics.

For example:

- a bank teller explaining different account options

- Understand informal presentations up to about 5 minutes long.

For example:

- a short news report





At this Benchmark, I can:

- understand most moderately complex, formal and informal communication related to life experience

When:

- the communication is face-to-face (one-on-one or in small groups) or on the phone
- the communication is moderate in length
- the information is concrete and sometimes includes some abstract concepts

Interacting with Others

- Understand common social conversations.

For example:

- making and cancelling arrangements
- apologizing or making excuses

Getting Things Done

- Understand communication intended to influence or persuade.

For example:

- telemarketer offers
- public transit announcements

Comprehending Instructions

- Follow 9- to 10-step instructions and directions for technical and non-technical tasks.

For example:

- instructions on how to write an essay
- instructional videos in a workplace training session

Comprehending Information

- Understand short group interactions and discussions on familiar topics.

For example:

- group discussions about class projects
- Understand informal presentations up to about 10 minutes long.
For example:
 - short presentations by professionals such as public health nurses





At this Benchmark, I can:

- understand most moderately complex formal and informal communication related to life experience and general knowledge

When:

- the communication is face-to-face (one-on-one or in small groups) or on the phone
- the communication is moderate in length
- the information includes some abstract concepts and ideas

Interacting with Others

- Understand social conversations.

For example:

- a person expressing appreciation for a favour
- a complaint from a friend or classmate
- a discussion among co-workers who are not getting along

Getting Things Done

- Understand communication intended to influence or persuade.

For example:

- reminders or requests from employers
- orders from law enforcement officials

Comprehending Instructions

- Follow 10- to 12-step instructions and directions for technical and non-technical tasks.

For example:

- detailed directions on how to get somewhere
- instructions for procedures in the workplace

Comprehending Information

- Understand short group interactions and discussions on familiar topics.

For example:

- one-on-one meetings with supervisors at work
- Understand informal presentations up to about 15 minutes long.
For example:
 - informal talks on general interest or occupation specific topics





At this Benchmark, I can:

- understand moderately complex formal and informal communication related to life experience, general knowledge, and specialized or work-related situations

When:

- the communication is face-to-face (one-on-one or in small groups) or on the phone
- the communication is moderate in length
- the information includes abstract concepts and ideas

Interacting with Others

- Understand social conversations.

For example:

- a co-worker discussing a colleague who suddenly left the company
- a formal farewell at a retirement party
- formal and informal condolences from friends after a funeral

Getting Things Done

- Understand communication intended to influence or persuade.

For example:

- warnings about door-to-door salespeople and suggestions for the best ways to deal with them
- public announcements containing extended warnings and recommendations

Comprehending Instructions

- Follow long, detailed instructions and directions (over 12 steps) for technical and non-technical tasks.

For example:

- instructions from a technical assistant to resolve a simple computer software issue
- detailed instructions from a supervisor about a familiar but complex process

Comprehending Information

- Understand group interactions about abstract and complex ideas on familiar topics.

For example:

- discussion about controversial social issues in a class debate
- Understand informal or semi-formal presentations up to about 20 minutes long.
For example:
 - presentations in workplace or community meetings





At this Benchmark, I can:

- communicate, with some difficulty, in short, routine social and business situations
- present concrete information about my needs and things that are important to me
- use simple and a few more complex structures and connect my ideas

When:

- I speak face-to-face, online, on the phone, or in familiar small groups
- the situation is casual or somewhat formal

Interacting with Others

- Participate in basic social conversations.

For example:

- say how I feel
- invite people and reply to invitations
- make small talk

- Participate in very short phone calls.

For example:

- provide basic information when answering the phone at work

Getting Things Done

- Make and respond to informal requests, and give permission, suggestions and advice.

For example:

- give advice to a colleague
- ask permission to hand an assignment in late
- make suggestions for a change to a class schedule
- ask a friend to help with a task

Giving Instructions

- Give step-by-step instructions or directions for everyday activities.

For example:

- give directions to a new home or business

Sharing Information

- Ask for and give information about my everyday activities in one-on-one conversations.

For example:

- describe symptoms to a pharmacist

- Agree, disagree and give opinions in small group discussions or meetings.

For example:

- plan a workplace event with co-workers

- Give short presentations (up to about 5 minutes) about events or daily routines.

For example:

- give a brief presentation about a news event or incident

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For the Canadian Language Benchmark Online Self-Assessment, visit www.CLB-OSA.ca.
For further details on the Canadian Language Benchmarks, consult the CLB document, available online at www.language.ca.
The Can Do Statements were developed with support from the Province of Manitoba and the Government of Canada.





At this Benchmark, I can:

- communicate with some confidence in everyday social situations
- present concrete information in some detail about familiar topics that are important to me
- use simple and some complex structures and connect my ideas

When:

- I speak face-to-face, online, on the phone, or in mostly familiar small groups
- the situation is casual or somewhat formal

Interacting with Others

- Participate in routine social conversations.

For example:

- make suggestions or arrangements for an event
- express opinions
- make excuses or apologies

- Participate in short phone calls.

For example:

- make a call to the dentist to set up an appointment

Getting Things Done

- Make and respond to somewhat formal suggestions and indirect requests.

For example:

- request a raise from an employer

Giving Instructions

- Give step-by-step instructions or directions for everyday activities.

For example:

- give instructions for using a bank machine
- give instructions to a friend on how to set up an account on a website

Sharing Information

- Ask for and give information in some detail in one-on-one and in small group discussions and meetings.

For example:

- express feelings or opinions
- express obligation, certainty or ability

- Give detailed presentations (up to about 7 minutes) about events, simple processes, or to describe or compare things.

For example:

- an informal presentation to colleagues about immigrating to Canada

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At this Benchmark, I can:

- communicate with some confidence in many daily routine, social, educational, and work situations
- present concrete and some abstract information on an expanding range of familiar topics
- use simple and some complex structures, and connect my ideas

When:

- I speak face-to-face, online, on the phone, or in somewhat familiar groups
- the situation is informal to formal

Interacting with Others

- Participate in less routine social conversations for many everyday purposes.

For example:

- respond to appreciation or dissatisfaction

- Participate in routine phone calls.

For example:

- leave a telephone message for a friend with details about an upcoming event

Getting Things Done

- Give extended warnings, suggestions, recommendations or advice.

For example:

- give a detailed suggestion on how to solve a problem
- make recommendations on how to improve a friend's class assignment

Giving Instructions

- Give instructions and directions for technical and non-technical tasks, procedures and processes.

For example:

- give instructions on how to use specific functions on a spreadsheet

Sharing Information

- Give detailed information one-on-one and in small group discussions or meetings.

For example:

- discuss a medical condition with a doctor

- Give detailed presentations (up to about 10 minutes) about events, simple processes, or to describe or compare and contrast 2 events, jobs, or procedures.

For example:

- compare and contrast the advantages and disadvantages of 2 workplace procedures

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At this Benchmark, I can:

- communicate with confidence in most daily routine social, educational and work situations
- present concrete and some abstract information on a range of familiar topics
- use an adequate range of grammatical structures in connected discourse

When:

- I speak face-to-face, online, on the phone, or in familiar or unfamiliar groups
- the situation is informal to formal

Interacting with Others

- Participate in less routine social conversations for most everyday purposes.

For example:

- comfort someone in distress
- introduce guest speakers formally to a group

- Make short professional phone calls.

For example:

- reassure a customer that his/her order will arrive on time

Getting Things Done

- Propose or recommend solutions to problems in familiar areas.

For example:

- respond to a customer complaint, providing various suggestions to resolve it

Giving Instructions

- Give instructions and directions for a broad range of technical and non-technical tasks, procedures, and processes.

For example:

- give detailed, multistep instructions to a student on how to conduct a science experiment

Sharing Information

- Give detailed information one-on-one and in small group discussions or meetings.

For example:

- participate in a performance review with an employer

- Give presentations (up to about 20 minutes long) on familiar, concrete, or abstract topics based on research.

For example:

- research and present on a political process for a course

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At this Benchmark, I can:

- understand simple and some moderately complex reading materials

When:

- the text is relatively short
- the text is factual or descriptive
- the vocabulary is mostly common, with some abstract or specialized vocabulary and occasional common idioms

Interacting with Others

- Understand familiar personal and public social messages.

For example:

- an email or a letter from a friend containing a compliment or an invitation
- letters to an advice columnist

Getting Things Done

- Scan formatted texts (such as forms, tables, schedules, directories, maps, and website navigation menus) to find and use 1-2 pieces of information.

For example:

- a train departure and arrival schedule

- Find information in business texts.

For example:

- a workplace memo about a new policy

Comprehending Instructions

- Follow step-by-step instructions with visual clues and about 7-10 steps for everyday tasks.

For example:

- first aid instructions

Comprehending Information

- Understand descriptions and stories about familiar topics.

For example:

- a plain language text about landlord or tenant law

- Interpret and use information in diagrams, tables, graphs, and website menus.

For example:

- a simple chart showing how a law is passed

- Get basic information from reference sources.

For example:

- information about an occupation in Canada





At this Benchmark, I can:

- understand a range of moderately complex reading materials

When:

- the text is relatively short
- the text is mostly factual or descriptive
- the vocabulary is mostly common, with some abstract or specialized vocabulary and occasional idioms

Interacting with Others

- Understand familiar personal and public social messages.

For example:

- a workplace announcement

Getting Things Done

- Scan formatted texts (such as maps, course calendars, directories, and website navigation menus) to find and use 2-3 pieces of information.

For example:

- two courses of interest in a course calendar

- Get information from moderately complex business texts.

For example:

- product specifications for a home appliance
- a cover letter for a job application

Comprehending Instructions

- Follow instructions with some visual clues and about 10 steps for everyday tasks, even when the steps are not always listed in order.

For example:

- an application for post-secondary study

Comprehending Information

- Understand descriptions and stories about familiar topics.

For example:

- a short current news item

- Interpret and use information in charts, diagrams, tables, graphs, and website menus.

For example:

- crime rate data presented in a table

- Access, locate, and compare 2 or 3 pieces of information online.

For example:

- different online readings about a familiar health problem





At this Benchmark, I can:

- understand a range of moderately complex reading materials

When:

- the text is moderate in length
- the text is factual, descriptive or argumentative with opinions and implied meanings
- the vocabulary includes a range of concrete, abstract or specialized terms, and idiomatic language

Interacting with Others

- Understand personal and public social messages for a variety of purposes.

For example:

- a personal email expressing appreciation, complaint, hopes, satisfaction, or dissatisfaction
- a letter from a friend relating some bad news

Getting Things Done

- Scan formatted texts (such as course calendars, directories, and website navigation menus) to find and use 3-4 pieces of information.

For example:

- course eligibility criteria, start date, and pre-requisites

- Get information from moderately complex business texts.

For example:

- a performance review
- a public health advisory

Comprehending Instructions

- Follow instructions with up to about 13 steps or 5-10 paragraphs for tasks that may be specialized or technical.

For example:

- how to remove a computer virus
- how to assemble a piece of furniture

Comprehending Information

- Understand extended descriptions, reports, and stories about familiar topics.

For example:

- a short research report

- Interpret and use information in charts, diagrams, tables, graphs, and flow charts.

For example:

- a flow chart illustrating a company reporting system

- Use information from different online reference sources.

For example:

- reports of an event in 2 online newspapers





At this Benchmark, I can:

- understand most moderately complex reading materials

When:

- the text is moderate in length
- the text is factual, descriptive or argumentative with opinions and implied meanings
- the vocabulary includes a range of concrete, abstract or specialized terms, and idiomatic language

Interacting with Others

- Understand social messages for a variety of purposes.

For example:

- general opinions in a blog
- responses to complaints or sympathy

Getting Things Done

- Locate, integrate, and use 3 or 4 pieces of information from formatted texts.

For example:

- an online financial table which indicates the amount that a person is eligible to receive, or needs to pay

- Get information from business service texts containing proposals, recommendations and statements of rules, regulations, and policies.

For example:

- an organization's declaration of rights and responsibilities

Comprehending Instructions

- Follow extended instructions with up to about 13 steps or 8-15 paragraphs for specialized tasks.

For example:

- how to program a small electronic item
- how to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)

Comprehending Information

- Understand extended descriptions, feature articles, reports, and narrations.

For example:

- letters to the editor expressing opinions about a controversial issue

- Interpret and use information in charts, diagrams, tables, graphs, and flow charts.

For example:

- a patient health status chart for nurses

- Access and use several pieces of information from different online reference sources.

For example:

- information on the Statistics Canada website





At this Benchmark, I can:

- write short, simple to moderately complex texts
- write paragraphs with a main idea and some supporting detail
- write with good control of simple grammar and adequate control of spelling and punctuation

When:

- I write for familiar people
- the topic is familiar and related to my life experience

Interacting with Others

- Write 1-paragraph formal or informal personal messages for social purposes.

For example:

- a note to accept an invitation
- an email telling someone how I feel
- a letter about what is new in my life

Getting Things Done

- Write short business messages (3-5 sentences) to get things done or for services needed in my personal life.

For example:

- a letter or email to an insurance company to cancel a policy
- Complete detailed forms with 20-30 items.
For example:
 - an application form for a car rental

Reproducing Information

- Take messages or notes with 5-7 details while listening to something.

For example:

- notes from a live or pre-recorded telephone message or information line

- Make a list of important points after reading a page of information.

For example:

- notes from advertising flyers with information about a product's features, prices, and retail locations

Sharing Information

- Write 1 paragraph to describe a person, object, routine, or a sequence of events.

For example:

- a short accident report
- a paragraph for a class newsletter to inform them about a new or useful service in the community

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At this Benchmark, I can:

- write short, moderately complex texts
- write paragraphs with clearly expressed main ideas and some supporting details
- write with good control of simple grammar and adequate control of spelling and punctuation

When:

- I write for familiar people
- the topic is familiar and related to my own interests and experiences

Interacting with Others

- Write 1- to 2-paragraph formal or informal personal messages for social purposes.

For example:

- a memo congratulating or thanking someone
- a note to make an apology
- an e-mail offering to help someone

Getting Things Done

- Write short business messages (up to 1 paragraph) to get things done or for services needed for everyday life.

For example:

- a letter to ask a company for a refund for a product that didn't work
- Complete detailed forms with 30-40 items.
For example:
 - a job application form

Reproducing Information

- Take messages or notes with 7-8 details while listening to something.

For example:

- notes from a podcast or short presentation

- Make an outline or summary after reading a page of information.

For example:

- notes from a website about a procedure

Sharing Information

- Write 1-2 connected paragraphs to describe a sequence of events, give a detailed description or comparison of people, things, routines or simple procedures.

For example:

- a description of daily routines at work
- a comparison of 2 job applicants





At this Benchmark, I can:

- write clear, moderately complex texts
- write well-organized paragraphs with clearly expressed main ideas and adequate supporting details
- write with good control of simple grammar, spelling, and punctuation
- write with adequate control of complex structures

When:

- I write for familiar people or organizations
- the topic is related to my own experience

Interacting with Others

- Write formal and informal messages (about 2-3 paragraphs) for a range of social purposes.

For example:

- an email to show or respond to appreciation
- a letter to make or respond to a complaint
- a note to express disappointment or satisfaction

Getting Things Done

- Write business messages (up to about 2 paragraphs long) for a range of routine and less routine purposes.

For example:

- a memo to pass on information or concerns
- a report to make recommendations or warnings

- Complete detailed forms with about 40 items and some written responses to questions.

For example:

- an incident report form

Reproducing Information

- Reduce oral information (e.g., in a live demonstration or from audio or video material) into notes to write instructions.

For example:

- notes from a detailed phone message at work

- Make an outline or summary after reading up to about 2 pages of information.

For example:

- an outline of a sequence of events in a historical text

Sharing Information

- Write 2 or 3 connected paragraphs to describe a sequence of events, make a comparison, or provide a detailed description of a person, system, routine or procedure.

For example:

- the procedure for becoming a Canadian citizen
- a comparison of the education system of 2 countries for an academic preparation course





At this Benchmark, I can:

- write clear, moderately complex texts
- write well-organized paragraphs with clearly expressed main ideas and good supporting details
- write with good control of complex structures, spelling, and punctuation

When:

- I write for a familiar or clearly defined audience
- the topic is related to my own experiences or ideas

Interacting with Others

- Write formal and informal messages (about 3 paragraphs long) for a range of social purposes.

For example:

- a memo clarifying a conflict
- an email giving reassurance

Getting Things Done

- Write for many purposes to communicate at work, with businesses, or with places providing a service.

For example:

- a report documenting work done
- a memo indicating a problem
- a letter requesting a change

- Complete and provide written responses in a range of detailed forms with over 40 items.

For example:

- lengthy paper-based or online job application forms

Reproducing Information

- Listen and take notes to prepare for writing instructions about established procedures.

For example:

- detailed notes of a recipe presented during a cooking show

- Make an outline or summary of a text that is up to 2 pages long.

For example:

- a summary of the main ideas in a text

Sharing Information

- Write 3-4 connected paragraphs to discuss a historical event, provide a detailed description of a phenomenon, explain a procedure, or express and analyze opinions on a familiar abstract topic.

For example:

- an essay for an entrance exam to a post-secondary institution

- Write 1 paragraph to explain information presented in a table, graph, flow chart or diagram.

For example:

- a paragraph describing information in a statistical table listing average incomes of Canadians by family type

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For the Canadian Language Benchmark Online Self-Assessment, visit www.CLB-OSA.ca.
For further details on the Canadian Language Benchmarks, consult the CLB document, available online at www.language.ca.
The Can Do Statements were developed with support from the Province of Manitoba and the Government of Canada.





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Canada

Key facts

- It is the world's second largest country, with an area of almost 10 million square kilometres.
- It includes 10 provinces and three territories.
- It has a population of over 34 million people.
- Its capital city is Ottawa.



Region	Province or Territory	Population (2011: 34 million)	Capital City
Atlantic Region	Newfoundland and Labrador	515,000	St. John's
	Prince Edward Island	140,000	Charlottetown
	Nova Scotia	922,000	Halifax
	New Brunswick	751,000	Fredericton
Central Canada	Québec	7,903,000	Québec City
	Ontario	12,852,000	Toronto
Prairie Provinces	Manitoba	1,208,000	Winnipeg
	Saskatchewan	1,033,000	Regina
	Alberta	3,645,000	Edmonton
West Coast	British Columbia	4,400,000	Victoria
North	Nunavut	34,000	Iqaluit
	Northwest Territories	41,000	Yellowknife
	Yukon Territory	32,000	Whitehorse

Source: Statistics Canada: www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/index-eng.cfm, accessed March 2, 2012.

Climate and Time Zones

Key Facts

- The climate in Canada varies across the country, but there are usually four distinct seasons: summer, fall/autumn, winter and spring.
- Winter in most of Canada is cold, with temperatures well below 0 degrees Celsius. In many parts of Canada, there can be snow from as early as late October until April.
- Winter in southwest British Columbia (including the cities of Vancouver and Victoria) is temperate (usually above zero degrees) and rain is more common than snow.
- Winters in northern Canada are long and very cold. The Yukon holds the record for the coldest temperature ever recorded in Canada (-63 degrees Celsius).
- Canada extends across six different time zones.
- Most areas of Canada observe Daylight Savings Time. Clocks are turned forward by one hour on the second Sunday in March, and back one hour on the first Sunday of November; many Canadians use the expression “spring forward and fall back” to remember which way to turn the clocks.

Canada's Time Zones

 <p>Eastern time 12:00 noon (Ontario, Quebec, Nunavut)</p>	 <p>Atlantic time +1 hour to Eastern time (Labrador, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island)</p>	 <p>Newfoundland time +1.5 hr to Eastern time (Newfoundland)</p>
 <p>Pacific time -3 hrs from Eastern time (British Columbia, Yukon Territory)</p>	 <p>Mountain time -2 hrs from Eastern time (Alberta, Northwest Territories)</p>	 <p>Central time -1 hr from Eastern time (Manitoba, Saskatchewan)</p>

Learn more:

🔗 About the weather at www.weatheroffice.gc.ca.

Extreme Weather

Many regions of Canada experience extreme temperatures. Winter can be very cold and windy, while summer can be hot and humid. There are dangers associated with very cold and very hot weather conditions. Three measures that alert us to these dangers are the wind chill index, the air quality index and the UV index. These measures are often included in weather reports.



In Winter Weather

One danger associated with very cold weather is frostbite. The wind chill index is a combined measure of the temperature and the wind speed. This combined measure tells us how cold it will feel outside and is used to measure the risk of frostbite. Frostbite is when exposed areas of the body freeze.

Wind Chill Index (combined measure of the temperature and wind speed)			
Low (0 to -27°C) <i>If outside for long periods, dress warmly.</i>	Moderate (-28 to -39°C) <i>Exposed skin can freeze in 10 to 30 minutes.</i>	High (-40 to -47°C) <i>Exposed skin can freeze in 5 to 10 minutes.</i>	Very High (-48 to -54°C) <i>Exposed skin can freeze in 2 to 5 minutes.</i>

In Summer Weather

Three dangers associated with hot weather are sunburn, heat exhaustion and heatstroke.

The humidex is a combined measure of the temperature and the humidity. This combined measure tells us how warm it will feel outside and can be used to measure the risk of heatstroke. Heatstroke happens when someone's body temperature rises rapidly and can be very dangerous.

The Humidex	
20-29	no discomfort
30-39	some discomfort
40-45	great discomfort; avoid exertion
46 +	dangerous; possible heat stroke

The UV index measures the strength of the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays are, and is used to measure the risk of sunburn and skin damage. Higher numbers mean higher risk from the sun's rays.

The UV Index			
Low (0–2) <i>Enjoy outdoor activities; wear sunglasses and sunscreen.</i>	Moderate (3–5) <i>Wear a hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen.</i>	High (6–7) <i>Reduce time in the sun; seek shade, wear a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen.</i>	Very high (8–10) <i>Avoid the sun; seek shade, wear a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen.</i>

Learn more:

🔗 About Canada's weather and how to prevent cold and warm weather injuries. Visit the Environment Canada website at www.ec.gc.ca/meteo-weather

Holidays and Symbols

National Anthem



*Oh Canada!
Our home and native land!
True patriot love in all thy sons command.*

*With glowing hearts we see thee rise,
The True North strong and free!
From far and wide, O Canada,
We stand on guard for thee.*

*God keep our land glorious and free!
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.*

Statutory Holidays

There are four statutory holidays observed in all of Canada's provinces and territories. On statutory holidays, government offices, banks, schools and most businesses are closed.



New Year's Day January 1
Canada Day July 1
Labour Day First Monday in September
Christmas Day December 25

Each province and territory has its own additional statutory holidays.

Symbols of Canada

The Canadian Flag

This flag was first raised on February 15, 1965.



The Maple Leaf

The maple leaf has been used as a symbol of Canada since the 1700s.



The Parliament Buildings

The parliament buildings are in Ottawa. The tower in the centre of the buildings is called the Peace Tower.



Canada's Coat of Arms

The Coat of Arms can be seen on public buildings, government documents and all paper currency.



The Beaver

A symbol of industriousness, the beaver can be found on Canada's five-cent coin.



Learn more:

🔍 About holidays and symbols: Canadian Heritage: www.pch.gc.ca.

Canada's People

Key Facts

Canada has a population of over 34 million people.

- Aboriginal Peoples were the first people to live in Canada.
- Aboriginal Peoples comprise three distinct groups: First Nations, Métis and Inuit. First Nations and Métis live in all parts of Canada. Inuit live primarily in the north.
- “French Canadians” are descendants of French settlers who came to Canada in the 1600s and 1700s.
- “English Canadians” are descendants of English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish settlers who came to Canada from the 17th to the 20th centuries.
- Over the past 200 years, millions of immigrants from around the world have made Canada their home. Until the 1970s, most immigrants came from Europe. Since then, the majority have come from Asian countries.
- Canada has two official languages, French and English. Consumer goods include information in both languages. The federal government provides services throughout Canada in French and English.



Languages Spoken at Home

Most people in Canada speak English, and just over 20 percent of the population speaks French. But many people in Canada first learned to speak a language other than English or French. The language a person first learns and still understands, is his or her mother-tongue. The list table on the right shows the 12 most common mother-tongue languages in Canada.

12 most common mother-tongue languages in Canada (2006)

Language	Number of People
English	17,883,000
French	6,818,000
Chinese languages	1,012,000
Italian	455,000
German	451,000
Punjabi	368,000
Spanish	345,000
Arabic	262,000
Tagalog	236,000
Portuguese	219,000
Polish	211,000
Vietnamese	142,000

Source: 2006 census data, accessed on Feb 12, 2012, www.statcan.ca/101/cst01/demo11a-eng.htm.

Learn more:

- 📖 About Canada's population: Statistics Canada: www.statcan.gc.ca
- 📖 Canadian Heritage: www.pch.gc.ca

Canada's Government

Key Facts

- Canada is a **federal state** with three levels of government: federal, provincial and municipal. Each level has its own responsibilities; the federal government is responsible for matters relating to national and international concerns.
- Canada is a **parliamentary democracy**. This means that Canadians elect people to represent them at the different levels of government.
- Canada is a **constitutional monarchy**. The Queen or King of England is the Canada's **head of state** while the Prime Minister is the **head of government**. The Queen/King is represented in Canada by the **Governor General**.

The responsibilities of each level of government are outlined in Canada's **Constitution**. These responsibilities include:

Federal government	Provincial or territorial government	Municipal (local) government
<p>Responsible for matters that affect the whole country, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National defence • Foreign policy • Immigration • International trade • Aboriginal affairs • Employment insurance • Post office 	<p>Some responsibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health care • Education • Transportation • Environment • Social services • Immigration (shared with federal government) 	<p>Some responsibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garbage collection • Snow removal • Water • Fire department • Ambulance services • Parks and recreation • Local policing

Learn more:

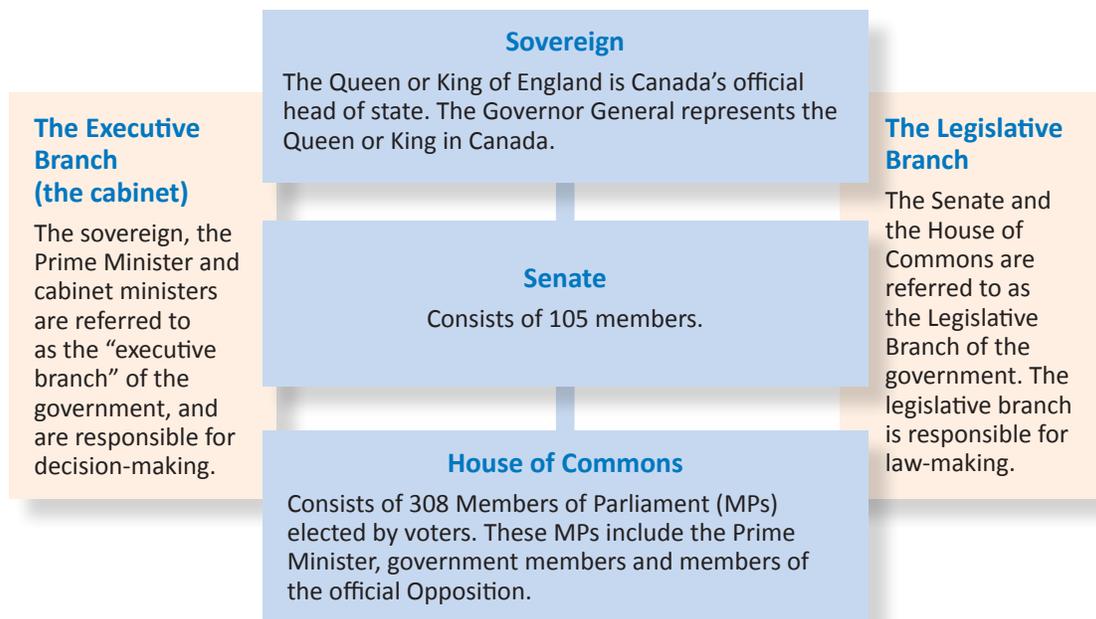
-  About Canada's Parliament: Parliament of Canada, www.parl.gc.ca. On the homepage, click on *About Parliament*.
-  *How Canadians Govern Themselves* (58 pp). This booklet explains Canada's parliamentary system. View or print it from the Parliament of Canada website, or order a printed copy. Find it by typing its title in the site search bar on the Parliament of Canada website homepage.

Canada's Parliament

Canada as a Parliamentary Democracy

- Canada's Parliament includes three parts: The sovereign (Queen or King of England), the Senate (appointed by the Prime Minister) and the House of Commons (elected by voters).
- The Queen/King is Canada's **head of state**. The Prime Minister is the head of government.
- The sovereign (Queen/King) is represented in Canada by the **Governor General**. The Governor General is appointed by the Queen/King on the advice of the Prime Minister.
- The **Senate** considers and reviews **bills** (proposals for new laws). A bill can only become law if it has been approved by both the Senate and the House of Commons, and receives royal assent from the Governor General.
- At the time this book was printed, Canada had 308 members of Parliament, but this number was expected to grow to 338, so it may be higher now.
- The **House of Commons** is where the elected members of parliament sit. Each member of Parliament represents a different geographical area in Canada called a **riding** or **electoral district**. Members of Parliament include government members (members of the ruling party that won the most seats in the election) and opposition members (members from all the other parties that won seats in the election). The party that wins the second largest number of seats in an election is called the **official Opposition**.
- The cabinet is made up of several cabinet ministers. Cabinet ministers are advisors to the Prime Minister. They are elected members of Parliament that are selected by the Prime Minister to manage different ministries (e.g., Ministry of Finance).

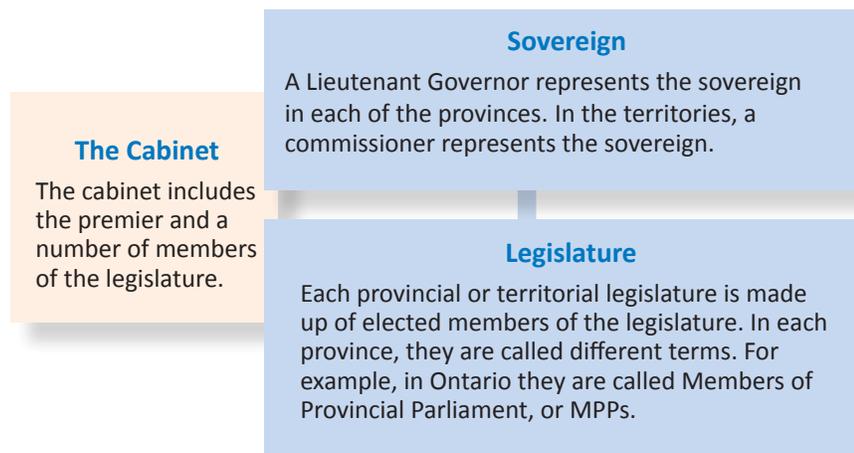
Canada's Parliament



Provincial and Territorial Governments

Key Facts

- Provincial/territorial governments have two main parts: The sovereign and the legislature.
- The sovereign is represented in provinces by a **Lieutenant Governor** and in the territories by a **Commissioner**.
- The **premier** is the leader of the provincial/territorial government.
- The legislature is where the elected members of the legislature sit. Each member represents a different geographical area in the province or territory, called a riding. The legislature includes government members and opposition members.
- The cabinet is made up of several provincial/territorial cabinet ministers who are advisors to the premier. They are elected members of the legislature that manage different provincial ministries (e.g., Ministry of Health).



Municipal Governments

- Municipal governments are headed by an elected leader called a **mayor** or **reeve**.
- Municipal governments usually have a council with elected members called **councillors** or **aldermen**. Council has the authority to pass local laws called **bylaws**.

First Nations Governance

- The First Nations have **band councils** that govern First Nations communities.
- Band councils are headed by an elected leader called a **band chief**, and include **band councillors**.
- Band councils are responsible for governing First Nations reserves, including housing, schools and other services.
- 📖 To learn more about First Nations governance, go to *Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada*: www.aandc-aadnc.gc.ca.

Federal Elections

Key Facts

- According to Canada's Constitution, a federal election must be held within five years of the last election.
- Canada is divided into 308 electoral districts or **ridings** (this number may be higher now). A riding is a geographical area represented by a **member of Parliament**. Canadians in each riding elect a member of Parliament that sits in the House of Commons in Ottawa.
- The people who run for office are called **candidates**. Most candidates belong to a political party.
- Each riding may have many candidates representing different political parties. Five main federal parties are:
 - Bloc Québécois
 - Conservative Party of Canada
 - Green Party
 - Liberal Party of Canada
 - New Democratic Party
- The candidate who receives the most votes in a riding becomes the member of Parliament for that riding. Your member of Parliament has an office in your riding.
- The political party with the greatest number of elected representatives becomes **the party in power**. The leader of the party in power becomes the **Prime Minister of Canada**.
- The parties that are not in power are called the opposition parties. The opposition party with the most members of Parliament is called the **official Opposition**. The role of the opposition parties is to oppose or try to improve government proposals.



Learn more:

- 🔗 About election results: www.elections.ca
- 🔗 About political parties: Enter the name of the political party in a search engine search bar.

Canada's Justice System

Key Facts

- The role of the courts is to resolve disputes between individuals and between the state and individuals. Many disputes are resolved out of court through **mediation** or **arbitration**.
- If you need help in a Canadian court, it's a good idea to hire a lawyer to represent you.
- Depending on your income, you may receive legal services free of charge (legal aid).

Helpful terms

Civil law: deals with issues that are non-criminal such as property ownership, child custody, etc.

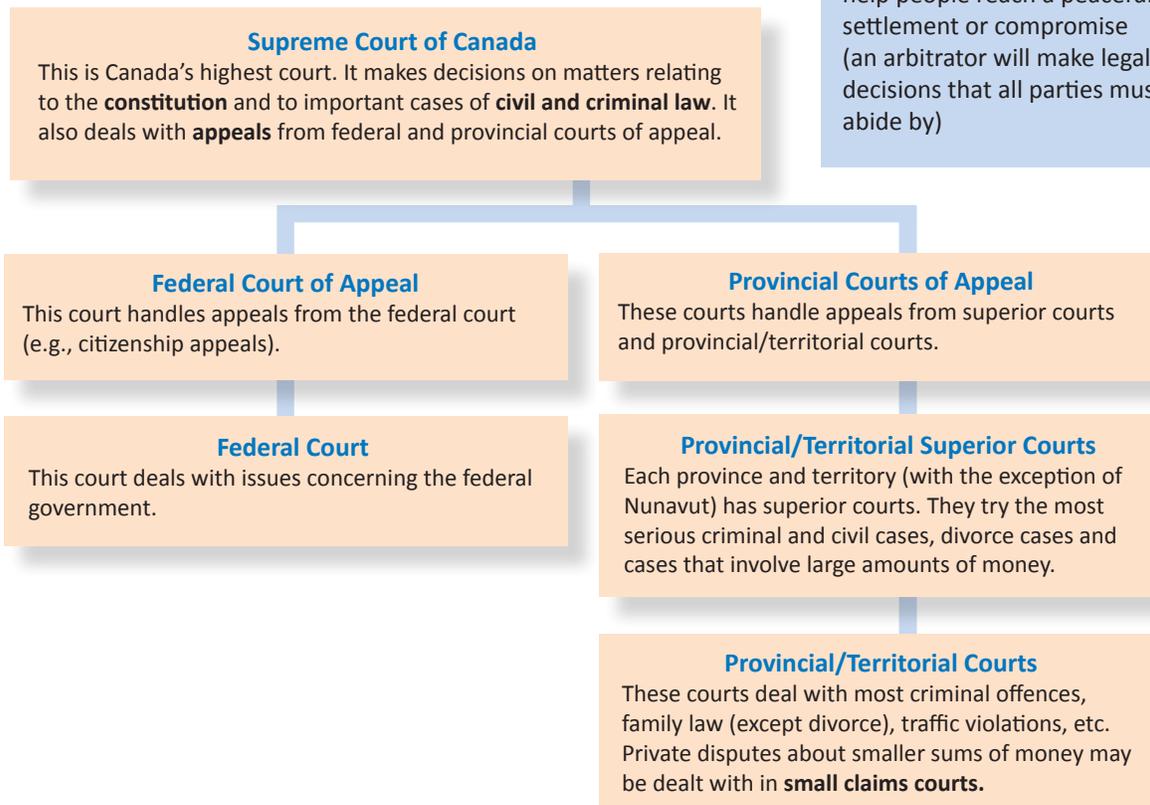
Criminal law: deals with crimes and their punishments

Appeal: legal proceeding where a higher court reviews a decision made by a lower court

Mediation: using a neutral person to help people who are in disagreement reach a peaceful settlement or compromise

Arbitration: using a neutral person with legal authority to help people reach a peaceful settlement or compromise (an arbitrator will make legal decisions that all parties must abide by)

Canada's Court System



Learn more:

- 📖 About Canada's system of justice: Go to www.laws.justice.gc.ca. On the homepage, click on *Key Publications*. Click on *Canada's Court System* for an online booklet about the court system. Click on *Canada's System of Justice* for an online booklet about the justice system.

Canada's Laws

Key Facts

- The laws in Canada apply to everyone; this includes the police, government and public officials.
- The role of the police is to keep people safe and enforce the law.
- Canadian residents must report to the police any crimes they know about or that they see happen.
- You can ask for assistance from the police in all kinds of situations—for example if there has been an accident, if someone has stolen something from you, if someone has hurt you or if someone has gone missing.
- If you need to call the police in an emergency, call 911.



If You Are Arrested

- Anyone who is arrested in Canada has the right to know what crime they have been charged with, the right to consult with a lawyer and the right to a fair trial in court.
- In Canada, everyone is presumed innocent until proven guilty.
- Canadians must know the law. If you are charged with an offence, you cannot be excused by claiming you did not know you were breaking the law.
- Someone who has committed very serious crimes can be labelled a “dangerous offender” and be put in jail for the rest of his/her life.

Some laws that apply to families

- Same-sex marriage is legal.
- A divorce is legal if granted by a court of law.
- From the age of five or six until 16 or 18 (depending on the province or territory), children and youth must receive some form of education.
- Family violence includes any form of abuse, mistreatment or neglect that children or adults experience with other members of their family.
- People found guilty of family violence are severely punished under Canadian law.

Learn more:

About Canada's laws:

Legal Line provides free legal information through a website and telephone service. Information on hundreds of Canadian law topics is available on the website.

🔗 Go to www.legalline.ca

→ Select your province or territory

→ Select a topic

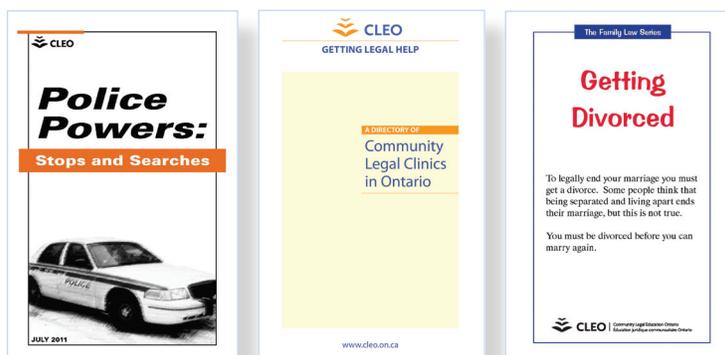
Getting Legal Advice

JusticeNet is a not-for-profit service helping people in need of legal expertise whose income is too high to access legal aid and too low to afford standard legal fees.

🔗 Go to www.justicenet.ca

Learning More About Canada's Laws

The Government of Canada funds one organization in each province and territory to help provide people with clear information to understand Canada's laws. Many of the organizations have free booklets and fact sheets available online. The images below are samples of available online booklets from Community Legal Information Ontario.



AB	Legal Resource Centre of Alberta	www.legalresourcecentre.ca
BC	The People's Law School	www.publiclegaled.bc.ca
MB	Community Legal Association of Manitoba	www.communitylegal.mb.ca
NL	Public Legal Information Association of Newfoundland	www.publiclegalinfo.com
NB	Public Legal Education and Information Service of New Brunswick	www.legal-info-legale.nb.ca
NS	Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia	www.legalinfo.org
ON	Community Legal Education Ontario	www.cleo.on.ca
PEI	Community Legal Information Association of PEI	www.cliapei.ca
QC	Educaloi	www.educaloi.qc.ca
SK	Public Legal Education Association of Saskatchewan	www.plea.org
NU	Public Legal Education Association of Nunavut	(867) 360-4601
NT	Legal Service Board of the Northwest Territories	www.justice.gov.nt.ca/legalaid
YT	Yukon Public Legal Education Association	www.yplea.com

Housing

Key Facts

- The laws governing landlords and tenants are set by each province or territory.
- If your income is very low, you may qualify for subsidized (government-supported) housing. You have to apply for subsidized housing; there are usually long waiting lists.
- There is emergency (short-term) housing available for people who need it.
- If you own your home, you can do what you want with your property—up to a point. You still have to obey municipal bylaws, building codes and federal and provincial laws, such as those protecting the environment.

There are different types of accommodation that you can rent or buy:

<p>One floor of a rented house is sometimes called a <i>suite</i> or a <i>flat</i>. It's possible to rent the basement or just one room in some houses.</p>	<p>A semi-detached home is attached to another on one side.</p>	<p>A townhouse is a home that is attached to another on both sides.</p>	<p>Bachelor, one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments can be rented or bought as condominiums.</p>
<p>Detached House</p> 	<p>Semi Detached House</p> 	<p>Townhouse</p> 	<p>Apartment</p> 

Tips for finding rental housing

- Look in the classified section (also called want ads) of a newspaper.
- Visit neighbourhoods where you would like to live and look for Apartments Available or For Rent signs.
- Look on Internet websites that list rental properties.
- Look in free community newspapers.
- Look on community bulletin boards, such as in grocery stores, community centres or laundromats.
- Ask for help at an immigrant-serving organization.
- Pay for the services of a rental agency to find a place for you.

Learn more:

- 🔗 Visit the Housing for Newcomers website, at www.cmhc.ca/newcomers. On the homepage, click on *Renting an Apartment*; information is available in eight languages.

Landlord and Tenant Rights and Responsibilities

Key Facts

A landlord may ask you to sign a lease (also called a tenancy agreement or a rental contract) that outlines terms you both agree to. This is a legal document. Read it carefully before signing.

- If a landlord is not meeting his or her responsibilities, you can contact the rental authority in the province/territory where you live for assistance.



Some Rights and Responsibilities

As a landlord	As a tenant
<p><i>You are responsible for ...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collecting rent• Keeping the building safe and in good condition• Providing everything that is included in the rent (such as the refrigerator, stove, heating)• Handling and paying for repairs when something stops working	<p><i>You are responsible for ...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paying the rent in full and on time• Keeping the rental unit clean and well maintained• Contacting the landlord when something needs repairs (you have to pay for anything you break)• Giving notice when you move out• Allowing the landlord to enter the unit (with proper notice) to carry out repairs and to show the apartment to other people when you are planning to move out
<p><i>You have the right to ...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Raise the rent once a year according to guidelines set by the provincial or territorial government• Enter the rental unit for a valid reason, with proper notice (e.g., to make repairs)• Evict a tenant with a valid reason (e.g., non-payment of rent or persistent late payment)	<p><i>You have the right to ...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rent an apartment without discrimination. Your landlord cannot discriminate because of your race, religion, sex, age, sexual orientation, marital or family status, disability or because you are a newcomer

Learn more:

- 🔗 About your rights as a tenant. Go to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation website: www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca.

Buying a Home



Key Facts

- Buying a home is a complex process. Most people rely on the services of real estate agents, lawyers, mortgage brokers, insurance brokers and home inspectors.
- There are many upfront costs to purchasing a home. These are things you have to pay for before you move in, such as land registration fees, pre-paid property taxes and utilities, property insurance and legal fees.

Useful Tips

Looking for a home	Many homebuyers rely on a real estate agent to help them find a home. A real estate agent will look for suitable properties based on your needs, arrange for you to see different homes, and negotiate the price and the contract with the seller. A real estate agent's services are usually free for the homebuyer.
Getting a lawyer	A good lawyer will explain the steps in buying a house and provide valuable advice. A lawyer is needed to prepare all of the necessary documents to legally transfer a property into your name. In Québec, a notary is often used instead of a lawyer.
Making an offer	Once you have found a home that suits your needs, you will make an offer to purchase . The offer will be prepared by the real estate agent or your lawyer (or notary) if you do not have an agent.
Having a home inspection done	It's a good idea to have a professional home inspection done before purchasing a home to make sure there are no serious problems with the house. Many people make their offers to purchase subject to a satisfactory home inspection to protect themselves in case there is a problem with the house.
Financing your home	All homebuyers must pay a portion of the cost of their new home in advance. This is called a down payment . Most people do not have enough money to pay the full cost of the home without a loan from a bank. A loan for buying a home is called a mortgage .

Learn more:

- 📖 About your rights as a tenant. Go to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation website: www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca.

Occupations in Canada

There are two types of occupations in Canada: regulated and non-regulated. Most occupations are non-regulated. Below are some differences between regulated and non-regulated occupations.

Regulated occupations



- There are two categories of regulated occupations in Canada: professions (e.g., doctors, engineers, teachers) and skilled trades (e.g., plumbers, electricians).
- You need to have a licence or certificate to work in a regulated occupation.
- To get a licence or certificate, you may need to have special education and/or Canadian work experience, pass exams and take a language test.
- You will need to have your credentials assessed. Your previous education, skills and work experience are your credentials. A credentials assessment compares your credentials from another country to the Canadian equivalents.
- Regulated occupations often have professional organizations that are responsible for protecting public safety and ensuring that professional standards are met.

Non-regulated occupations



- About 80 per cent of all occupations are non-regulated.
- You don't need a licence to work in a non-regulated occupation.
- Some non-regulated jobs require years of education and specialized training (e.g., economists, computer systems analysts); others require very little formal training (e.g., food and beverage servers).

Learn more:

- About occupations in Canada from the Job Bank website (jobbank.gc.ca), which has information on over 500 Canadian occupations. Use the website to learn about required qualifications and job opportunities.

Job Search in Canada

There are many ways to look for a job. You can:

- Check job-search websites (e.g., Service Canada’s job bank)
- Check industry-specific websites (e.g., websites of companies or organizations that hire people in your field of work)
- Contact employers directly to ask if they are hiring
- Get assistance from a local employment resource center or an immigrant-serving organization
- Attend job fairs in your city or town—job fairs bring together employers and people looking for jobs so they can meet and discuss opportunities
- Look at the job ads in the classified section of your local newspaper
- Look at help wanted signs on store windows and on bulletin boards in community centres or supermarkets
- Use an employment agency that will search for jobs on your behalf
- Ask family, friends and acquaintances if they know about available positions

To apply for a position, you may have to:

Send a résumé and cover letter	Fill out an application form	Attend a job interview
		
<p>A résumé is a formal list of your qualifications and work experience. A cover letter is a short description of what makes you a strong candidate for that position.</p> <p>It is common for people to send many résumés and cover letters to different places before being invited for a job interview.</p>	<p>Some jobs require that you fill out an application form rather than submit a résumé and cover letter.</p>	<p>Based on your résumé and cover letter, you may be invited for a job interview.</p> <p>The interview gives the employer a chance to meet you and ask questions to see if you are right for the position.</p> <p>After the interview, you may receive a job offer.</p>

Learn more:

- 🔗 About looking for a job by visiting the Job Bank website (jobbank.gc.ca), which has information on over 500 Canadian occupations, including information about required qualifications and job openings.

Canadian Work Experience

There are a number of different programs that can help you gain Canadian work experience.

Apprenticeship

In an apprenticeship, you learn a skilled occupation through a combination of paid on-the-job training and classroom-based instruction. Apprentices work towards becoming qualified tradespersons, sometimes referred to as journeypersons.

To become an apprentice, you must be sponsored by an employer, who is responsible for providing you with a work placement for the duration of the apprenticeship. You must also take courses, sometimes called training blocks, to supplement your learning. These courses are typically offered through community colleges and union training centres. Apprenticeships usually take between two and five years, depending on the occupation. When you meet the conditions for hours worked and all required courses and exams, you receive a Certificate of Qualification for the province or territory.



Bridge Training Programs

Some colleges, universities and community agencies offer bridge training programs for internationally trained individuals in certain professions or trades. These programs are designed to help newcomers gain employment. They can provide:

- An assessment of your education, skills and language abilities to identify additional training you may need
- Occupation-specific language training
- Skills training
- Preparation for a licence or certification examination
- Information about how to get your credentials assessed
- Job counselling
- Experience in a Canadian workplace

Internships

An internship involves on-the-job training and may be either paid or unpaid. Internships can be part-time or full-time depending on the company, and are a good way to improve your language skills, develop your knowledge of the Canadian workplace and develop contacts for future job searches.

Learn more:

- 🔗 About trades and apprenticeships at Human Resources and Skills Development Canada: www.hrsdc.gc.ca. On the homepage, click on *Trades and Apprenticeship*. The website www.apprenticetrades.ca also has useful information on this subject.
- 🔗 About internships at Career Edge: www.careeredge.ca.

Self-Employment

There were almost 2.7 million people in Canada who were self-employed in 2010.

- Self-employed individuals must report their income, pay income tax and file income tax returns.
- There are three different business structures: sole proprietorship, partnership and incorporation.
- Most businesses have to be registered in Canada. The exception is small businesses owned by a single person (sole proprietorship) whose total annual earnings are less than \$30,000.



Steps in Starting a Business

Find out

Find out about the laws and requirements for starting a business

Develop a business plan

A business plan is a written document that describes your business, its objectives and strategies, the market you are targeting and how much money you expect to make with your business. It also includes details about the structure of your business, its name and location, and market research to make sure your business is a good idea.

Organize your finances

Decide what type of financing is right for your business, and arrange for it.

Register your business

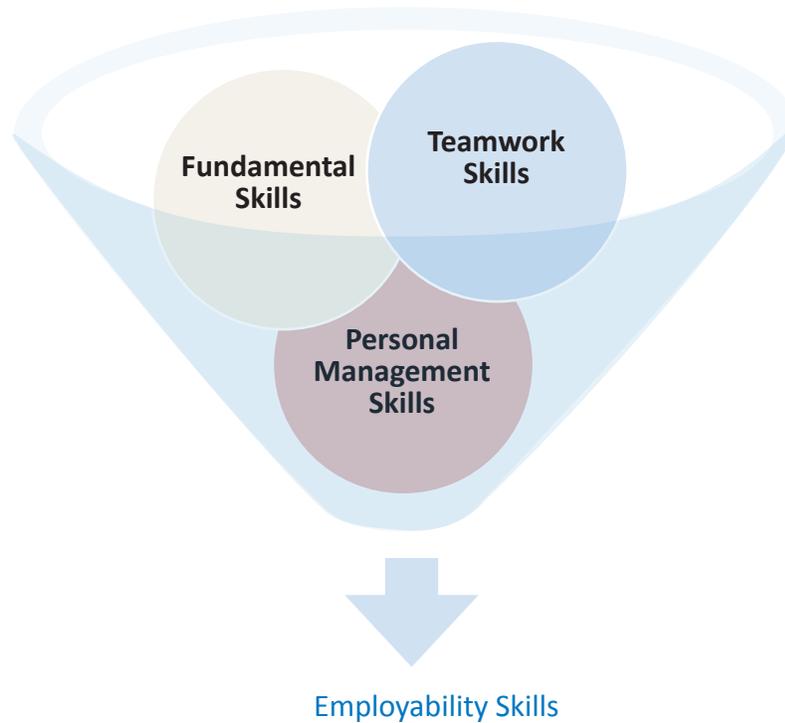
Most businesses require various forms of registration with federal, provincial, territorial and sometimes municipal agencies. Once you complete the process, you will have a business number, a registered business name and a PST, GST or HST account.

Learn more:

- 🔗 About government programs, services and tools for starting a business: www.canadabusiness.ca and www.servicecanada.gc.ca; on the homepage, click on *Starting a Business*.
- 🔗 About financing a small business: visit Industry Canada at www.ic.gc.ca.
- 🔗 About the permit and licence process: www.bizpal.ca.
- Your municipal government is also a good source of information for starting a business.

Employability Skills

Many jobs require specific skills. These are sometimes referred to as *technical skills*, *hard skills* or *job skills*. But employers also like to hire people with good employability skills, sometimes referred to as *soft skills*. Unlike specific job skills, employability skills are important for *all* kinds of work. Here are some examples of employability skills:



Fundamental skills	Personal management skills	Teamwork skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communicating with others ▪ Managing information (e.g., finding, organizing and using information) ▪ Using numbers (e.g., measuring, calculating, estimating) ▪ Thinking and solving problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Having a positive attitude (showing interest and initiative) ▪ Being responsible ▪ Managing your time ▪ Being adaptable (e.g., working independently or as part of a team, carrying out multiple tasks or projects) ▪ Learning continuously ▪ Working safely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Working with others (e.g., being flexible, accepting and providing feedback in a constructive and considerate manner, contributing to a team by sharing information, leading or supporting when appropriate, managing and resolving conflicts) ▪ Participating in projects & tasks (e.g., planning and carrying out a project)

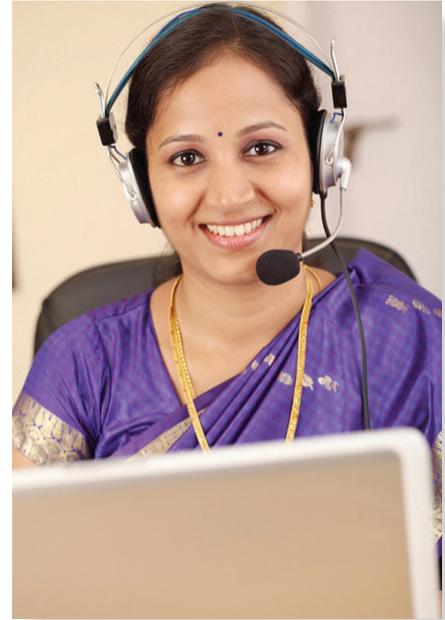
Source: Adapted from The Conference Board of Canada-*Employability Skills 2000+*, www.conferenceboard.ca/Libraries/EDUC_PUBLIC/esp2000.sflb.

Professional Behaviour in Canada¹

Professionalism means showing skill or care when you are doing a job. People are hired because of their skills, knowledge, and ability to do the job. However, the way they do the job is often important to their success.

Here are some helpful tips for being professional in Canada:

- Create a professional image. Look at how people in the industry and in your company dress, and wear clothes that are similar in formality and style. When you look like you fit in, people tend to trust you more easily.
- Learn the terminology that people use in your industry.
- Be polite and respectful, and have a positive attitude.
- Listen to others. Try to understand what they need and want. When in doubt, clarify information by asking questions.
- Be reliable. If you say you will do something, make sure you do it.
- Be punctual and prompt. This includes being on time for work and for meetings, as well as responding promptly to voice and email messages.
- Be easy to work with. Support your manager. Help your colleagues do their jobs.
- Consider how you can participate in company events and celebrations.
- Find out what your manager and your company expect you to do. Show that you are motivated, and work hard to meet your goals.
- Take responsibility for what you do. If you make a mistake, apologize and try to fix the problem.



Learn more:

- 🔍 Enter the following search terms in your Internet browser: *Business culture in Canada.*

¹ This page is adapted from *You're Hired...Now What? An Immigrant's Guide to Success in the Canadian Workplace*. Lynda Goldman. Copyright © Oxford University Press Canada, 2010. Adapted by permission of the publisher.

Workers' Rights in Canada

Key Facts

- There are laws called employment standards. They set the standards for basic working conditions in each province and territory.
- There are also human rights laws that prevent employers from treating employees unfairly or discriminating against them.
- Workers in Canada have the right to join a labour union. Unions negotiate wages, hours of work and working conditions for their members.

Employment Standards

Each province and territory has employment standards that set the minimum standards that employers and employees must follow. Employment standards include laws on minimum hourly wages, hours of work, annual vacation, statutory holidays, layoff procedures and severance pay (compensation paid by the employer to an employee who is laid off or let go).

Health and Safety in the Workplace

All workers in Canada have the right to work in a safe and healthy environment. The federal, provincial and territorial governments protect workers' rights through laws, programs and services designed to prevent accidents and injuries on the job.



Human Rights

There are federal, provincial and territorial laws that protect workers from being treated unfairly by employers because of their age, gender, marital status, disability or sexual orientation. For example, employers must hire employees based on their qualifications. They cannot refuse to hire someone because they don't like their skin colour or religion. They also cannot prevent women, members of visible minorities or Aboriginal Peoples from advancing to higher positions.

Learn more:

- 🔗 About employment standards on the Ministry of Labour website: www.labour.gc.ca. On the homepage, click on *Employment Standards*, then click on *provincial or territorial ministry of labour*.
- 🔗 About health and safety laws in your province on the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety website: www.ccohs.ca. On the homepage, enter *Provincial Workers Compensation Boards* in the site search box.
- 🔗 About human rights in your province or territory on the Canadian Human Rights Commission website: www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca. On the homepage, click on *Links*, then click on *Provincial and Territorial Human Rights Agencies*.

Pay Deductions

Key Facts

- All workers pay income tax on the money they earn.
- A paycheque includes **gross pay**, deductions and **net pay**.
- Gross pay is a worker's pay with not deductions. Net pay is the gross amount minus deductions for things like employment insurance, Canada Pension Plan contributions and income tax).



Employment Insurance (EI)

Employment Insurance (EI) is a federal government program that provides temporary financial assistance to unemployed people who meet certain criteria. People can receive EI benefits (payments) if they have been laid off, or cannot work because they are sick or caring for a newborn child or seriously ill family member.

Employed workers in Canada must pay EI contributions; employers deduct contributions from their paycheque. Self-employed workers can choose to make EI contributions. Only people who have contributed to the EI program can apply for EI benefits in a time of need.

Canada Pension Plan (CPP)

The Canada Pension Plan (CPP) is a federal program that provides an income to people who have worked in Canada and have reached the age of 60 to 65. The CPP can also provide basic financial support to you if you become sick or to your family if you die.

Anyone who works in Canada must pay into the CPP. Employers deduct CPP contributions directly from employees' paycheques.

Income Tax

Residents of Canada must pay income tax on their income. Employers usually deduct income tax from employees' paycheques. Self-employed workers may have to pay income tax in a single payment or several installments.

Each year, working-age Canadians must submit an Income Tax and Benefit Return to inform the government of how much money they earned and how much tax they paid. If they paid too much tax, they will get a refund. If they paid too little, they will have to pay more.

Learn more:

- 📄 About income tax. Go to the Canada Revenue Agency website, www.cra-arc.gc.ca; on the homepage, click on Individuals; then click on Educators; then click on Learning About Taxes.
- 📄 About EI and CPP. Visit Service Canada: www.servicecanada.gc.ca.
- About EI. Call the Service Canada Employment Insurance Automated Information Line: 1-800-206-7218.
- 📄 About the Québec Pension Plan (QPP): www.rrq.gouv.qc.ca.

Education in Canada

Key Facts

- The provincial and territorial governments are responsible for their own systems of education.
- Attending school is mandatory until the age of 15 to 18 depending on the province/territory.
- Elementary and secondary education is free in all public schools and paid for by tax dollars. However, there are also private schools that charge tuition fees.
- Post-secondary institutions include colleges, universities and institutes. Some of these institutions are recognized by the provincial or territorial government and others are not. Students pay tuition fees for most post-secondary programs of study.



Elementary and Secondary Schools

There are two basic levels of government-funded education for children and youth in Canada: elementary and secondary education. Because Canada has two official languages, there are English-language and French-language schools. Some provinces have separate (Catholic) schools. School boards (sometimes called *school districts*, *school divisions* or *district education councils*) are responsible for managing public schools at the local level.

The school year typically begins after Labour Day in September and finishes at the end of June with two months' vacation in July and August. Students attend school from Monday to Friday. The school day typically lasts about six to seven hours.

Elementary school

- By law, children begin attending school by the age of five or six depending on the province or territory.
- Elementary school usually begins with kindergarten, followed by grades one to eight.
- Elementary education is free. There are sometimes additional costs (e.g., supplies, school trips, snack programs), which are paid for by parents or guardians.

Secondary school

- Secondary school includes grades nine to 12 in most provinces.
- Students who successfully complete secondary school receive a high-school diploma.
- Secondary education is free.
- There are adult education programs for adults who have not completed elementary or secondary education.

Learn more:

📞 Contact the appropriate ministry or department of education in your province or territory.

Post-Secondary Education

Key Facts

Post-secondary institutions in Canada include universities, university colleges, private career colleges and community colleges (sometimes called colleges of applied arts and technology, institutes of technology or, in Québec, Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel, also known as CEGEP).

- Some post-secondary institutions are recognized, which means the government allows them to grant degrees, diplomas, certificates or other qualifications. Others are not recognized and are not subject to government quality controls.
- If you don't have the money to pay for a post-secondary education, you may qualify for a loan, grant or scholarship.



Universities

In Canada, universities are independent institutions that receive some funding from the government. Students pay tuition fees to attend; some scholarships and government grants are available. Students must also cover the costs of textbooks and other fees.

Students usually enter university after successfully completing secondary school or the two-year CEGEP program in Québec. Most universities also have special entrance requirements and paths for mature students. Universities offer degrees at three consecutive levels:

- Bachelor's degree: three to four years of study depending on the province and the program
- Master's degree: one or two years of study after a bachelor's degree
- Doctoral degree: requires three to four years of study and research after completing a master's degree

Colleges

Colleges and institutes offer a range of programs in professional and technical fields, including business, health, applied arts, technology and social services.

Colleges generally issue diplomas to students who successfully complete two- and three-year programs, and certificates for completing programs that take up to one year. University degrees and applied degrees are offered in some colleges and institutes.

Learn more:

- 🔗 About the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials: www.cicic.ca. On the homepage, click on *Studying in Canada*; then click on *Recognized Postsecondary Education Programs in Canada*.
- 🔗 Visit the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada website: www.aucc.ca.
- 🔗 Visit CanLearn: www.canlearn.ca. CanLearn is a website that provides information about education for children, youth and adults, and about student loans, grants and scholarships.
- Contact individual universities, colleges and institutes directly.

Adult Continuing Education

Adult education courses are offered by universities, colleges, community organizations and local school boards. These are either **credit courses** (courses that lead to a certificate, diploma or degree) or **non-credit courses** which are usually taken out of interest.

Government-Funded Language Training

There are several English and French language training programs funded by either the federal or provincial governments that are free for adult newcomers to Canada. They are delivered by school boards, community agencies, colleges and universities. Programs:

- Can be full- or part-time
- Can be during the day, evening or weekends
- Can include information to help you settle in Canada
- May cover the cost of childcare and transportation to and from classes
- Can be available at different levels of English or French language ability
- Address the language skills you need to settle in Canada and participate in the community
- Can include language for specific occupations
- May be available online



Some programs are specifically designed to help people prepare for and find work in their professions and offer more than just language training. Some programs, for example, have bridge-to-work assistance, including mentorship, work placements and other employment help.

Private Language Classes

Private language classes are offered by private language schools. These schools charge a fee for classes.

In the Workplace

Some workplaces and unions offer language training to their employees or members. These classes are usually offered for free.

Learn more:

- Contact the Department of Education in your province or territory, a local school board or an agency serving immigrants in your community.

Health Care

Key Facts

- Canada's health care system is publicly funded, which means medical services are paid for through taxes collected by the government.
- The provincial and territorial governments are responsible for managing health care services.
- Provincial/territorial health insurance plans provide access to medically necessary services. However, you may need private insurance (often called supplementary health insurance) to pay for some expenses that government plans do not fully cover (e.g., prescription medications, dental care, physiotherapy or prescription eyeglasses).
- You need to have a health insurance card to use public health care services.

Seeing a Doctor



Many Canadians see a family doctor for basic health care and annual check-ups. The family doctor may request tests (such as blood tests) to identify problems and treat them early. If the tests detect problems, your family doctor may refer you to a **specialist** (e.g., a cardiologist or oncologist). Typically, you need a referral from a doctor to see a specialist. If you do not have a family doctor, you can see a doctor at many medical or walk-in clinics without an appointment.

Emergency Help



If you need urgent medical help, you can either go to the emergency department of the nearest hospital or call 911, the emergency number. All emergency medical services in hospitals are free, as is calling 911. However, depending on the province or territory and your circumstances, you might have to pay for ambulance services.

Seeing a Dentist



Dental care is generally not covered by provincial health insurance plans, although sometimes emergency dental care is covered. Some communities have dental clinics that offer free dental services to low-income patients. However, you can get supplementary insurance to cover the cost of dental care.

Learn more:

- 🔗 Go to the Health Canada website at www.hc-sc.gc.ca. On the home page, click on *Health Care System*; then click on *Health Care System Delivery/ Provincial/ Territorial Role in Health* (for a list of provincial/territorial ministries of health).

Money and Finances: Banking

Key Facts

In Canada, banks, trust companies and credit unions (*caisses populaires* in Québec) are safe places to keep your money.

- Many banks and trust companies are members of the *Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation* (CDIC). This means that if the institution fails, you can get up to \$100,000 of your savings back from CDIC.
- Canada's five largest banks are Bank of Montreal (BMO), Bank of Nova Scotia (Scotia Bank), Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC), Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) and TD Canada Trust.
- In Canada, you have the right to a bank account even if you don't have a job or have money to put into the account right away.
- You have the right to cash a cheque from the federal government free of charge at any bank.

Find out:

- 🔗 Is your financial institution a member of CDIC? Find out at www.cdic.ca.

Bank Accounts

To open an account, you have to go to the bank in person and present original documents that prove your identity. With a bank account, you can do your banking in person at a bank branch, at an ATM (automated teller machine), or through telephone or Internet banking.

You can use a bank account to:

- Deposit and withdraw money
- Pay bills
- Write cheques
- Make transfers between accounts
- Receive funds, such as your pay, through direct deposit
- Use a debit card to make purchases, deposit or withdraw money from an ATM



Bank Loans and Mortgages

A **mortgage** is a loan to buy a house. You can get a mortgage from a bank or a mortgage broker (someone who is licensed to negotiate a loan with a bank, trust company or private lender on your behalf). A mortgage is usually paid back over a long period of time (up to 25 years).

A **personal bank loan** may be useful if you need a loan to pay for large expenses such as post-secondary education, a car or a home renovation.

Money and Finances: Credit

If you need to borrow money to make a purchase or pay expenses, you can apply for credit. Credit can be in the form of a credit card, a line of credit, a mortgage or a bank loan. With all types of credit, except for credit cards that are paid in full by the due date, you have to pay the money back after a certain period of time with interest. Interest is a fee charged for borrowing the money. With any loan, it is important to make sure you clearly understand your obligations when it comes to late or missed payments, the payment of fees and the interest rate before signing the loan agreement.



Credit cards are a convenient way to shop. Some transactions (such as renting a car) cannot be made without a credit card. All the major banks and some large retail stores offer **credit cards**. There are many types of cards to choose from, so research the options to select the card that is best for you.

A **line of credit** allows you to borrow money when you need it without having to apply for a loan each time. A line of credit often has a lower interest rate than credit card advances.

A **“payday loan”** is a short-term loan that you pay back from your next pay cheque. Payday loans are a very expensive way to borrow money because of the high interest rates and processing fees charged by the lender. They are offered by privately owned payday loan companies and by most cheque-cashing outlets. These businesses may not be regulated by the government.

Credit Rating and Credit History

It's important to establish a good **credit rating**. A credit rating is an assessment of how reliable you are in paying your bills. Banks, credit card companies and even some landlords will check your credit rating when deciding whether or not to lend you money or rent to you. If you have a poor credit rating, a lender may refuse to give you a loan or you may have to pay a higher interest rate.

Your credit rating is determined from your **credit history**. A credit history is a record of the details of your past borrowing and repayment. In Canada, whenever you take out a loan, use a credit card or take advantage of a “buy now, pay later” offer, a credit-reporting agency collects this information. It becomes part of your credit history. One of the ways to start building a credit history is to get a credit card. To maintain a good credit history, make sure to always pay your bills in full and on time, including rent, utilities, cable and insurance premiums.

Learn more:

Go to the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada at www.fcac.gc.ca.

Did you know?

You can get a copy of your credit report for free. Send your request in writing with a copy of two pieces of I.D. to Equifax or TransUnion.

*Equifax Canada
National Consumer Relations
P.O. Box 190, Station Jean-Talon
Montréal, Québec H1S 2Z2*

*TransUnion Canada
Consumer Relations Centre
P.O. Box 338, LCD 1
Hamilton, Ontario L8L 7W2*

Québec Residents, send to:
*TransUnion (Echo Group)
1 Place Laval, Suite 370
Laval, Québec H7N 1A1*

Driving in Canada

Key Facts

- To drive a car in Canada, you must have a driver’s licence. Drivers’ licences are issued by provincial and territorial governments.
- The process for getting a driver’s licence in Canada depends on your province or territory and your driving background. As a new driver, you may need to pass a written examination and one or two driving tests.

Some Rules of the Road

You must	You must not
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Be covered by an automobile insurance plan to drive.✓ Follow the speed limits when driving.✓ Wear a seatbelt while driving.✓ Pull over to the side of the road immediately when you hear the sirens of emergency vehicles (police cars, ambulances, fire trucks).✓ Give priority to pedestrians and be respectful of cyclists.✓ Use your signals when you turn or switch lanes while driving.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✗ Drink alcohol and drive—if your blood alcohol level is above the legal limit, the penalties are severe.✗ Pass a yellow school bus that is stopped and has its red lights flashing, even if you are driving toward the bus in the opposite direction.✗ Leave the scene of an accident if you are involved.✗ Talk or text on a handheld cell phone while you are driving.

What to Do If You Have an Accident

If you have a minor accident, you must exchange the following information with the other driver: name, address, telephone number, licence plate and driver’s licence number, insurance company name and insurance plan number. You may also have to report the accident to the police.

If you have a serious accident with another vehicle or hit a pedestrian, call 911 for the police and an ambulance (if necessary).



Learn more:

Contact the ministry that regulates driving in your province or territory.

Becoming a Canadian Citizen

Key Facts

- To become a Canadian citizen, you must:
 - Be 18 years old or older
 - Be a permanent resident of Canada
 - Have lived in Canada for at least three of the four years before applying for citizenship

- To apply for citizenship, you must complete an application form and take a citizenship test (if you are between the ages of 18 and 54.) To pass the test, you must be able to speak either English or French at about CLB 4 or higher. You should be prepared to answer questions about:
 - Canada's history and geography
 - Canada's system of government
 - The rights and responsibilities of citizenship
 - Election and voting procedures

- Canadian citizens have the right to:
 - Vote in federal, provincial and municipal elections at the age of 18
 - Be a candidate in elections
 - Apply for a Canadian passport

- The right to become a Canadian citizen also comes with some duties and responsibilities, including:
 - Duty to serve on a jury if called to do so. **Jury duty** means you will be part of a group of people who sit through a court trial and make decisions based on the information presented.
 - Responsibility to vote in federal, provincial and municipal elections
 - Responsibility to help others in the community
 - Responsibility to protect Canada's natural, cultural and architectural heritage for future generations
 - Responsibility for yourself and your family



Learn more:

- 🔗 Go to the Citizenship and Immigration Canada website at www.cic.gc.ca. Click on *Citizenship*. There is a link to the official citizenship study guide, *Discover Canada*.
- 🔗 Go to <http://citizenshipcounts.ca>. There are study materials to help you learn about the content on the citizenship test.

Rights and Freedoms in Canada

Key Facts

- The Constitution is the highest law in Canada.
- The Constitution Act of 1982 includes the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* that protects human rights.
- If you feel your rights have been violated, you can take the matter to a court of law.

These are some rights and freedoms that the Charter guarantees:

- Freedom to express your beliefs and opinions freely
- Freedom to associate with anyone you wish and to gather peacefully with other people
- Freedom to practise any religion or no religion
- The right to live anywhere in Canada, and to leave Canada
- Legal rights such as the right to life, liberty and security
- The right to equality—you cannot be discriminated against because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability
- Language rights
- Aboriginal rights



Learn more:

- 🔗 Go to the Department of Justice Canada: www.laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/Charter. This links to the actual text of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
- 🔗 For information on rights in Canada, go to the Canadian Heritage website at www.pch.gc.ca; on the homepage, click on *Cultural Diversity and Rights*; then click on *Human Rights*.
- 🔗 *Your Guide to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* is an online booklet. To find it, type the title into the search box of your Internet browser.

Helpful Websites



i The federal government has websites with information for newcomers.

The federal government website offers information about:	www.canada.gc.ca
▪ Immigration and settlement	www.cic.gc.ca
▪ Federal government services and programs	www.servicecanada.gc.ca
▪ Employment in Canada	www.workingincanada.gc.ca
▪ Credentials assessments	www.credentials.gc.ca

i Provincial and territorial governments also have websites with information for newcomers.

Alberta	www.albertacanada.com/immigration
British Columbia	www.welcomebc.ca
Manitoba	www.immigratemanitoba.com
New Brunswick	www.gnb.ca/immigration
Newfoundland and Labrador	www.nlimmigration.ca
Northwest Territories	www.gov.nt.ca
Nova Scotia	www.novascotiainmigration.com
Nunavut	www.gov.nu.ca
Ontario	www.ontarioimmigration.ca and www.settlement.org
Prince Edward Island	www.gov.pe.ca/immigration
Québec	www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca
Saskatchewan	www.saskimmigrationcanada.ca
Yukon	www.immigration.gov.yk.ca



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My Province or Territory

Canada has 10 provinces and three territories, and extends across six different time zones.

Your province or territory's government website has information about living, working and travelling in your province or territory.



Visit the website of your province or territory and fill in the blanks below.

Alberta:	www.alberta.ca	Nunavut:	www.gov.nu.ca
British Columbia:	www.gov.bc.ca	Ontario:	www.ontario.ca
Manitoba:	www.gov.mb.ca	Prince Edward Island:	www.gov.pe.ca
New Brunswick:	www.gnb.ca	Quebec:	www.gouv.qc.ca
Newfoundland and Labrador:	www.gov.nl.ca	Saskatchewan:	www.gov.sk.ca
Northwest Territories:	www.gov.nt.ca	Yukon:	www.gov.yk.ca
Nova Scotia:	www.gov.ns.ca		

Population of province

Capital city

Population of capital city

Name of time zone

Find a [map](#) of your province or territory to keep in your binder.



My Community

Your community is the village, town or city in which you live. Each community has its own shopping centres, schools, restaurants, parks and community services. Most cities or towns have an official website. The official website will give provide facts about the community and about the municipal government. Go to the website and record the following information.

Official website of your city or town

Population of your city or town

Address of city hall

Mayor or reeve of your city or town

The name of the councillor for your municipal ward

Attractions and landmarks in the community

In your opinion, what is unique or special about your community?

Find a map of your community to keep in your binder.



Services in My Community

Find out about the government services in your community. Record the addresses and telephone numbers to get or renew these cards.

To work you need a **social insurance number (SIN)** card issued by the federal government.

Address and intersection:

Telephone number:

1-800-0-Canada

To see a doctor you need a **health card** issued by the provincial/territorial government.

Address and intersection:

Telephone number:

To drive a car you need a **driver's licence** issued by your provincial or territorial government.

Address and intersection:

Telephone number:

There are other community services you may want to use. Find the addresses, nearest intersections and hours of operation for the services below. To find immigrant-serving organizations in your community, call 1-888-242-2100 or visit www.servicesfornewcomers.cic.gc.ca.

Library

Address, intersection, phone:

Hours of operation, services offered:

Community centre

Address, intersection, phone:

Hours of operation, services offered:

Immigrant-serving organization

Address, intersection, phone:

Hours of operation, services offered:

Government

There are local representatives in your community for each level of government. Record details about the government representatives in your community.

Federal Government

Elections Canada (www.elections.ca) has information about federal representation in your community.

The Prime Minister of Canada

The political party he/she is leader of

The name of your federal electoral district

The name of your member of parliament

The political party he/she belongs to

Provincial or Territorial Government

Find the Elections website of your province or territory. Enter the search terms elections + the name of your province or territory in your Internet browser search bar.

The premier of your province or territory

The political party he/she is leader of

The name of your provincial electoral district

The name of the member of the legislature

The political party he/she belongs to

Transportation

Record information about public transportation services in your community.

Travelling Outside Your City or Town

Canada is the second largest country in the world, covering an area of 10 million square kilometres. You can travel by air, train or bus. There are several regional air carriers, but the airlines with the most extensive routes are Air Canada and WestJet. Cross-country trains are operated by VIA Rail, while Greyhound provides many bus routes throughout the country.



Find out about the regional transportation provider in your community that offers ground transportation to nearby towns and cities.

Name and website

Travelling Within Your City or Town

All cities and most major towns in Canada have public transportation services. Record information about public transportation in your city or town.

Name and website

Transportation provided

buses streetcars subways light rail transit

Cost

for 1 ticket/token

Adult fare: _____

Student fare: _____

Senior fare: _____

for _____ tickets/tokens

Find a [route map](#) of your local public transportation provider and the schedules of the routes you use often. Keep the map and the schedules in your binder.



Income Tax

Residents of Canada pay tax on their income to fund government programs and services.

If you are an employee, income tax is deducted directly from your pay cheques. Each year, you need to file an income tax return. If you have paid too much income tax during the year, you will get a refund. If you haven't paid enough, you will need to pay what is owing.



Canada has a progressive tax system. That means that the income tax rate increases as your income increases. The amount of income tax you pay depends on how much money you earn in a year. Fill in the blanks in the chart below to find out how this works.

Find out the income tax rates for your province or territory. Visit the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) website at www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/ndvdl/fq/txrts-eng.html. Record the information in the chart below.

Federal tax rates	Your province/territory tax rates
___ % on the first \$_____ of taxable income +	___ % on the first \$_____ of taxable income +
___ % on the next \$_____ of taxable income +	___ % on the next \$_____ of taxable income +
___ % on the next \$_____ of taxable income +	___ % on the next \$_____ of taxable income +
___ % on taxable income over \$_____	___ % on taxable income over \$_____

Canadians file an income tax return in April of each year. It may be a complex task to fill out the necessary forms. Some people choose to pay a professional to fill out the forms for them. Others get help from volunteers.

Did you know?

- You can get help with your tax return. The Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP) completes tax returns for people who need help but can't afford a professional accountant. To find out more about this free service, call 1-800-959-8281.
- You can listen to income tax information on the automated Tax Information Phone Service (TIPS), at 1-800-267-6999.
- You can read information about taxation on the Canada Revenue Agency website at www.cra-arc.gc.ca.

Job Search

Employment rates and job availability vary from region to region in Canada. The Canadian government developed the Job Bank website to help people find work and learn about job market trends. On the Job Bank website, you can:

- View current job openings in your community
- Subscribe to receive email alerts of new job postings
- Find out about current job market trends
- Identify occupations that in high demand
- Find out about the education requirements of occupations that interest you

Explore the Job Bank website. Go to www.jobbank.gc.ca. Click on Explore Careers. Enter the name of the occupation you are interested in, and your city or postal code. Then click on Go. The website will display a list of job openings. It will also provide other useful information, organized in to five main sections:

Description | Titles | Duties ▾

This section provides a description of the occupation, and a list of job titles and job duties. In the space below, write three job titles this occupation has.

 Jobs

This section lists current job openings for the occupation. Record the number of job openings below.

 Wages

This section lists the approximate wages you can expect to earn in this occupation. Record the expected wages below.

 Outlook

This section describes the demand for workers in this occupation.

 Education & Job Requirements

This section describes the skills and education you need for this occupation.

Job Search (continued)

Many communities have services and programs that can help you achieve your employment goals. These include employment resource centres, programs at immigrant-serving organizations, and services at a volunteer agency.

Find out about employment-related services in your community and record the information below. To find a volunteer agency, go to www.volunteer.ca. To find an immigrant-serving organization, go to www.servicesfornewcomers.cic.gc.ca.

Employment resource centre

Address, intersection, phone number, website, hours of operation:

Services offered (that interest you):

Volunteer agency

Address, intersection, phone number website, hours of operation:

Services offered:

Immigrant-serving organization

Address, intersection, phone number, website, hours of operation:

Services offered:

Work

Employment Standards

In Canada, provinces and territories have their own employment standards that set out employees' rights and employers' obligations (what they must do).

Employment standards address employers' responsibilities, such as minimum wage, paid holidays, overtime and breaks.



Workplace Safety

Provinces and territories set laws to address workplace safety. Employers pay workplace safety insurance, which allows workers to receive benefits (payments) if they are injured on the job.

Employment standards in your province or territory	
Alberta	www.employment.alberta.ca/SFW/1224.html
British Columbia	www.labour.gov.bc.ca/esb
Manitoba	www.gov.mb.ca/labour/standards/index.html
New Brunswick	www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/post-secondary_education_training_and_labour/labour.html
Newfoundland and Labrador	www.gov.nl.ca/lra/index.html
Northwest Territories	www.ece.gov.nt.ca/Divisions/Labour/index.htm
Nova Scotia	www.gov.ns.ca/lae/employmentrights
Nunavut	www.justice.gov.nu.ca/i18n/english/lrb.shtm
Ontario	www.labour.gov.on.ca/english
Prince Edward Island	www.gov.pe.ca/sss/index.php3?number=1002354&lang=E
Québec	www.cnt.gouv.qc.ca/en/home/index.html
Saskatchewan	www.lrws.gov.sk.ca/about
Yukon	www.community.gov.yk.ca/labour

Visit the website (listed above) for your province or territory to learn about work-related laws.

Find out the name and website address of the agency that provides compensation to injured workers in your province or territory. Visit the website to learn about workplace safety laws.

Education

Consider your short- and long-term learning goals and find information about programs that can help you achieve them.

My goal	Related programs (name, contact details, website)
<p>Get secondary school credits Programs that offer secondary school credits for adults are offered through Adult Learning Centres. There may also be correspondence or online courses available in your province or territory.</p>	
<p>Prepare for a language entrance test for college Classes are available to help you prepare for a standardized English language proficiency test, such as the TOEFL.</p>	
<p>Go to university or college Colleges and universities offer a wide range of full- and part-time programs that lead to certificates and degrees.</p>	
<p>Learn English related to my profession Some school boards and immigrant-serving agencies offer occupation-specific language training.</p>	
<p>Upgrade my job skills</p>	
<p>Other</p>	

Health Care

Provinces and territories pay for most basic and emergency medical services for Canadian citizens and permanent residents. The costs of some medical services, such as seeing a dentist or an optometrist, are not covered by public health insurance. People who have a very low income may be able to access these services at no cost.

Medical services may be offered in doctors' offices, medical clinics, community health agencies and hospitals. Some provinces and territories offer free health information over the telephone. You can speak to a registered nurse and get advice about any health concern.



Record information about the health care services closest to your home.

	Name, address and phone number	Hours
Family doctor		
Dentist		
Clinic		
Hospital		
Pharmacy		

If your province or territory has a telephone health-care service, record the number below.

 _____

➤ For more information about health care in Canada, visit www.hc-sc.gc.ca.



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Helpful English for... *Interacting Socially*

Informal Conversations

Conversations among friends and acquaintances are usually informal. Sometimes close friends hug or kiss each other when they meet. Often, people who do not know each other shake hands when they are introduced.



Begin informal conversations with a greeting

- Hi, how are things?
- Hi, how are you doing?
- Hi Maria, what's new with you?

Maintain a conversation by asking questions

- How are the kids?
- How's work going?
- How's the new house?

Encourage a conversation by adding supportive comments

- Oh, that's too bad!
- I'm happy for you!
- That's great!

Maintain a conversation by introducing new topics

- Oh, by the way...
- Before I forget, did you... ?
- So,

Conversations often include expressing feelings. Here are some informal ways to express feelings:

Surprise

No way!
I don't believe it!
You're kidding!

Sympathy

I'm so sorry.
Oh, that's too bad.

Happiness

I'm thrilled!
I'm so happy for you!
That's wonderful!

Useful Grammar

Use the past participle to express how you feel:

I'm so annoyed**ed**!
I'm so disappointed**ed** that things didn't work out.
I'm feeling really frustrated**ed** at work.

Use the present participle to express how something or someone makes you feel:

His behaviour is annoying**ing**.
The dinner was disappointing**ing**.
My job is so frustrating**ing**.

Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet. Use the search terms Participle Adjective or expressing feelings learning English.

Accepting and Declining Invitations

Here are some phrases for giving, accepting and declining an invitation. There are also phrases for hedging if you are not sure you can accept an invitation. The expressions range from somewhat formal to less formal.



Inviting

- I was wondering if you would like to come over for a drink.
- I have two tickets for the symphony tonight. Would you like to go?
- Would you like/care to have dinner with us on (day/date)?
- Do you have any plans for (day/date)?
- What are you doing on (day/date)?
- Do you want to go to the movies tonight?
- What/How about dinner tonight?

What are you doing Friday?

Accepting

- Sure. That sounds like fun.
- That sounds great, thank you.
- I'd love to, thanks.
- Sure. Thanks for the invitation.
- Sure. What time?
- Sure. When should I be there?/Can I bring anything?

Declining

- Thanks so much for the invitation, but I'm booked that evening.
- I'm really sorry but I have other plans that night.
- I'd love to, but I already have plans.
- Thanks for asking, but I'm afraid I'm busy.
- Oh thanks for asking, but I can't. I've got a lot of work to do.

Hedging

- Thanks. I'll have to check my calendar. Do you mind if I let you know on Monday?
- I'm not sure if my husband has already made plans.
- Could I get back to you tomorrow?
- Sunday might not be a good day for us.
- Can I let you know for sure tomorrow?
- I'd love to, but what time does it start?

Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet for useful language related to invitations. Use the search terms *accepting and declining invitations*.
- Observe how others give, accept and decline invitations.

Giving Compliments

Most people like to receive compliments. Compliments can be good conversation starters in social situations. They can build rapport and make others feel good.

You can learn about giving compliments by observing others. Listen for how people give and respond to compliments in social and work situations. Observe their body language.



Tips for giving compliments to friends

Relate the compliment to an object

- What a beautiful dress.
- That jacket looks great on you.
- Your home is beautiful.

Be specific

- I like your hair cut. The style really suits you.
- That sweater looks great on you. The colour matches your eyes.
- I love your home. It's so warm and inviting.

Ask a question

- I like your hair. The style really suits you. Where do you get it cut?
- Can I ask where you bought that suit? It looks fantastic on you!

Thank You!

Giving compliments to work colleagues

Giving sincere compliments on someone's work can help to maintain positive working relationships. But it is a good idea to avoid remarking on a colleague's appearance.

- Your presentation was excellent. Well done!
- You did a really good job on that report!
- You write really well. You should consider a career in journalism.
- I admire your ability to make everyone feel comfortable and welcome.
- Congratulations on your promotion. You deserve it!
- You're doing such a great job. Keep it up!

Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet for information about compliments. Use the search terms *Giving compliments*.
- Observe how others give and receive compliments.

Expressing Sympathy

We express sympathy in a variety of situations, for example if someone has experienced a loss or the death of a loved one, becomes ill or is going through a difficult time.

You can express sympathy formally or less formally depending on the situation and how well you know the other person. It's common and thoughtful to express sympathy in the form of a handwritten note or sympathy card.



Here are some expressions you can use:

Informal ways to express sympathy

- I'm sorry to hear about ...
- That's so sad/that's too bad.
- I hope you feel better soon.
- I hope things get better for you soon.

I hope you feel better soon.

Expressing sympathy for a loss or death

- I'm so sorry to hear about your loss.
- Sorry for your loss.
- You have my sincere sympathy.
- You have our deepest sympathy.
- My heart goes out to you.
- S/he will be missed tremendously.
- Please accept my condolences.
- Thinking of you in your time of loss.
- We are very saddened to hear of your loss.
- My heartfelt condolences on your loss.
- With deepest sympathies.
- Our thoughts are with you in this difficult time.

Dear Hillary

I was deeply saddened to hear of Gina's death. She was a kind and generous friend to many and will be greatly missed. Please accept my deepest sympathy. My thoughts are with you and your family.

*Sincerely,
Linda*



Learn more:

- 📖 For information and tips on how to express sympathy, visit www.writeexpress.com or search the Internet using the search terms *phrases for expressing sympathy*.

Helpful English for... *Interacting in the Community*

Talking to Strangers

It can be difficult to start a conversation with someone you don't know. One way is to start talking about something you have in common. You can also ask a question or make a statement about the situation you are both in.

Talking with strangers while shopping or waiting in line can be a pleasant way to pass the time. However, some people are more open to small talk than others. Their response to your attempts at small talk, including their body language, will tell you whether or not they want to engage in conversation.

At a bus stop

A: Have you been waiting long?

B: Yes, I've been here for 20 minutes already. This bus is always so slow.

A: Oh, I know. Last week, I waited 25 minutes and when the bus finally arrived, it was packed and I could barely squeeze on.

B: It's terrible. They've made so many cuts to the service.

A: Yes, it almost makes me want to buy a car. I just waste so much time waiting for buses.



In the park

A: What a cute dog! I remember when my dog was that small. How old is he?

B: He's just 8 months old.

A: Just 8 months—wow! He looks so calm.

B: Yes, he's really good-natured.

On an airplane or train

Possible conversation starters include:

- Questions about their reasons for travelling to this particular destination and whether they've travelled there before
- Questions about what they do for a living
- Comments on the food or the service
- Comments about a book or magazine the person is reading



Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet for small-talk strategies. Use the search terms *strategies for small talk* or *body language small talk* or *small talk tips*.

Making Complaints

As a customer, client or citizen, there are times when you may want to make a complaint. You can make a complaint in person, by phone or in writing.

Tips for Making a Complaint

- Be informed about the policies that apply to the situation.
- Talk to the right people, in the right order. Begin with a customer service representative or a front-line staff person. If you are not successful, talk to a supervisor or manager. If that fails, you can try to speak to someone with more authority.
- Be polite and try not to get angry.
- Keep a record of important details such as dates, the names of people you spoke to and the outcome of your conversation(s).
- If you cannot resolve your problem in person or on the phone, write a letter to the business or organization.



Components of a Letter of Complaint

Your name, address and contact details

Date

The organization name and address

Dear Sir/Madam:

Opening paragraph: Give details about the product or service (e.g., model number, price, location of store, type of service) you purchased or the way you interacted with the company or organization (e.g., *On June 15, I visited your amusement park; or On May 12, I purchased a television at the Bay Street store*).

Next paragraph: Describe the problem and your actions. Include details such as the names and titles of people you spoke to, and dates.

Next paragraph: State exactly what you want the organization to do to resolve the problem (e.g., refund your money, replace the item).

Final paragraph: Close with a statement like *I look forward to your immediate attention to this matter. I can be reached at (give telephone number)*.

Sincerely,

Sign the letter

Type your name

Learn more:

🔗 Visit www.ic.gc.ca. On the homepage, click on *Resources for Consumers*; then click on *Canadian Consumer Handbook*; then select *Complaints* (includes information and sample complaint letters).

- Call the consumer affairs office in your region.

Giving Directions

Tips for Giving Directions

- Keep directions simple
- Give directions in the correct order
- Include any cautions (e.g., confusing intersections)
- Name landmarks, such as stop lights or railroad tracks
- Give distance, if possible (e.g., *Go about five kilometres.*)
- Ask the person to repeat the directions back to you to make sure they understand
- Use imperatives to give clear and concise directions



Tips for Listening to Directions

- Clarify details as the directions are given
- Confirm your understanding by repeating directions back to the speaker and asking questions

For example, here are some helpful phrases for giving instructions:

Use **imperatives** to give clear and concise directions

Public transit directions

- Take the number ____ bus to ____.
- Get on/off at ____.
- Transfer at _____ street/station.
- Go southbound on the ____ subway line.

Turn right at the lights.

Use the **conditional** when including cautions

Driving directions

- Merge into traffic.
- Stay in the right hand lane.
- Take the exit towards ____.
- Take highway 234 until you reach the Lake Road exit.
- Go northeast.
- Make a U-turn.
- Keep right/left.
- Turn right at the lights.

When listening to instructions, ask **questions** and **repeat back** to make sure you understand.

Confirming understanding
Can you repeat that?

- Did you say turn *right* at the lights?
- So, I turn *left* at the intersection?

Learn more:

- 🔗 For grammar practice activities, use the search terms *conditional sentences* or *question formation*.
- 🔗 For driving directions, refer to an online service, such as www.mapquest.com or Google maps.
- 🔗 For public transit directions, use the search terms *public transit + (the name of the city or town)*.

Helpful English for... Talking on the Telephone

Telephone Expressions

Phrasal verbs are commonly used when talking on the telephone. Some phrasal verbs can be separated (by a noun), while others cannot. For example:



Separable

Hang (the phone) up **or** Hang up the phone
Please hang the phone up. I need to make a call.

Put (a call) through **or** Put through a call
I'll put you through to his voice mail.

Pick (the phone) up **or** Pick up the phone
Would you mind picking the phone up?

Call (someone) back
He'll call you back tomorrow.

Call (someone) up **or** Call up someone
We should call him up sometime.

Cut (someone) off
You just cut me off!

Turn (your cell phone) off **or** Turn off your phone
Please turn your cell phone off during the meeting.

Non-separable

Hold on/hang on
Hold on. I'll go get her.

Get through
I can't get through. The line is busy.

Get off (the phone)
Could you get off the phone, please?

Get back to (someone)
He'll get back to you this afternoon.

Speak up
Can you speak up? I can't hear you.

Here are some common terms related to telephone use.

Do you know what they mean?

- Touchtone phone
- Unlisted number
- Ring tone
- Star key
- Dial tone
- Busy signal
- Landline
- Directory
- Text
- Smart phone
- Digit
- Voice mail
- Call display
- Call answer
- Pound key
- Calling card

Learn more:

- 📄 See page 48 for a list of phrasal verbs.
- 🔍 Search the Internet. Use the search terms *phrasal verbs*.

Making Calls at Work

Here are some useful phrases when making calls at work.

Opening a call and introducing yourself

- Hello. This is _____. Can I speak to _____?
- Hello. Could I speak to _____, please?

Asking who is calling

- May I ask who's calling?
- I'm sorry. Who may I say is calling?
- Can I ask who am I speaking with?

If the person is not available

- Would you know when she might be available?
- Could I leave a message?
- Could you connect me to his voice mail, please?

Taking a message

- Mr. Lee is unavailable at the moment. Can I take a message?
- I'm sorry. He isn't in today. Would you like to leave a message?

Putting the caller on hold; returning to the call

- Just a moment, please.
- Can I put you on hold for a second?
- Would you mind holding, please?
- Thanks for holding.
- Sorry to keep you waiting.

Ending the call

- I'll be sure to give her the message.
- I'll let him know you called.



Could I leave message?

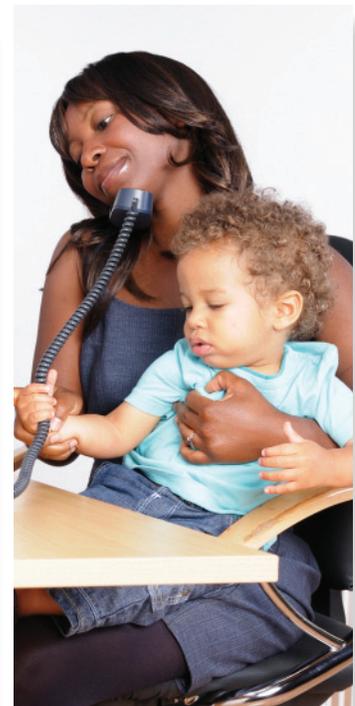
- Receptionist: Hello, DBS Industries. How may I direct your call?
- Caller: Can I speak to Martin Swartz, please?
- Receptionist: I'm sorry. Mr Swartz is away for the day. Can I take a message?
- Caller: Yes. Could you tell him Heidi Robson from ABC Company called? I'm going to have to postpone our meeting until the end of the month. I'll call him in a few days to reschedule.
- Receptionist: Okay. So that's Heidi Robson from ABC. You are postponing your meeting until the end of the month and you'll call him in a few days to reschedule.
- Caller: That's right.
- Receptionist: I'll make sure he gets the message.
- Caller: Thank you.
- Receptionist: You're welcome. Bye
- Caller: Bye.

Making Social Calls

The following are some phrases you can use when making social calls to friends and neighbours.

	Common phrases	Possible responses
Opening a call	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hi Kara, it's Tina. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oh hi Tina. How are you?
Checking if it is a good time to call	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have I caught you at a bad time? • Is this a good time to talk? • I hope I'm not interrupting anything. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No, not at all. • Well, actually I was just about to leave for an appointment. Can I call you later?
Making small talk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are you? • What's new? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm doing well. • I've been very busy ...
Changing the topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So... • By the way... 	
Ending the call	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'll let you go. • I should let you get back to your work. • Well, I guess I'd better get going. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Okay. Good talking to you. • Okay. Thanks for calling.

Tina: Hi Lin, it's Tina.
 Lin: Oh, hi Tina. How are you?
 Tina: I'm fine. I just wanted to catch up. We haven't talked in a long time. Is this a good time to chat?
 Lin: Absolutely! I have a few minutes before I pick up Marco from school.
 Tina: So how are things? How are the renovations going?
 Lin: Great! The kitchen looks amazing. Now Diego's working on the living room, and we hope it will be finished by December. You'll have to drop by one day and see it.
 Tina: I'd love to! By the way, did you hear Rodriguez moved? He's renting an apartment in your neighbourhood now.
 Lin: Really? Whereabouts?
 Tina: I'm not sure of the exact address, but I know it's on Elm Street.
 Lin: That's close by. We should arrange to have dinner together one night.
 Tina: Great idea! I'll call him and see if he has some free time in the next few weeks.
 Lin: That sounds good. Tina, I need to get going. I've got to get Marco.
 Tina: No problem. It was great chatting with you.
 Lin: So glad you called. Let's talk again soon. Bye.



Avoiding Miscommunication

Here are some strategies for avoiding miscommunication on the phone:

Ask the speaker to slow down or speak up

- I'm sorry. Could you slow down a bit?
- I'm sorry. I'm having trouble hearing you. Could you speak up?

Making sure you understand by repeating back

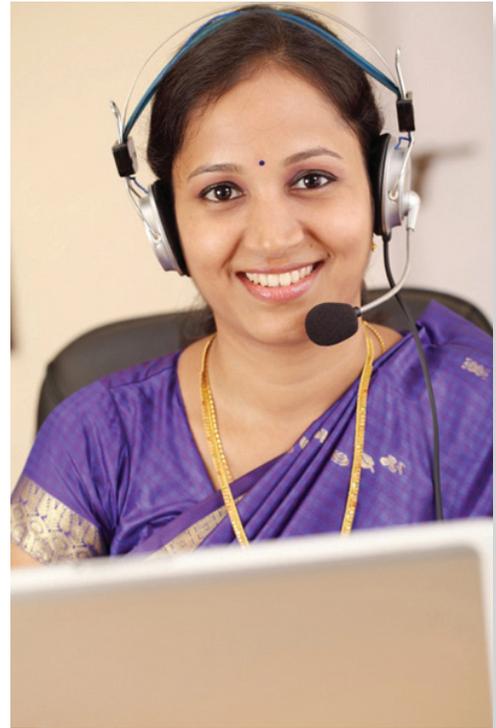
- Did you say 4396 or 4356?
- That was three o'clock, right?
- Let me repeat that back to you ...
- I just want to make sure I got everything. You said...
- If I understood you correctly, you said...

Ask the speaker to spell something

- How do you spell that?
- Was that "S" as in Sam?

Ask for repetition

- I'm sorry, could you repeat that for me?
- Would you mind repeating the last three numbers?
- Could you say that again?



Use modals to make polite requests

- *Can* you spell that for me?
- *Could* you speak more slowly, please?
- *Would* you mind spelling that?

Learn more:

- 🔍 About miscommunication: search the Internet using the search terms *avoiding miscommunication*.
- 🔍 About the use of modals: Use the search term *modals*.

Using Voice Mail

Recording Voice Mail Greetings

A voice mail greeting should be brief and can include:

- A greeting
- Who the caller has reached
- A statement that you cannot take the call
- A request for the caller to leave a message
- A statement about when you will call back
- A closing



Expressions for voice mail greetings

- Hello. This is...
- I can't take your call right now.
- I am either away from my desk or on another line...
- I am currently away on business and will return on (date).

Voice mail greetings at work

- Hello. You have reached Lisa Ling in the human resources department. I'm sorry I'm not available at the moment. Please leave your name and number and a brief message and I will return your call as soon as I can. Thank you.

Voice mail greetings at home

- Hi. You've reached 555-122-3344. We're not available to take your call right now. Please leave your name and a brief message and we'll get back to you as soon as we can. Thanks.

Leaving a voice mail message

- Hello, Mr. Ramirez. This is Julie Barnes from Reliable on Thursday, July 4th. I'm calling to discuss the claim you filed on June 14th. Could give me a call back at 555-999-8989? I'll be here until 4:00 today. Again, that's Julie Barnes at 555-999-8989. Thanks very much.

Tips for leaving a voice mail message

- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Include all the information the listener needs to call you back (phone number, time).
- If needed, repeat your name and phone number at the end of message (for someone who does not know you).

Learn more:

- 📞 Use the free online activities on Telephone Calls at www.settlementatwork.org/lincdocs/linc5-7/index.html.
- 📞 Search the Internet. Use the search terms *sample voice mail greetings*.
- Listen to how others leave voice mail greetings and messages.

Helpful English for... Looking for a Job

Describing Your Skills

It is important to be able to describe your employment skills, work responsibilities or past work experience in a clear and concise way. It helps others (such as potential or current employers) understand the skills you have and how you might fit into their workplace.

Consider the questions below. You may hear them in social or employment related situations. They are requests to know what your occupation is, and details about your job responsibilities.

So, what do you do?

What do you do for a living?

What does that entail?

What exactly does a _____ do?

I work with a team to design websites for corporate clients. I'm responsible for the technical side of things, like the navigation tools on the site. I consult with clients and co-workers to prepare mock-ups and agree on a website design, then write website code. ...

I'm a web designer.



Nine Essential Skills

- Reading Text
- Document Use
- Numeracy
- Writing
- Oral Communication
- Work with Others
- Thinking Skills
- Computer Use
- Continuous Learning

Using the Essential Skills Profiles

The Government of Canada has created Essential Skills Profiles for about 250 occupations in Canada. Each Profile describes job tasks related to nine skills that are considered essential to success in the Canadian workplace.

Each profile lists examples of tasks for the nine essential skills. You can use the profiles to learn some of the vocabulary needed to describe your skills in employment interviews and networking situations.

The National Occupation Classification (NOC)

Every occupation has a four-digit number called the National Occupation Classification (NOC).

The NOC code is listed under the occupation name in each Essential Skills Profile. When you click on it, a one-page description for that occupation appears. It lists the main duties of the occupation, the education requirements and a list of related job titles.

To find the Essential Skills Profiles:

- 🔍 Find the website by entering the search terms *HRSDC Essential Skills Profiles* in your web browser's search box. On the Essential Skills website, find a profile for an occupation that interests you.

Writing Cover Letters

When you apply for a job, it is a good idea to include a cover letter and a résumé. A cover letter tells the employer that you are interested in the job and explains why you are a suitable candidate. A cover letter should be brief (not more than a page) and it should be **customized** to the position you are applying for. This means matching your background and experience to the job ad.



Address the letter to a specific person or department.

March 16, 2012

Ms. Cynthia Callum
Director of Human Resources, City
Hospital
333 Queen St. Suite 500
Calgary, AB T2N 2T9

Opening paragraph: State the reason for your letter and the position you are applying for.

Dear Ms. Callum:

Please accept my application for the position of pharmacy technician at City Hospital. I would very much like to be considered for the position. I have enclosed my résumé for your review.

Second paragraph: Outline why you are a good candidate for the position. Mention the skills and qualifications listed in the advertisement that match your qualifications.

I believe I have all of the qualifications you are looking for in a suitable candidate. I have extensive experience in retail pharmacy, having **worked for** a number of years at both PharmExcellence and at DrugsPlus Pharmacy. In these positions, I was **responsible for** processing prescriptions, handling cash and entering prescription information in the pharmacy computer system. My references can **attest to** my excellent customer-service skills. In addition, I **graduated from** Lakeside Community College with a Pharmacy Technician Diploma.

Third paragraph: Thank the employer, request an interview and end on a positive note.

I am confident that my skills, experience and educational background would be an asset to your organization. I would welcome the opportunity to participate in a personal interview to discuss my qualifications. Thank you for your time and consideration. I **look forward to speaking with** you soon.

Sincerely,

Useful collocations

Prepositional collocations consist of a verb and a preposition. The sample cover letter includes many of them. For example: *work for*, *responsible for*, *attest to*, *graduate from*, *believe in*, *participate in*, *take part in*, *apply for*, *look forward to*, *qualified for*.

Learn more:

- 🔗 Use the free online activities on Looking for a Job at www.settlementatwork.org/lincdocs/linc5-7/index.html.
- 🔗 Search the Internet using the search terms *sample cover letters*.

Writing Résumés

An effective résumé outlines your relevant work experience, education and training. It can also list personal attributes and skills that make you a suitable candidate for the position. There are three main résumé formats:

- A chronological résumé organizes relevant work experience by date, beginning with the most recent position
- A functional résumé organizes relevant work experience and accomplishments by skill area (such as project management, sales, etc.) rather than by where and when you acquired these skills
- A combination résumé includes elements of both chronological and functional formats



A Chronological Résumé Example

Professional experience includes:

- Date of employment
- Name and location of the employer
- Title of the position
- A list of responsibilities relating to the position, beginning with action verbs

Work responsibilities are described with action verbs, such as: cared for, planned, maintained, implemented, assisted, ensured, organized. For a list of action verbs, see page 47.

Education includes:

- The institution where the diploma or degree was granted
- The type of degree/diploma

Lily Rousseau
600 Ridgewood Court
Halifax, NS B3H 1A8
(555) 123 4567; lilo@email.ca

Objective: To obtain a position as an Early Childhood Educator where I can utilize my skills and education to develop and support the social, emotional and physical growth of young children.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2009–2011: Canadian Daycare Inc., Halifax, Nova Scotia
Early Childhood Educator

- Cared for a group of children ages 3 to 4 years
- Planned, organized and implemented daily, weekly and monthly program activities with other staff
- Assisted children with proper eating, dressing and toilet habits
- Ensured the safety and well-being of children in the program
- Communicated with parents about children's activities, behaviour and development

2006–2009: The Berlingen Family, 222 Strandt Strasse, Munich, Germany
Nanny

- Cared for four children ranging in age from two to nine years
- Assisted with the children's daily activities as required
- Supervised homework activities
- Organized and implemented educational outings
- Provided French language tutoring to the two oldest children
- Prepared nutritious snacks and occasional meals
- Maintained a positive and supportive relationship with the parents and the children

EDUCATION

École Supérieure
Diploma: Professeur d'école, 2006

Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet more by using the search terms *résumé formats* or *résumé writing*.

Participating in Job Interviews

During an interview, the interviewer may...

Begin the conversation with small talk:

→ *Did you have any trouble finding us?*

→ *It really feels like winter today!*

Begin an interview by saying:

→ *Tell me a little about yourself.*

Ask you to describe your skills and work duties:

→ *Tell me about the work you did before you came to Canada.*

→ *Tell me about the work you do in your job now.*

Ask you to describe your employment-related personal attributes or qualities:

→ *Tell me about your best qualities.*

→ *How would you describe yourself?*

Ask you to describe a difficult situation and how you handled it:

→ *Tell me about a time when you had a problem with a client and how you dealt with the situation.*

Ask you to describe what you would do in a hypothetical situation:

→ *What would you do if someone on your team weren't pulling his or her weight?*

Tips for responding

→ Maintain a positive tone in your response (even if you just spent a few hours in traffic trying to get to the interview).

→ Give a one- to two-minute summary of your experience and education as it relates to the position you are applying for.

→ I've been working in business for the last 15 years. I have a business degree and I used to have my own business selling small furniture. In the last two years I've been working in sales at a large furniture store.

→ Prepare your description in advance. Use action verbs, and be sure to use the correct tense (past tense for actions that were completed in the past; present tense for current activities).

→ In my country, I worked...

→ In my current position, I work...

→ Use descriptive adjectives to talk about your qualities or skills. Include examples that provide evidence for the qualities you say you have.

→ I'm a very creative and resourceful person. In my last job, whenever there was a problem, I would...

→ Provide a clear and concise description of a specific situation, your response, any actions you took and what happened in the end.

→ Two years ago, I had a problem with a client. The client...

→ Prepare some responses in advance. Use conditional sentences to describe a hypothetical situation.

→ If someone on my team weren't pulling his or her weight, I would...

Learn more:

🔍 Search the Internet (also search YouTube videos); use the search terms *tips for job interviews; common questions and answers job interviews; behavioural job interview*.

Networking

Networking refers to establishing and maintaining connections with people who may be helpful to you or your work.

Job seekers network in order to make contacts that can lead to a job. What you say in a networking situation depends on who you are speaking with, what your goal is and where the conversation takes place (e.g., at a job fair, employer information session, informally at work, on the phone). In networking situations, you may only have a few minutes to make a positive impression. The following tips may help.



Begin by introducing yourself

- Hi/ hello/good morning, my name is Vero Harkov. I'm with RBG Industries.
- I'm Helen Chang. I'm a recent graduate of Branson University.
- If a conversation doesn't begin with an introduction, you could say: By the way, my name is ...

To start a conversation

- What brings you to today's meeting?
- How did you get started in this field?
- How does your company differ from others in the industry?
- What advice would you give someone just starting in nursing in Canada?

To continue the conversation, sometimes it's helpful to provide a 10- to 20-second description of your professional background and goals

- Hi, I am Elias Mohammed. I'm a trained accountant with 10 years of experience overseas. I'm currently taking a course to upgrade my skills in ACCPAC and I'm also taking an advanced English class to improve my English. I'm hoping to work for a large accounting firm one day.

Useful tip

Practice your description in advance.

To close a conversation

- This has been helpful. Thank you very much.
- Thanks, it's been good talking with you.
- Here's my card. Do you have a business card?

To move on to talk to another person

- Would you excuse me?

Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet for information and tips on networking. Use the search term *networking*.

Helpful English for... *Interacting at Work*

Formal and Informal Interactions

Each Canadian workplace has a unique approach to how employees dress, talk to each other, make decisions and manage conflict. Taken together, these “ways of doing things” are referred to as the *workplace culture*. Day-to-day interactions at some workplaces are more formal than at others. Observe how people in your workplace interact with each other (in writing and in speaking). This will help you learn about the level of formality in your workplace.

The level of formality you use in your interactions at work depends on a variety of factors. In addition to the culture of the particular workplace, those factors include:

- The purpose of the interaction. For example, giving suggestions, persuading and making requests may require more formal language than engaging in small talk with a colleague.
- The relationship between you and the other person. Interacting with an unfamiliar person or someone in a position of authority usually requires you to be more formal.

Here are some examples of formal and informal language:

More formal	Less formal
Opening or closing a conversation	
→ How are you today?	→ How are things?
→ I enjoyed speaking with you.	→ What's up?/How's it going?
→ It's a pleasure meeting you.	→ Good talking to you.
	→ See you later.
	→ Nice to meet you.
Making or responding to a request	
→ Would you mind...?	→ Can you...?
→ Would it be possible for you to...?	→ Can I talk to you for a minute?
→ Excuse me, could I speak with you?	→ Do you have a minute?
→ Could you wait for a minute, please?	→ Hang on a second.
→ I'd be happy to do that for you.	→ Sure, no problem.
Asking questions	
→ I wonder if you would be available at 3:00 for a meeting.	→ Can we meet at 3:00? Is 3:00 a good time for you?
→ Will you be attending the meeting?	→ Are you going to the meeting?

Learn more:

🔍 Search the Internet. Use the search terms *workplace culture*.

Making Arrangements



Open the conversation

Max: Hello, Steve. This is Max Anthony. We met at the conference last week. You suggested I call to set up an appointment to meet with you.

Continue with small talk

Steve: Oh, hi Max. Good to hear from you! How did you enjoy the rest of the conference?

Max: It was great! That was definitely one of the better conferences I've attended.

Suggest an arrangement

Steve: Yes, I thought so too. So, we should get together. Is Tuesday, September 17th good for you? Maybe around 1:00?

Suggest an alternative

Max: I'm sorry. I have another meeting on Tuesday. How about Monday the 23rd instead, at around 10:30?

Confirm the arrangement

Steve: Sure. So that's Monday, September 23rd at 10:30. Should we meet at my office?

Max: That would be great.

Close the conversation

Steve: I'm looking forward to meeting with you.

Max: Likewise. See you on Monday.

Cancel the arrangement

Steve: Hello Max, this is Steve Galitsis calling. I'm really sorry but I'm going to have to postpone our meeting on Monday. Unfortunately something has come up. I'll call back in a few days. Hopefully we can reschedule.

Instructions

Tips for giving instructions

- Give a few instructions at a time. Most people have trouble remembering a lot of information.
- If your instructions are long and complex, give the information in stages. Make sure the listener has understood each stage before you go on to the next.
- Be clear about what you want the listener to do.
- Say exactly what you mean so the listener isn't left guessing.
- If you are unsure about whether the listener has understood, have them repeat the instructions back in their own words.
- Try not to rush when giving instructions. Give the listener time to understand the information.



Tips for following instructions

- Take notes if the instructions involve a number of steps.
- Clarify your understanding of the instructions by asking questions and repeating back.
- Don't wait until the end of a long explanation to tell the speaker that you don't understand. Ask for clarification as you go along.

Giving instructions

- First, turn all switches to the off position; then ...
- When the silicone has been removed,...

Demonstrating or illustrating what you mean

- Here, let me show you what I mean.
- Here's an example of what I'm talking about...

Confirming that the instructions were understood

- Is that clear?
- Do you have any questions?
- Can you tell me in your own words what needs to be done?

Handling a misunderstanding

- There may have been a misunderstanding about ...
- Maybe I wasn't clear enough when I gave you instructions. I should have ...

Clarifying information (when receiving instructions)

- So, in other words, I have to...
- If I understood you correctly, I have to first...
- Then I have to... Is that right?

Use **imperatives** to give clear and concise instructions; complex instructions are sometimes written with **adverbial clauses** and in the **passive voice**

Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet using the search terms *tips for giving instructions* or *passive voice*.

Being Assertive

Being assertive involves expressing your thoughts and feelings in a clear and calm way while respecting the opinions and feelings of others.

The following are some language strategies for communicating assertively:

Do this:

Don't do this:

✓ Use “I” statements to describe your feelings and the reason you feel this way.

→ I get frustrated when you don't finish your work on time because I can't move ahead with mine.

✗ Blame the other person.

→ You make me so angry! You never finish your work on time!

✓ Say it clearly and directly. Be specific.

→ I would prefer that you talk to me before seeing a client.

✗ Make generalizations. Avoid words like “never” and “always.”

→ You always just go ahead and do whatever you like. You never talk to me before seeing a client.

✓ Focus on the person's actions and not the person themselves.

→ I don't like the way she is talking about Chitra behind her back.

✗ Criticize the person.

→ She's obnoxious! She always talks behind people's backs.

✓ Let others know that you are listening to them, but that you are going to stand your ground.

→ I understand how you feel. But here is how I feel.

✗ Use demanding or blaming statements.

→ Stop...!
→ You should/shouldn't...
→ It's your fault...
→ You make me...

✓ Use a calm, even tone of voice and a normal volume to deliver your message.

Be mindful of the emotions the sound and pace of your voice may convey. Speaking too quickly can convey nervousness, excitement or even aggression (when combined with loudness). A slow and low-pitched voice can convey controlled anger.

Learn more:

🔍 Search the Internet, using the search terms *assertive communication*.

Saying “No”

One way to say “no” to an unwanted request at work is to use a technique called “the broken record.” This technique is useful when you have been clear about your refusal but the other person is trying to convince you to change your mind. It consists of calmly and firmly repeating your refusal until the other person accepts it.

Clearly state your refusal

→ I won’t be able to work this Saturday.

Acknowledge the other person’s situation

→ I understand that you’re under a great deal of pressure, but I can’t work this Saturday.

Offer a compromise

→ I can work a bit later this evening but I can’t come in on Saturday.

Keep repeating your point; use a calm, pleasant voice

→ I’m sorry, but I can’t come in on Saturday.

Repeat the refusal and offer an explanation

→ Saturday is my day off and I already have plans.



Sam: Hey Lee, can you cover for me this Sunday? I want to take my son to a hockey game.

Lee: Sorry, Sam, but I can’t work this weekend.

Sam: But it’s the playoffs, and I promised my son I’d take him.

Lee: I wish I could help Sam, but I just can’t work this Sunday. I’ve got too many things to do. Maybe Jan can switch shifts with you.

Sam: I’ve already asked him and he has a family thing to go to on Sunday. There’s really no one else who can cover for me. Please, Lee. I can work for you next Friday if you like.

Lee: Sorry Sam, but this weekend just isn’t good. Any other weekend and I’d be happy to switch with you, but I just can’t work this Sunday.

Sam: Okay. Thanks anyway.

Learn more:

🔍 Search the Internet for *saying no assertively*.

Being Tactful

Being tactful is a communication skill that involves minimizing the impact of a critical statement in a way that respects the feelings of others. Tact helps maintain good relationships with others.



Less Tactful

- You made a mistake on this order.
- This is wrong.
- That's a terrible idea.



More Tactful

- Use indirect language to soften the impact of a critical statement.
 - There seems to be a problem with this order.
 - I think there might be an error.
 - I'm not sure that's a good idea.

- You set this up incorrectly.
- You made several mistakes in this spreadsheet.



- Use the passive voice to avoid blaming someone directly.
 - This was set up incorrectly.
 - There are four mistakes in this spreadsheet.

- You don't write clearly.



- Use "I" statements to avoid placing blame, and to keep the focus on consequences.
 - I had trouble following the ideas in your paper.

- He's slow at completing his work.
- She's such a negative person.



- Use qualifiers (e.g., *kind of*, *a little*, *a bit*) to minimize the impact of a statement.
 - He's kind of slow at completing his work.
 - She can be somewhat negative at times.

- Her writing is really bad.
- This display is really boring.



- Use positive language; it can lead to solutions and problem-solving.
 - Her writing could be improved.
 - This display might be a bit more attractive if we...

- We have to do it differently.
- Stop dealing with that company.



- Use modals to make a statement less demanding, and encourage input from others.
 - Maybe we could try doing it a different way.
 - I wonder if we should stop dealing with that company.

Learn more:

-  Search the Internet using the search terms *diplomatic communication* or *how to be diplomatic* or *tactful language*.

Helpful English for... Workplace Meetings

Participating in Meetings

Group meetings may be formal or informal and involve a variety of language skills including those needed to:

- Engage in small talk before or after the meeting
- Greet and introduce yourself or others if participants don't know each other
- Participate in the meeting (e.g., give updates, present information, give and respond to suggestions, warnings or opinions, take turns speaking, interrupt politely, ask for clarification, summarize information)
- End the meeting



Making small talk prior to the meeting

- Wow, the traffic out there is terrible. It's getting worse all the time.
- What beautiful weather we're having.

Steering the conversation towards work-related topics

- So, it looks like we have a pretty full agenda today.
- How's your project going?

Introducing yourself or another person

- My name is Thom Nguyen. I've been working for LBJ Consulting for the past six years. Before that, I worked for PBS Engineering...
- Please join me in welcoming John Smith. John joined LBJ just three weeks ago and brings considerable sales experience to our team.

Making suggestions and recommendations

- I think we **should** buy all of our supplies from ABC Company.
- We **could** re-use paper to save money.

Use **modals** (could, should, would) when making suggestions

Warning or suggesting caution

- If we don't shut down the machines at night, they will overheat and stop working.
- We can save \$500 a month in electricity costs if we turn the air conditioner down.

Use **conditionals** (if...then) for warnings

Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet using the search terms *language of meetings* or *phrases for meetings* or *meeting vocabulary*.

Giving Opinions

People are often required to give or respond to opinions and suggestions in meetings. Here are some expressions you can use:

Expressing an opinion

- In my opinion ...
- It seems to me that...
- Speaking from my experience, ...
- The way I see it...

Asking for an opinion

- How do you feel about ...?
- What's your opinion about...?
- What do you think?
- Do you agree?

Agreeing

- I (totally/completely) agree.
- I can see that.
- I think so too.
- Good point!
- For sure.
- Absolutely!/Exactly!/Totally!
- Sounds good.

Disagreeing

- I disagree because...
- I totally/completely disagree.
- I don't know about that/I'm not sure.
- I see your point, but I also think that ...
- That's a good point, but ...
- I know what you mean, however...
- I'm not sure I agree.



Clarifying questions

Before disagreeing, it is helpful to ask a clarifying question. Your question/s should help you understand the speaker's opinion, and should give the speaker a chance to explain their point of view or change it.

For example:

- So, do you mean that ...?
- Did you consider...?
- Can you explain what you mean by ...?

The final four examples include phrases that support and acknowledge the opinions of others.

Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet using the search terms *giving opinions* or *expressing agreement or disagreement*.

Being Persuasive

The purpose of a persuasive presentation is to convince the listener or listeners to take a particular action that will meet a need or solve a problem.

When you are planning to present a proposal or persuasive idea that you want others to adopt, it helps to have a clear goal in mind and develop a compelling argument.

To deliver an effective, persuasive presentation:

- State the facts about the need or the problem you are addressing
- Give a clear explanation of how you plan to meet the need or solve the problem
- Discuss how your proposal is better than other possible proposals or solutions
- Address how your proposal could be implemented; include steps that need to be taken and resources that are needed
- Be clear, concise and positive



State your goal up front

→ I am proposing that we use an online conferencing tool instead of meeting face-to-face.

Use simple sentences to communicate clearly and make key points

→ We're spending a lot of money on meetings.

→ Our staff wastes a lot of time travelling to meetings.

Use compound sentences to add detail and justify your proposal

→ Online conferencing is more cost-effective than meeting in person because we don't have to pay for travel expenses, refreshments or a meeting room.

Use statements that contain facts

→ This tool costs \$30.00 per month. It has the following features:...

Use transitional phrases to discuss the features and benefits of a proposal

→ This is important because...

→ This means that...

→ With this feature, (state the advantages)...

Use comparative and superlative adjectives to compare your proposal to others

→ This tool is cheaper than that one.

→ _____ is much more practical than _____ for the following reasons:...

Use intensifiers

➤ It's *really* easy to use and *incredibly* cost-effective.

Learn more:

🔍 Search the Internet using the search terms *persuasive language* or *persuasive presentations*.

Taking Turns and Interrupting

It's important that everyone has a chance to express their opinions and ideas in a meeting. The following are some expressions you can use as a meeting facilitator:

To encourage others to participate in the discussion

- Would anyone like to comment on what Marc just said?
- Abdul, what do you think?
- What does everyone think about Svetlana's suggestion?
- Does anyone have anything they'd like to add?
- What's your opinion, Uzma?
- That's a good point, Svetlana. What does everyone else think? *(This is helpful when someone is monopolizing the discussion.)*



Interrupting

It is generally impolite to interrupt when someone is speaking. Nevertheless, there are times when you need to interrupt. A good time to interject is when speaker indicates that he/she is coming to a pause or an end in their discourse. They may signal this through body language or by pausing. Below are some expressions for interrupting politely.

- Could I just say that...
- I'd like to add that...
- Sorry to interrupt, but ...

One way to stop someone from interrupting you if you are the speaker is to avoid eye contact and continue with what you are saying. If the other person does not get the hint, here are some helpful expressions:

- Please allow me to finish.
- I'm not finished my point.
- Just a moment...
- I'd just like to add one more thing.

Learn more:

- 🔍 About meetings: Search the Internet using the search terms *meetings* or *language for meetings*.
- About interrupting: Observe how others take turns and interrupt. Pay particular attention to their body language when they are interrupting or being interrupted.

Helpful English for... Business Writing

Writing Email Messages

Here are a few things to consider when writing email messages:

- Email messages are often used to record business interactions. Check the accuracy of your facts before sending the message.
- Use a friendly but professional tone. If you are unsure of the tone to use, start with a formal approach and see how the recipient responds. An email to a colleague should be businesslike, but can be less formal.
- Keep messages brief and organize the text into short paragraphs. Long texts without breaks can discourage readers from reading the entire message.
- Keep the content of the message related to the email subject line.
- Avoid writing in full upper case (e.g., *I WOULD* ...); it can be interpreted as shouting.
- Check for correct grammar, punctuation and spelling before you send your message. Misspelled words and improper punctuation reflects negatively on you and your employer.
- Reread your message before you send it. Edit it to remove unnecessary words.



Anatomy of an email message

- 1 **A short subject line that tells the recipient what the email is about**
→ Ceramic tiles shipment
- 2 **A formal or informal greeting**
→ Dear Ms. Wong (formal)
→ Hi Uzma (informal)
- 3 **The purpose of the message**
→ I would like to inform you that your shipment of ceramic tiles has arrived.
- 4 **A closing**
→ Sincerely, / Regards, / Thank you, (formal)
→ Cheers, / Thanks, (informal)

Keep in mind

When you receive emails, respond! Most people expect a quick response to an email. If you cannot address the content of the email quickly, you can still send a courteous prompt response. This lets the sender you have received their message and are considering it. For example, *Thank you for your message. I will respond with more details on Thursday.*

Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet; use the search terms *appropriate subject lines in email messages, email etiquette, formality in email.*

Accident and Incident Reports

Most companies have guidelines for reporting accidents or incidents at work. This may include a form that the employee fills out.

In general, accident and incident reports should be:

- **Factual and objective:** Include significant facts that can be proven at the time of writing the report. Avoid opinions or interpretations about what happened.
- **Accurate:** Make sure all dates, times and events are recorded as accurately as possible. (These reports are sometimes used in court.)
- **Clear and concise:** Eliminate unnecessary words or statements that may confuse the reader.
- **Complete:** Include all relevant information.
- **Well-organized:** A good way to organize the report is chronologically.
- **Correct:** Proofread your report to make sure there are no spelling, grammar or punctuation mistakes. You can also ask someone else to proofread it.



Asking and Answering Questions

The report should answer the **who, what, where, when, why, and how** of the accident or incident.

Who

- Who was involved?
- Who reported the incident/accident?
- Who witnessed the incident/accident?
- Who responded? Who took what actions?
- Who did you speak to?

When

- When did the incident/accident happen?
- When was management informed?
- When did you report it?
- If emergency medical services were called, when did they arrive?

What

- What happened?
- What actions did you take?
- What were the results of those actions?

Where

- Where did the incident/accident happen?
- If someone was injured, which medical facility were they taken to?

Why

- Why did the incident/accident occur?
- What caused the accident/incident?

How

- How did the incident/accident occur?
- How was it discovered?

Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet for sample accident and incident report forms.
- 🔍 Search the Internet for grammar practice activities; use the search terms *question formation in English*.

Tone in Business Writing

Tone in writing refers to the attitude, meaning and emotion conveyed by the words we use in our written messages. A business message should usually convey a courteous and professional tone.

When deciding on the tone to convey, consider:

- The purpose of your message (e.g., to congratulate, complain, give information)
- Your reader(s) (e.g., supervisor, client, co-worker)
- Your relationship with your reader(s)
- The attitude you want to convey (e.g., enthusiasm, regret, appreciation)



To convey appreciation

- Thank you for all your help in organizing the trade show.
- Thanks for your understanding.
- I really appreciate the offer, however ...

To convey enthusiasm

- I wanted to congratulate you on a job well done!
- It was wonderful to meet with you on Thursday.
- Your presentation was very interesting and informative.

To convey confidence

- I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.
- I believe I have the qualifications you are looking for.
- We are certain you will be pleased with the results.

To convey regret or an apology

- We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.
- We are sorry to inform you that...

To convey authority

- We have decided to terminate our contract with your company for the following reasons:...
- Using the company car for personal business is not permitted.

When Delivering Negative News

Negative business messages often use formal language and the passive voice. This creates a formal distance between the writer and the receiver and an attitude of seriousness.

- *This is to inform you that your account is 90 days in arrears. If the overdue amount is not paid in full within 15 days, we will cancel our contract with ABC Company.*

Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet; use the search terms *tone in business writing*.

Helpful English for... Academic Success

Writing Paragraphs

A paragraph is a series of sentences about a topic.

Topic sentence

The topic sentence is usually at the beginning of the paragraph. It states the main idea and tells reader what the paragraph is about.

Supporting sentences

Supporting sentences provide supporting details about the topic sentence. They can include facts, explanations, statistics and examples

Concluding sentence

The concluding sentence sums up the paragraph and expresses the same general idea as the topic sentence but in different words

Polar Bears in Canada

Global warming is one of the most serious threats to polar bear populations in the Arctic. Temperatures are rising far faster in the Arctic region than in the rest of the world and this is causing the sea ice to melt. This loss of ice is threatening polar bears who depend on it for their survival. Ice is the natural habitat of polar bears, and they need it to get their food, to mate and to travel from one area to another. Scientists predict that that if current global warming trends continue in the Arctic region, two-thirds of the polar bear population could disappear by 2050.

Academic paragraphs are somewhat formal; avoid using contractions.

Use:

is not

were not

cannot

you would

should not

Do not use:

isn't

weren't

can't

you'd

shouldn't

Learn more:

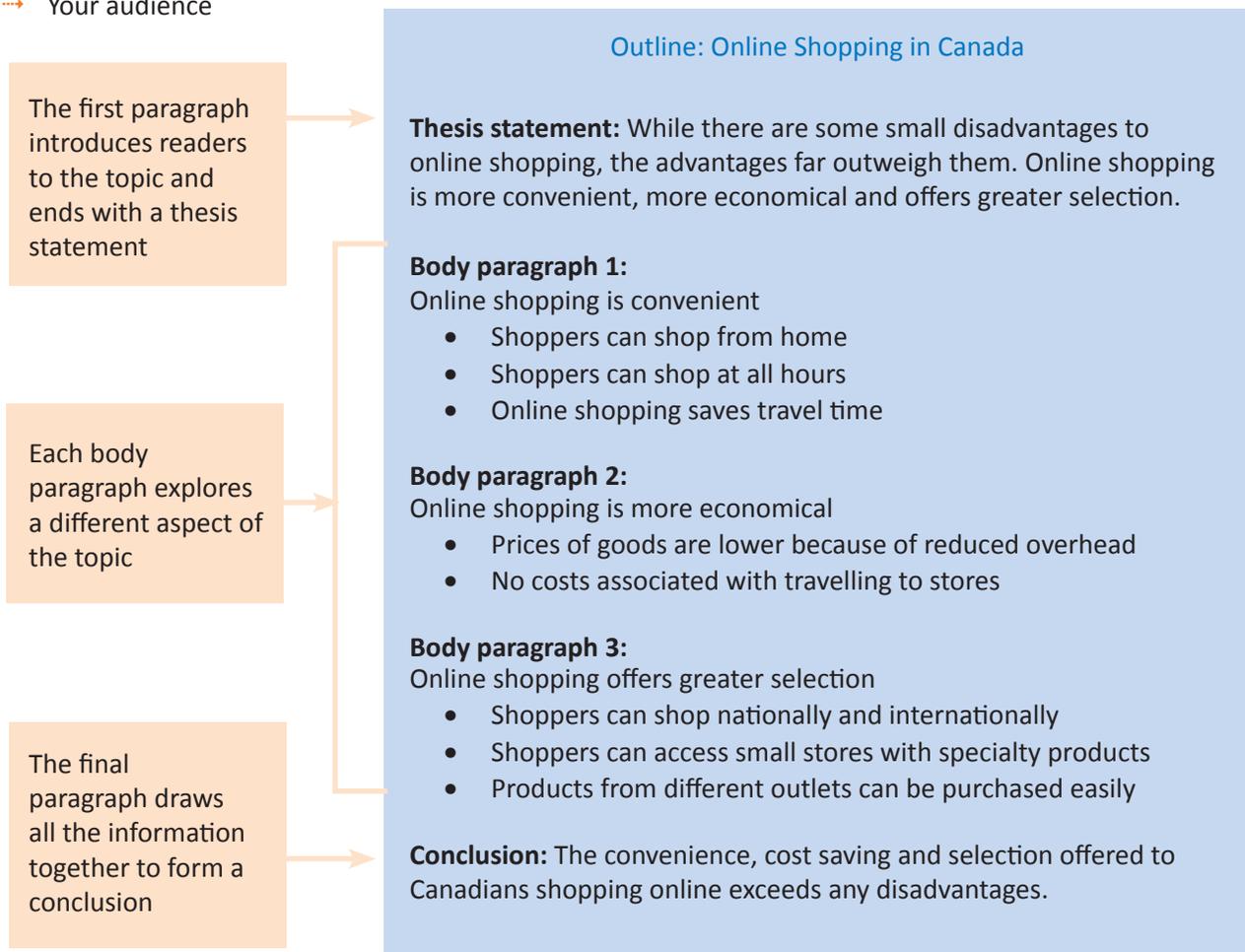
- 🔗 Use the free online activities on academic writing at www.settlementatwork.org/lincdocs/linc5-7/index.html.
- 🔗 Search the Internet using the search term *paragraph writing*.
- 🔗 Visit websites with activities on paragraph writing, such as:
Guide to Grammar and Writing: <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>
Purdue Online Writing Lab: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl>
Sentence Sense: www.ccc.commnet.edu/sensen/
Writing Den: http://www2.actden.com/writ_den/tips/contents.htm

Creating an Outline

Creating an outline is an important step in the writing process. An outline is a skeletal organization of your ideas. It is created to guide you during the writing stage so your writing reflects a logical flow of ideas. An outline is particularly helpful when you are writing long texts. Having a well-developed outline makes the writing process easier.

Before you begin, be clear about:

- The type of text you are writing (e.g., story, research paper, essay)
- The purpose of your text (e.g., to describe, to present facts or opinions, to compare and contrast)
- The main ideas you want to express
- Your audience



Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet using the search terms *writing process* or *creating an outline*.
- 🔍 Visit Purdue Online Writing Lab at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl> or the University of Victoria's writing guide at <http://web.uvic.ca/wguide/>.

Tips for Effective Writing

Here are five tips for effective writing:

- 1 Use short, simple sentences to emphasize an important idea; use longer sentences for explanations and examples to support it.

Smoking is harmful to your health.

Smoking is the leading cause of heart disease, different types of cancers, emphysema and chronic bronchitis.



- 2 Use parallel structure within sentences. This refers to using the same sentence structure and forms of words when joining two or more ideas in a sentence.

I enjoy skiing, swimming and cooking.

I enjoy skiing, swimming and I like to cook.

- 3 Be concise by getting rid of unnecessary words.

She is a hard-working person ~~who works very hard.~~

- 4 Use complete sentences. A complete sentence contains a subject, a verb and an object.

People have different writing styles.

S V O

- 5 Proofread and edit your work. Correct spelling and punctuation errors. Don't rely solely on a computer spell check feature; it is not always accurate. Edit for consistency in tense and proper sentence structure. If possible, ask someone else to read it.

Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet; use the search terms *effective writing, writing effective paragraphs, writing topic sentences, parallel structure, proofreading, editing strategies* or *editing a paragraph*.
- 🔍 Visit the University of Ottawa's free electronic grammar course at www.writingcentre.uottawa.ca/hypergrammar/grammar.html

Making Presentations

Many academic programs require students to give presentations. Before you begin to organize a presentation, determine its purpose. Is it to convey information, to convince the audience of a particular point of view, to motivate them to action or to achieve some other purpose? Then consider the audience's expectations and prior knowledge. This will help you determine the best approach.

Signposts in presentations

In presentations, it's common to use language signals, also called signposts, to tell the audience how the presentation is organized and to indicate different parts of a presentation.

To introduce the topic and tell the audience what to expect

- The topic of my presentation is...
- Today I'd like to talk about...
- My presentation is about...

To tell the audience how the presentation is organized

- I've organized my presentation in three parts. In the first part, I'd like to talk about...
- Then I plan to show...
- And finally, I will...

To move from one point to another

- Next I'd like to talk about...
- And now for my next point...

To emphasize a point

- I want to stress that...
- It's important that...

To signal that you are nearing the end of your presentation

- And for my last point...
- And finally...

Summarize the key points of your presentation

- To sum up...
- To summarize what I've said...



Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet using the following search terms: *giving presentations* or *presentation skills*.
- 🔍 Search for presentation-related skills, such as: *body language during presentation*, *preparing an outline*, *summarizing information* or *being clear and concise*.

Reading Strategies

Here are some common strategies to help you read more effectively.

Pre-reading strategies

- Preview the text by looking at the title, headings, pictures, captions, words and sentences in bold or italics. Look at the layout and organization of the text to get a general sense of what information is included.
- Think about any questions you would like to have answered by the text.
- Identify the writer's purpose. For example, is it to inform, persuade, argue a point, present facts or give instructions?
- Skim the text to get a general idea what it's going to be about. Skimming means looking over a whole text quickly before reading it.



Strategies to use while reading

- Read the first sentence (topic sentence) of each paragraph. If written well, the topic sentence will tell you the main idea of the paragraph. Identify the supporting details in each paragraph.
- Scan the text. Scanning means reading the text to find specific information or words without reading each sentence carefully.
- Take notes about important details in the text. Use a highlighter to point out the main ideas and a pencil to add your own annotations (comments), ideas and thoughts.
- Try to guess the meanings of unfamiliar words from the context instead of using a dictionary for each unfamiliar word.
- Distinguish facts from the writer's opinions.

Strategies to use after reading

- Talk about the text with someone else.
- Write a summary of the text.
- Give your own ideas and opinions about what the author has written.

Learn more:

- 🔗 Use the free online activities on Managing Information at www.settlementatwork.org/lincdocs/linc5-7/index.html.
- 🔗 Search the Internet for *reading strategies, skimming and scanning*.

Taking Notes

Taking notes requires you to listen carefully to a lecture. If you do it effectively, your notes can provide you with a record of the key points to study later on. Since you can't write everything the lecturer says word for word, you'll need to be able to distinguish important information from less relevant details quickly.



Tips for determining key information for your notes

- Lecturers often display an outline or key points on the board, a handout or a slide.
- Listen carefully to the introduction. This will often provide you with an overview of the main points and key details of the presentation. You can use this overview to organize your notes.
- Listen for repetition. Lecturers often repeat important points for emphasis.
- Observe the speaker's gestures, tone of voice and the length of time he or she spends on a particular point; these are often clues as to what is important in the presentation.
- Listen for phrases that signal key information. For example: *Another important point is...; The main point is ...; "I want to stress that...*
- Listen carefully to the end of the lecture. The speaker often provides a summary of the main points.

Tips for taking notes quickly

- Use short forms and abbreviations that you'll be able to identify later.
- Eliminate articles, prepositions, pronouns and the verb "be."
- Use symbols to replace words, such as: = (equals), → (leads to), > (greater than), < (less than), # (number), & (and).
- Indent to distinguish main ideas from supporting points.
- Write key words and phrases rather than complete sentences

March 6: Environment studies (notes)

Alternative Energy Sources: Pros and Cons

Problems with fossil fuels:

- non-renew;
- pollution → envir. probs (e.g., CO₂ → global warming)
- Alternatives = wind, water, solar

Wind:

- Pros:
 - few safety risks
 - wind is free
 - no harm to environmt
- Cons:
 - public complaints - noise pollution
 - need big turbines

Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet for *note-taking strategies*.
- 🔍 Search university websites; many have note-taking strategies, such as Athabasca University, at: http://lss.athabascau.ca/counselling/study_skills.php.

Study Skills

There are **many** study strategies. They include topics such as learning styles, study skills, time management, avoiding procrastination, writing an essay, reading comprehension strategies, preparing for exams, memory strategies and note-taking.

Cornell Notes

The Cornell Notes system is just one study strategy. It is described below. It involves using your notes (taken during a lecture or while you are reading) to study. To use it, divide your page into three sections, as below:

<p>KEY WORDS, QUESTIONS In this section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Write key words that correspond to the main ideas (e.g., dates, people, concepts).Write questions about the information. <p>Note: this section can be completed after you take the notes in the right column.</p>	<p>NOTES In this section, record the main ideas of the lecture. (Use short forms and abbreviations to make note-taking quicker.)</p>
<p>SUMMARY After the lecture (e.g., the next day), write a summary of the main ideas.</p>	

To use the notes to study

Cover the right column. Use the key words and the questions in the left column to test yourself. Try to answer the questions.

Read your notes in the right column and the summary at the bottom. Focus your attention on these two sections; they probably include information you will be tested on.

Learn more:

- Search the Internet for information on study strategies. Use the search terms *study strategies* or *Cornell notes*.
- Visit the websites of universities that have free online resources on study strategies, such as:

Athabasca University study skills
http://ss.athabascau.ca/counselling/study_skills.php

Tips for Learning English

There are a number of things you can do to improve your English. Several tips are listed below.

Two key tips are:

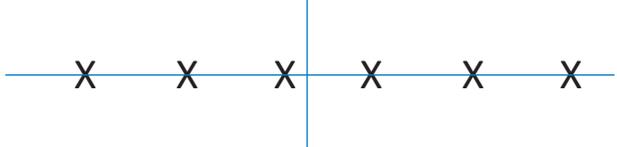
- Try to study English each day
- Don't be afraid to make mistakes

Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Find radio programs that interest you. Listen actively to identify the main points and a few important details.✓ Listen to news broadcasts. Keep up to date on the news (even if in your first language) so that it will be easier to understand the news in English.✓ Listen to people speaking English around you (e.g., on the bus, while shopping).✓ Watch English movies and programs on television.✓ Listen to podcasts or watch YouTube videos on the Internet.
Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Volunteer to answer questions in class.✓ Join an English conversation club.✓ Use every opportunity to have conversations with others (e.g., neighbours, strangers, store clerks).✓ Search for websites that provide pronunciation practice.✓ Ask others to help you with pronunciation.
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Read books, comics, newspapers and magazines in English. Identify the main points of each article after you read it. If possible, re-tell what you've read to someone else.✓ Try to guess the meanings of new words from the context (from the words around it). Then look up the word to see if your guess was correct.✓ Use a monolingual dictionary to look up the meanings of unfamiliar words.✓ Read to understand the main ideas, without worrying about understanding every word.✓ Use flashcards or a small notebook to remember new vocabulary, expressions and phrases. Try to learn two or three new words each day.
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Write email messages, texts and letters to friends in English.✓ Join an online discussion or chat group.✓ Write a summary of a movie or news item.✓ Write regular entries (in English) in a journal.✓ Make comments on blogs; write postings on your own blog or social networking website.

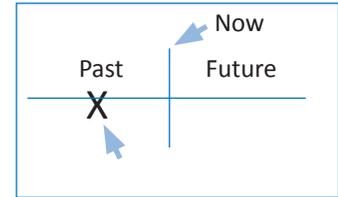
Verb Tenses: Simple Tenses

Simple Present = verb + -es or -s

Events or actions that exist always, usually or repeatedly. They exist now, have existed in the past, and probably will exist in the future.

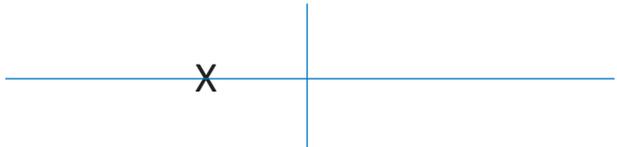


Affirmative	Negative
Kati works every day.	Marc doesn't work every day.
Interrogative	
Does Kati work every day?	



Simple Past: regular verbs = verb + -ed or -d

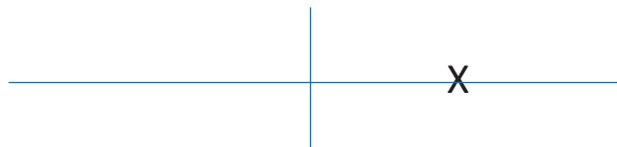
An action that began and ended in the past



Affirmative	Negative
Sue worked in Peru in 1997.	Sue didn't work yesterday.
Interrogative	
Did Robyn work yesterday?	

Simple Future = *will* + *verb*

An action or event that will happen in the future.

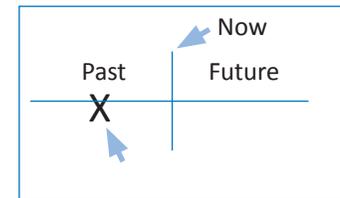
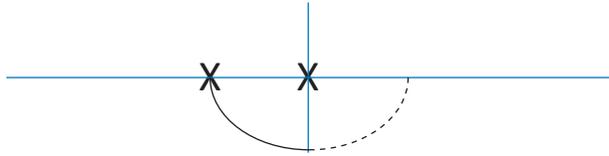


Affirmative	Negative
Kunal will work tomorrow.	Tom will not work tomorrow.
Interrogative	
Will Kunal work tomorrow?	

Verb Tenses: Progressive Tenses

Present Progressive = *am/is/are* + verb + *-ing*

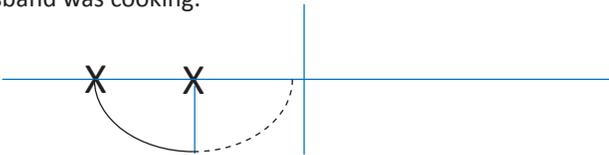
An action that is in progress at or around the time of speaking.



Affirmative	Negative
Roberto is working today.	Michelle is not working today.
Interrogative	
Is Roberto working today?	

Past Progressive = *was/were* + *-ing*

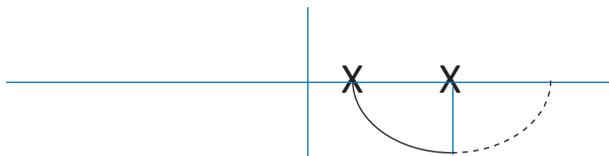
- An action or event that was in progress at a certain time in the past.
- An action that was in progress and was interrupted by another action. I was watching TV when the phone rang.
- Two actions happening at the same time in the past. While I was studying, my husband was cooking.



Affirmative	Negative
Anne was working when he arrived.	Barb wasn't working when I arrived.
Interrogative	
Was Anne working when he arrived?	

Future Progressive = *will be* + verb + *-ing*

An action that will be in progress at a certain time in the future.

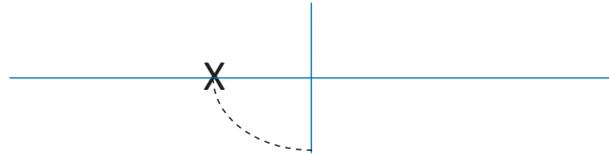


Affirmative	Negative
Frances will be working tomorrow.	Ming will not be working tomorrow.
Interrogative	
Will Frances be working tomorrow?	

Verb Tenses: Perfect Tenses

Present Perfect = *have/has* + past participle (I have written)

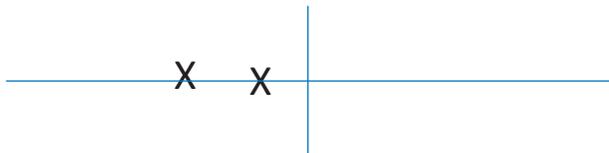
- a) An action that is finished before now.
- b) An action that happened in the past and has results in the present, e.g., Jen has lost her wallet.
- c) An action that started in the past and continues in the present, e.g., We have lived in Canada for six months.



Affirmative	Negative
I have seen this movie many times.	I haven't seen this movie.
Interrogative	
Have you seen that movie before?	

Past Perfect = *had* + past participle (e.g., I had written)

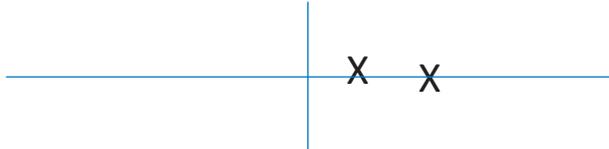
An event or action that was finished before another action or specific time in the past.



Affirmative	Negative
He had already finished working before I arrived.	He hadn't finished working by the time I arrived.
Interrogative	
Had he already finished working by the time you arrived?	

Future Perfect = *will have* + past participle (I will have finished)

An event or action that will be finished before another action or specific time in the future.

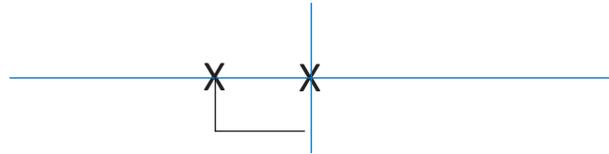


Affirmative	Negative
He will have finished working by 3:00.	He won't have finished working by 3:00.
Interrogative	
Will he have finished working by 3:00?	

Perfect Progressive Tenses

Present Perfect Progressive = *have/has been + verb + -ing*

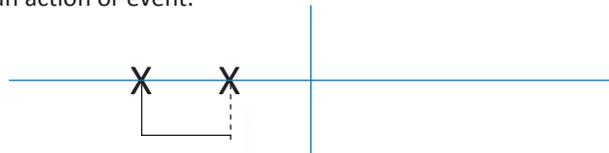
An event or action that started in the past and is in progress until now. This tense expresses the duration of an action or event.



Affirmative	Negative
He has been working for an hour.	He hasn't been working for an hour.
Interrogative	
Has he been working for an hour?	

Past Perfect Progressive = *had been + verb + -ing*

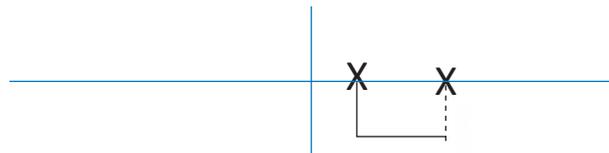
An event or action that was in progress for a period of time before another event happened. This tense expresses the duration of an action or event.



Affirmative	Negative
He had been working for three hours before I arrived.	He hadn't been working for three hours before I arrived.
Interrogative	
Had he been working that long before I arrived?	

Future Perfect Progressive = *will have been + verb + -ing*

An event or action that will be in progress immediately before, or until, another event or action in the future. This tense expresses the duration of an action or event.



Affirmative	Negative
You will have been working here for five years as of next month.	You will not have been working here for five years as of next month.
Interrogative	
Will you have been working here for five years as of next month?	

To learn more about English verb tenses, view this online presentation at www.elihinkel.org/tips/tenses.htm.

Irregular Verbs (sample list)

Infinitive	Past tense	Past participle
be	was, were	been
become	became	become
begin	began	begun
break	broke	broken
bring	brought	brought
build	built	built
buy	bought	bought
catch	caught	caught
choose	chose	chosen
deal	dealt	dealt
dream	dreamed/dreamt	dreamed/dreamt
drive	drove	driven
feel	felt	felt
fly	flew	flown
forget	forgot	forgotten
forgive	forgave	forgiven
give	gave	given
have	had	had
hear	heard	heard
keep	kept	kept
know	knew	known
learn	learned/learnt	learned/learnt
leave	left	left
lie	lay	lain
lose	lost	lost
mean	meant	meant

Infinitive	Past tense	Past participle
meet	met	met
mistake	mistook	mistaken
pay	paid	paid
prove	proved	proven
sell	sold	sold
send	sent	sent
show	showed	shown
speak	spoke	spoken
spend	spent	spent
spread	spread	spread
stand	stood	stood
take	took	taken
teach	taught	taught
tear	tore	torn
tell	told	told
throw	threw	thrown
understand	understood	understood
wear	wore	worn
win	won	won
write	wrote	written

Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet for a detailed list of irregular verbs and practice activities. Use the search terms *irregular verbs*.

Action Verbs (sample list)

When you are writing a résumé or describing your job skills, it is helpful to have a list of action verbs to draw on. The sample list below is organized by skill area.

Clerical skills

arrange
compile
file
organize
process
purchase
send
type

Financial skills

analyze
balance
budget
calculate
develop
estimate
evaluate
plan

Physical skills

check
drive
fill
install
lift
measure
operate
repair

Teaching skills

clarify
coordinate
evaluate
explain
facilitate
instruct
plan
train

Creative skills

cook
create
decorate
design
draw
illustrate
perform
sew

Service skills

advise
answer
arrange
assist
deliver
receive
sell
serve

Helping skills

assess
assist
facilitate
guide
listen
mediate
refer
rehabilitate

Research skills

evaluate
examine
identify
inspect
interpret
investigate
review
summarize

Communication skills

arrange
edit
motivate
negotiate
persuade
recruit
speak
translate
write

Management skills

coordinate
evaluate
improve
manage
organize
recommend
review
schedule
supervise

Technical skills

build
calculate
construct
design
examine
make
operate
repair
solve

Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet for information on using action verbs in résumés.

Phrasal Verbs (sample list)

Phrasal verbs are expressions that consist of a verb and preposition. Together, they create a specific meaning. There are many phrasal verbs that are commonly used in conversational English. Some phrasal verbs can be separated; others cannot.

Separable phrasal verb (S):	hand in	I handed my paper in yesterday.
Non-separable phrasal verb (NS):	ran into	I ran into an old friend yesterday.

Phrasal verb	Meaning	Sample sentences
blow out (S)	extinguish	<i>The child blew out the candles on his birthday cake.</i>
break down (NS)	stop working have a collapse	<i>My car broke down, so I had to take the bus. She broke down in tears when she heard the bad news.</i>
bring up (S)	raise children mention/introduce a topic vomit	<i>They brought up their children to be good citizens. We should bring this matter up at tomorrow's meeting. The baby brought up all her food.</i>
call for (NS)	require	<i>This situation calls for immediate action.</i>
call off (S)	cancel	<i>They called off the concert because the singer was ill.</i>
clean up (S)	make clean and orderly	<i>The guests helped to clean up the house after the party.</i>
come back (NS)	return	<i>He always comes back from Vancouver on the same flight.</i>
come up (NS)	be mentioned	<i>The topic of wage increases came up at the meeting.</i>
do over (S)	do again	<i>My teacher wants me to do my test over.</i>
fall behind (NS)	fail to keep pace with	<i>He missed so many lessons and fell behind the rest of the class.</i>
figure out (S)	find the answer by reasoning	<i>I can't figure out this algebra problem.</i>
get ahead (NS)	succeed in career	<i>He was a hard worker and got ahead in the company quickly.</i>
get along with (NS)	have a good relationship with	<i>Julie is really nice. She gets along with everyone.</i>
go over (NS)	review	<i>Let's just go over this math lesson again.</i>
take on (S)	hire	<i>The company has taken on 20 new employees.</i>
turn down (S)	decrease volume reject	<i>Turn down the radio! It's too loud. Bob asked Linda to marry him, but she turned him down.</i>

Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet for a detailed list of phrasal verbs and practice activities. Use the search terms *phrasal verbs in English*.

Punctuation

Here are some common uses of punctuation. This is not a complete list.

Punctuation	Symbol	Common uses
Period	.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the end of a sentence, e.g., <i>The weather is beautiful today.</i> At the end of an abbreviation, e.g., <i>Jan. / Dr. / Main St.</i>
Question mark	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the end of a question, e.g., <i>How are you?</i>
Exclamation mark	!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To show excitement/enthusiasm, e.g., <i>Yes! Okay! Great!</i> If using a loud voice or giving a command, e.g., <i>Stop! Don't do that!</i> To describe a loud sound, e.g., <i>Bang! Crash! Boom!</i>
Comma	,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To separate items in a list, e.g., <i>He bought milk, bread, eggs and meat.</i> Before and after clauses, e.g., <i>The table, which had been set beautifully, would only fit eight guests.</i> Before a quote, e.g., <i>She said, "Thank you for the flowers."</i>
Colon	:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To introduce a list, e.g., <i>Today's menu: ribs, chicken, or grilled fish.</i> To give examples, e.g., <i>There are many ways to lose weight. For example:...</i>
Semicolon	;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To link two closely related independent clauses, e.g., <i>John wanted to go; I did not.</i> To separate groups of words that are separated by commas, e.g., <i>You need to buy mushrooms, cream and parsley for the appetizer; chicken and peppers for the main course; and strawberries and butter for the dessert.</i>
Apostrophe	'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To form contractions, e.g., <i>I'm, they're, hasn't, don't</i> To indicate possession, e.g., <i>Lee's car, Melissa's father</i>
Quotations marks	" "	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To indicate when somebody is speaking, e.g., <i>"It's raining,"</i> said Mirko. When writing the title of a movie or book, e.g., <i>Have you seen "The Godfather?"</i>
Hyphen	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To form compound adjectives, e.g., <i>a one-way street, chocolate-covered almonds</i> To add a prefix or for compound numbers, e.g., <i>co-worker, twenty-two</i>
Dash	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To separate a phrase from the rest of the sentence, e.g., <i>He was late because of heavy traffic—at least, that was what he said.</i> To separate a phrase which has extra information, e.g., <i>A few people—not more than 10—had already arrived.</i>

Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet using the search term punctuation or punctuation activities.
- 🔍 Visit webpages with more complete information, such as the University of Ottawa Writing Centre (www.writingcentre.uottawa.ca) or the Purdue Online Writing Lab (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>).

Helpful Websites for Learning English

There are many websites that can help you learn English. Here are just a few examples.



Listening

CBC Podcasts: www.cbc.ca/podcasting

Includes numerous podcasts of radio shows for listening practice

English as a Second Language Podcast: www.eslpod.com

Offers a large collection of free podcasts for English language learners

Focus English: www.focusenglish.com

Include listening practice and activities for using every day English



Speaking

Business Presentations and Public Speaking in English:

www.englishclub.com/speaking/presentations.htm (tutorial)

Dave's ESL Café: www.eslcafe.com

Resources for pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary development

Speech Accent Archive: <http://accent.gmu.edu/howto.php>

English speech samples and pronunciation analyses

University of Toronto Pronunciation Strategies: <http://individual.utoronto.ca/English/SGSPronunciation.htm>

Pronunciation information with recordings of academic words and phrases

ESL Pronunciation Work Page: www.e-pron.com

Includes pronunciation activities with audio and comprehension activities



Reading

Breaking News English: www.breakingnewsenglish.com

Includes readings with comprehension activities based on current news

English Daily: www.englishdaily626.com

Includes reading comprehension activities, conversation practice, grammar and vocabulary activities



Writing

Ohio ESL @ Ohio University: www.ohiou.edu/esl/english/reading/index.html

Resources for English language learners on paragraph writing, reading strategies, grammar and vocabulary

The Purdue University Online Writing Lab: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>

Provides guidance on writing letters, memos, email messages, paragraphs and essays

The University of Victoria Writing Guide: <http://web.uvic.ca/wguide/>

The Writing Den: http://www2.actden.com/writ_den/tips/contents.htm

Includes tips and guidance on paragraphs and essay writing (in the tips-o-matic section)

Wilfred Laurier University writing resources: www.wlu.ca (in the site search box, type *online writing resources*)



Grammar

Capital Community College Guide to Grammar and Writing: <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar>
Includes grammar at the sentence, paragraph and essay level, grammar Q & A, 170 interactive quizzes

English, baby!: www.englishbaby.com

Includes free grammar and vocabulary development lessons; you can also chat with others in English

Online English Grammar: www.edufind.com/english/grammar/toc.cfm

Can be used as a grammar reference

The University of Ottawa Writing Centre: www.writingcentre.uottawa.ca

Includes *HyperGrammar*, a free grammar e-book

Vocabulary Development

About.com: English as a Second Language: www.about.com

Includes information and activities on grammar, vocabulary building, listening and writing skills

EnglishClub.com: www.englishclub.com/speaking/practice.htm

Includes practice activities for grammar and pronunciation

General Service List (GSL): <http://jbauman.com/gsl.html>

A list of about 2,000 of the words most frequently used in English

Marsha Chan's Vocabulary Quizzes: www.missioncollege.org/depts/esl/faculty/chan/voc/

Practice using the 2,000 most frequently used words in English

Self-Assessment

CLB Online Self-Assessment (OSA) Tool: www.clb-osa.ca

Offers an online assessment of your English language proficiency in reading and listening through tests based on the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB)

CLB-referenced Online Activities for Newcomers to Canada

www.settlementatwork.org/lincdocs/linc5-7/index.html

Offers free interactive online activities for students at CLB 5 to 8

