TUTOR HANDBOOK

Literacy Action
of Central Arkansas

Tutor Handbook

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Dear Volunteer Tutors,

We're grateful that you've made the decision to become a tutor with Literacy Action and share the gift of improved reading and language skills with someone in our community. Your work will help someone achieve their dream of a better education or job, but more than that, the help you give to one person will ripple outward in many ways. Each student we tutor can impact others through improved optimism and confidence, becoming a more involved and literate parent, improving their health and financial literacy, increasing their engagement in the community as an educated citizen, and contributing to economic growth in our area as they join the workforce. **As a tutor with Literacy Action, you will make a big impact through donating just a few hours of your time each week.**

Let me tell you about a few of the students we have helped over the past few years. **Ashar** moved here from Iraq with limited English skills. After working with our tutors for the past few years, she is now a PhD student in engineering and is being interviewed by Fortune 500 companies. **Van** struggled with dyslexia throughout his life, and at the age of 75, finally learned to read and write. He's now reading novels for enjoyment. **Marisela** studied in our ESL classes so that she could become an American citizen, giving her the freedom not to worry about being separated from her children, who grew up here. **Michael** was inspired by his wife Christina (who was Arkansas's student of the year for 2018) to improve his own literacy after giving up his education to a life on the streets. Those are just a few of the students whose lives have been changed by the volunteer tutors at Literacy Action.

Now let me tell you about a few of our tutors. **Veronique** makes a difference teaching three unschooled Yemeni women each week not only to speak English, but also to read. **Philip** tutors his student after work to improve his literacy skills so he can read chemical information at his job. **Kathy** and her fellow church group tirelessly worked to organize literacy classes for prison inmates and provide them with free books as well. **Debora** helped her college-educated Mexican student pass her GED so that she can pursue further education in the U.S. There are many more stories of tutors from all walks of life who have generously given their time to shine the light of literacy for others. We are so glad you've chosen to become one of them!

There would be no Literacy Action without our volunteers. Thank you for joining our mission to improve the literacy of the people of central Arkansas. The time you give to one student (or perhaps more) will make a bigger difference than can be described in words.

Sincerely,

Sarah Standridge
Director of Adult Programming

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INTRODUCTION

A. Literacy Action — Who We Are and What We Do

Our mission statement is simple: Literacy Action of Central Arkansas teaches adults and families reading and English language skills.

Approximately 16% of adults in central Arkansas struggle with basic reading, writing, and language skills. These individuals experience difficulties when filling out a job application, understanding a prescription label, or reading a bedtime story to their children. Adult literacy is a factor in almost every socioeconomic issue, including parenting, health care, workforce development, and poverty. Adult education helps break the cycle of intergenerational illiteracy and poverty by giving adults the skills they need to be successful as workers and parents.

Literacy Action has worked hard since 1986 to build a community empowered through literacy. We have offices in Little Rock and Conway but serve students throughout central Arkansas. We focus on a one-on-one tutoring model for adult basic literacy (ABL) instruction and a one-on-one or small-group model for English as a second language (ESL). We recruit and train volunteers to provide tutoring services. Tutors work with students on practical applications of their new skills so that students see the benefits of their efforts right away.

B. How We Work with Our Students and Tutors

Students contact Literacy Action with a desire to improve their reading, writing, and/or speaking skills for various reasons: self-improvement, educational or job goals, or better communication skills. They may be referred to us by another agency or adult education center, or they may find us by word-of-mouth or an internet search.

During the student's intake, we inquire about their past educational level and experiences, learning difficulties, interests, and goals. We generally give students a reading or English assessment to determine their beginning level in order to assign them a textbook and/or place them in a class.

Our responsibilities to our students include the following:
- Provide students with a trained volunteer tutor who is dedicated to helping them reach their goals, whether one-on-one or in a class setting.
- Make instructional materials available for our students' needs and goals.
- Maintain a lending library to supplement basic materials with additional reading and other instructional material.
- Provide a positive atmosphere that will encourage all students.
- Maintain the confidentiality of our students' learning activities.

Our responsibilities to our tutors include the following:
- Provide preservice training to familiarize you with instructional materials and appropriate teaching methods and techniques.
- Screen/test prospective students to provide you with information about the student.
- Assist you in finding a suitable meeting location.
- Make appropriate materials available to you and your student.
- Provide information about changes and innovations in instructional materials.

C. Our Programs

Literacy Action's services are all offered free of charge and embrace the belief that socioeconomic issues such as parenting, health care, workforce development, and poverty can be improved if we increase the literacy levels of adults in central Arkansas.

Adult Basic Literacy (ABL)

Our ABL program is designed for people 16 years or older who read below an 8th grade level. We provide a tutor who will work one-on-one with them to help them reach their goals using curriculum that is specifically designed for our population of students. Many of these adults have coped for years with the enormous barrier of being unable to read and write well enough to become active, contributing members of our community.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

Literacy Action offers one-on-one tutors and classes to adults who are learning English as a second language. We offer basic, intermediate, and advanced ESL, so every student is able to start learning or improving their English at the appropriate level. Whether they are professionals with advanced degrees or have little education, our students receive the instruction they need to thrive in their new community.

Local Community Partner Organizations (LCPO)

Our LCPO program is an initiative that combines the efforts of Literacy Action with local community organizations that lack the funding and the know-how to build a literacy program for their constituents. In the past three years we have partnered with over 30 community organizations to develop new, individualized literacy programs that meet the needs of small, local communities.

Family Literacy Program — Project LIFT (Literacy Inspiring Family Transformation)

In January 2018, Literacy Action launched Project LIFT, a pilot family literacy program, to bring parents and children together to participate in family literacy activities. We believe that if we can increase the literacy levels of the entire family, we will help lift them out of the cycle of intergenerational illiteracy.

D. ProLiteracy

Literacy Action of Central Arkansas is a member of the ProLiteracy organization, which specializes in the organization, development, and management of educational resources, as well as accreditation, advocacy, and development and delivery of training programs for adult literacy.

ProLiteracy had its beginnings in 1955 by founder Frank C. Laubach, who discovered that literacy empowers people to improve and enrich their lives. His work began in the Philippines in 1930 and continued for more than 40 years, touching illiterate and impoverished peoples in 103 countries. Literacy materials developed in the local languages used charts with picture, word, and sound association and incorporated vocabulary development and comprehension exercises. Limited resources were overcome as literate adults accepted Dr. Laubach's "Each One Teach One" challenge and took on the responsibility of teaching an illiterate friend or neighbor. Our literacy curriculum, *Laubach Way to Reading*, is the result of his efforts and bears his name.

Source: www.proliteracy.org

E. The Literacy Problem

According to the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy, the U.S. is falling dramatically behind other countries in literacy skills. One in four American adults cannot read above a 5th grade level. Research shows that the greatest single indicator of a child's future success is the literacy level of his or her parents.

Unbelievably, **36 million adults** in America cannot read or write at the most basic level. A recent study by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development concluded that the U.S. was "very weak in literacy." The group surveyed 24 countries and compared levels of adults' literacy. The results revealed that a larger proportion of American adults have poor literacy skills when compared to other countries.

Low literacy skills are directly linked to greater inequality, higher unemployment, less earned income, and poor health. Sadly, the education and social mobility gap in America continues to grow. This growing education inequality creates less financial opportunity and social mobility for low-income families, resulting in a stagnant U.S. economy.

Source: www.barbarabush.org

F. Causes and Effects of Low Literacy

Causes of Low Literacy:
- Illness or absence from school during a critical period in the early years; skills missed were never made up and compounded later problems
- The high mobility of many families and constant change of school for the children
- Poor quality of schools or instructors, or inadequate materials
- Physical or mental disabilities (poor eyesight, brain injury)
- Dyslexia or other learning disabilities that were not helped with intervention
- Maturation lag—lack of reading readiness
- Foreign birth—lack of access to education or English classes in native country
- Lack of personal encouragement to read or literacy resources
- Lack of personal motivation; education may seem irrelevant to personal goals
- Generational poverty; feeling that education is not a realistic goal

Other Effects of Low Literacy on Individuals and Society:
- Development of coping skills (memory, dependence on others, cover-up)
- Lack of self-esteem or self-worth
- Tremendous frustration and anger, which may even result in criminal behavior (the average reading level of people in correctional facilities is about 3rd grade)
- Increased unemployment and need for public assistance
- Loss of people's talents in the workforce and in the community
- Accidents and injury on the job, resulting in increased costs to individuals, businesses, and society
- High number of school dropouts
- Inability of parents to reinforce the skills their children are learning in school, creating a cycle of illiteracy
- Loss of human rights (the right to vote, the right of informed consent)
- Poor health and resulting high health-care costs
- Increased likelihood that individuals living in poverty stay in poverty

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT TUTORING

A. Volunteer Tutor Job Description

As a tutor, you will work to help adults acquire basic reading, writing, English speaking, and/or other life skills needed to function successfully in society. This is usually done through a one-on-one or small-group relationship that emphasizes personal attention.

Qualifications: A tutor should be dependable, interested in people, sensitive to others, a good listener, literate (professional training not necessary), flexible, patient, optimistic, friendly, nonjudgmental, open-minded, and have a sense of humor.

Benefits:
● Personal satisfaction in helping someone grow intellectually and emotionally
● Deepened understanding of values and lifestyles different from your own
● Broadened imagination for creative problem-solving

Training: Participation in Literacy Action's one-day tutor training workshop is required; attendance at tutor meetings and continuing education offerings is a plus.

Location of lessons: Any safe, neutral public location such as the Literacy Action office, a library, or a church may be used. Meeting in private homes is not advised.

Hours: Ideally, a tutor will work directly with a student three hours weekly, plus preparation time, which varies depending on the student.

Duration: A minimum six-month commitment is preferred.

Responsibilities:
● Once matched, contact the student to schedule time and location of lessons.
● Make arrangements to stop by the LACA office to pick up the curriculum materials you'll need for tutoring your student.
● After the first session has taken place, notify Literacy Action's program director/coordinator to let her know if you need anything/have concerns.
● Meet regularly with the student.
● Maintain the student's confidentiality at all times.
● Provide encouragement and support; help the student to develop a positive self-image and an enthusiasm for learning.
● Set goals *with* the student and frequently evaluate progress toward them.
● Prepare lessons to meet the individual needs and interests of the student.
● Inform the program director/coordinator if any issues arise, such as personality conflicts or absenteeism.
● Keep accurate records of hours tutored and student progress; report those hours to Literacy Action weekly.
● Notify Literacy Action if tutoring terminates, even for a short period.
● Contact the program director/coordinator when new books or materials are needed, and let us know about your student's progress and achievements.

Commitment: The most important part of Literacy Action's volunteer program is your genuine commitment to and concern for your student. Your primary goal as a tutor is to help your student acquire basic literacy or English skills, but to do this, you need to build a

ladder of successful learning experiences. Success helps to build the self-confidence the student needs to tackle more difficult material, try something new, risk failure, and understand that mistakes are part of the learning process. Before getting started, think carefully: Are you prepared to follow through with this?

Your respect for and commitment to your student are essential ingredients in building success. When a tutor leaves, it can be a tremendous disappointment to the learner.

B. Meeting Your Student for the First Time

Your program director/coordinator will contact you (usually by email) when a student is assigned to you, and will give you your student's contact information, some basic personal information, learning goals, and recommended curriculum. You will need to go to your local Literacy Action office to pick up the books and materials needed once you have made contact with your student.

Your initial contact with your student will usually be by telephone (sometimes ESL students prefer email) to make arrangements for your first weekly tutoring session. Introduce yourself by stating your name and identify yourself as their new tutor from Literacy Action (or from "the library" if privacy is a concern), ask if this is a good time to talk, select days and times convenient to both of you, suggest a location, give directions on how to get there, and leave your telephone number and/or email address.

The first time you meet, try to put your student at ease immediately. To avoid awkward silences, it's good to have some ideas and questions prepared. Plan how you will begin and end the session, and think about essential information you need to give to your student. Here are some ideas to help you have a successful first meeting:

- Introduce yourself, and make sure you are pronouncing and spelling the student's name correctly. Ask what they wish to be called. Be sure they know your name and contact information.
- Establish a regular meeting place, day, and time, as well as expectations regarding scheduling and cancellation.
- Get to know each other. Discuss hobbies, interests, family, jobs, and daily life.
- Try to ask open-ended questions to encourage your student to talk about themselves, such as: *What made you decide to get in touch with the literacy council? What are some things you'd like to learn?*
- Bring pictures of your family or other things about yourself that you want to share. Invite your student to do the same at your second meeting.
- Bring any materials you may need: books you have been given (Laubach, Ventures, etc.) including teacher's manual, student book, and workbook, along with a notebook, pencils, pens, highlighters, etc. If tutoring an ESL student, a bilingual dictionary or translation app and/or an *Oxford Picture Dictionary* could be helpful. It's good to keep all your tutoring materials in a designated bag so they are ready when you need them.
- Discuss current reading and writing practices and challenges. (Example: *What kinds of things do you read/write during a normal day at home, at work, and when you're out? What are some things about reading and writing that are challenging for you?*)
- Ask your student about reading and writing goals. (Example: *What would you like to be able to read/write better now/in the future?*) Write down your learner's goals so you can check on progress later.

- Look at the curriculum and get familiar with what you will be doing together. You may want to try the first page of the first lesson or have the student practice writing.
- Most importantly, LISTEN to your student. You need to learn about your student's difficulties, interests, motivations, self-image, confidence, and learning style to provide a good foundation for a successful tutoring experience.
- Some ESL students will experience difficulty with this level of dialog, so information may be approached incrementally over several sessions.
- Do not promise anything you cannot deliver; you may be joining a long line of others who have broken promises. You must make every effort to show your student that they can have confidence in you, and that your promises mean something. Take turns reflecting on how the session went. (Example: *What did you learn today? Is there anything that needs clarifying? Is there anything we should do differently next time?*)
- Discuss plans for your second meeting, confirm the meeting time and place, and make sure you have correct phone numbers for each other.

After the initial meeting, be prepared to use almost the whole time on instruction. Remember, we cannot always predict which materials will work best for you and your student. The best selection may be a combination of materials. Encourage your student to bring any reading material they need to work on.

C. Relating to Your Student

Rapport and Patience

How you relate to your student can be summarized in two words: *rapport* and *patience*.

Learning can only take place when you interact with your student. To create a climate for learning, tutoring must be a relaxed, friendly experience. Try at all times to:
- Be honest and sincere
- Be kind and warm
- Take care that your words, tone of voice, and body language are positive

These qualities provide the basis for good student-tutor rapport.

Recognize that learning will be difficult at times. It is easy to feel discouraged if you do not seem to be making progress. Students have left literacy programs because they sensed the tutor's frustration with their lack of advancement.

Help the student recognize gains in skills, however small, that are evidence of growth. These gains are important to both you and your learner as you progress through the tutoring program.

Be patient and praise your student for what they have learned. Help them feel that this is a learning partnership and that when things get difficult, you will both be there to look for ways to make it easier.

Remember, each session should be a rewarding experience for both of you!

Cultural Sensitivity

Culture represents the ways and means by which humans deal with universal situations and problems. These situations may involve social relationships, child rearing, family, education, entertainment, housing, work, food, clothing, beliefs, etc. It is these common "rules" that keep us from having to make certain fundamental decisions anew every day. The behaviors are already mapped out for us in our culture.

Our students come from diverse backgrounds and cultures that may be very different from your own. Often it is differences between cultures that result in miscommunication, and even embarrassment at times.

Cultural learning is selective. Eventually, your student will decide which elements of their native culture to retain and which elements of their new culture to adopt. The student's cultural identity will usually represent a mixture of both.

Examples of cultural differences which may affect tutoring
● Attitudes toward time and punctuality
● Attitudes about personal hygiene, frequency of bathing, etc.
● Attitudes toward teachers (may be revered in some cultures)
● Attitudes toward the role of students
● Eye contact

Tips on being an effective cultural guide
● Beware of stereotypes or assuming that all people within a country share the same culture.
● Learn as much as you can about the student's culture.
● Be aware of your own cultural orientation in order to help students see contrasts.
● Examine similarities between cultures as well as differences.
● Explore cultural meanings found in words, phrases, and gestures.
● Train yourself and the student to be prepared for expressions that are not meant to be taken literally, or that have culture-specific meanings.
● Avoid being judgmental of the student, especially of values and beliefs which differ from your own.
● Realize that forming a new identity in a new cultural setting is a matter of choice.
● Be aware that new Americans often experience major adjustment problems, and be sensitive to these adjustments.
● Promote discussion about behavior in hypothetical situations (role plays) in order to avoid embarrassment.
● There is no "best" or "only" way to do something. Others' ways are just as valid as yours.
● Learn from each other! (This takes time because you must first work to gain the student's trust.)

(Adapted from New Readers Press, *Training by Design, ESL Workshop Presentations)*

Preparing for Potential Problems

Volunteering as an ABL or ESL tutor is a rewarding experience, but as with anything, there can be difficulties. You must expect that there will be some bumps in the road along this

journey, and plan for how you will react. Here are some fairly typical problems that tutors and students can experience, and some possible solutions.

Possible Problem	Possible Solution
Student doesn't show up for tutoring session.	Call or text student several times over the next few days; if student replies, be friendly and understanding. Ask if a new time or place is better for the student and try to schedule another meeting. If there is no answer after several tries, call LACA.
Student seemed enthusiastic in the early sessions, but attendance and enthusiasm have gone down dramatically.	Talk to your student about what's going on. Find out if something has changed in the student's life. Remind them of their goals and ask if a change in tutoring (frequency, length of session, time or day) will help. Try to help them see progress and feel successful. We can print a certificate of completion or make a fun award to encourage/motivate them.
Student "overshares" their personal problems.	It's OK to listen and be empathetic, but if this makes you uncomfortable, remind your student that you are there as a tutor and aren't trained to help them with other issues. Redirect them to tutoring if they begin to talk about their personal life. Refer them elsewhere if you know someone who can help (we have a community resource guide).
You and your student become friends and you end up chatting the whole session instead of tutoring.	It's a wonderful outcome if you and your student become friends, but if they still want to learn, you need to do your best to refocus your time together. Try to schedule time to have coffee or lunch to catch up.

If you experience any problems that can't seem to be resolved, contact your LACA office as soon as possible.

D. Setting Goals

Students entering our program are likely to describe goals that are vague: "I just want to be able to read better," "I'd like to get a better job," "I want to improve my English," or "I want to be able to help my kids with schoolwork." Others identify goals that will take a long time to reach: "I want to get my GED" or "I want to get U.S. citizenship."

Don't discourage a student who expresses goals like these, but understand that students need to be able to see concrete progress toward a goal. One of the most common reasons for students to drop out of the program is discouragement about not seeing improvement. Immediate progress toward a long-term goal is hard to perceive. If the goal is vague or requires skills far above the student's current reading and writing level, find short-term goals the two of you can work on to help move them closer to the long-range goal. There are many ways to break up a long-term goal into manageable chunks.

Be sure that the activities you choose are realistic for the learner's skill level and are concrete enough to allow them to see progress. For example, a student who wants to get a good job will need to know how to read a want ad or how to fill out a job application. Both of these skills can be subdivided. In order to read a want ad, a student needs to learn how

to locate the employment ads in the classified section of the newspaper or online. They need to learn alphabetical order and any other system used to categorize jobs and be able to understand any special vocabulary or abbreviations that are used in these ads.

Work with your student to list the activities you want to work on together. Involve the student in making decisions about what you will do with your time together, but be sure the choices are realistic, and never promise more than you can deliver. Also remember that the more concrete and specific the activities are, the easier it will be for the student to judge how much progress is being made.

To give you a starting point, Adult Learners Section A has examples of needs and goals. After you have identified some short-term, concrete, and realistic goals, set aside time in each tutoring session to work on them. Remind your student that time spent studying in the course books will also help them progress toward their goals. Together you are developing a foundation of basic skills that will be used in all the activities you have talked about.

Finally, take time periodically to discuss and evaluate with the student what progress is being made. You may decide to modify your short-term goals or to set new ones, but make that decision together.

E. Lesson Planning

When planning a lesson, you should allow time for work on basic reading and writing skills, as well as activities that directly relate to the student's personal goals. It may be helpful to think of each lesson as having the following three parts:

1. Learning Basic Skills
The three types of skills listed under this section are usually included when you teach a lesson from a workbook, but sometimes you will want a chance for the student to learn skills in a setting other than the workbooks. The following are examples of activities or materials you can use on the three key skills.

a. Reading: Language experience story, sight words flash cards
b. Writing: Spelling words from a story, free write activity
c. Skills practice: Letter sounds, *Focus on Phonics*, or listening activity

2. Reinforcing Skills
The amount of time you spend on this section depends on your student. If they need extra reading practice, you can use the "More Stories" from *Laubach* or an easy reader from the library, duet reading, *News for You*, or something on the student's level that they select (more information on these resources and strategies can be found in later sections).

You might use the time to review word patterns or sight words the student has been learning, or do something just for fun, such as a crossword puzzle, hangman, or other word game. If a student is having a lot of difficulty, you might want to use almost the entire lesson to help them reinforce their skills before starting a new lesson.

3. Meeting Individual Needs
You should also plan activities that directly relate to the goals identified by the student. For example:
● Use flashcards to learn important words
● Practice filling out job applications or other forms
● Practice reading a children's story book using duet reading
● Work on writing a letter to a friend or relative

F. Keys to Successful Tutoring

These strategies are useful for ALL learners, including students with learning disabilities or learning difficulties.

- Orient the student to what they will be doing and why, but reduce instructions to what is essential. Be specific about what you are asking the student to do.
- Present information in small, logical steps. Build on what they already know. Relate new material to your student's everyday life; make connections to previous lessons.
- Be concrete and give examples.
- Asking "Do you understand?" isn't sufficient. Ask the student to demonstrate understanding, for example, by using a new word in a sentence.
- Use organizational aids such as 3-ring binders, calendars, folders, etc.
- Use a variety of tools to help the student retain information, including flash cards, word games, crossword puzzles, maps, and color coding.
- Slow down. Reduce stress by setting a relaxed pace.
- Avoid distractions by meeting in a quiet place.
- Provide frequent and focused feedback.

Tips for new tutors from experienced tutors:
- Don't be discouraged by slow progress; it takes time to get to know your learner and establish a good routine. Learning takes time.
- Your will student likely be more nervous than you. Try to put them feel at ease.
- Relax, have fun, and be creative—don't be afraid to go "off book."
- Don't take poor attendance personally, but do ensure that you are meeting your learner's needs.
- Meet your student where they are, not where you think they should be.
- Find out what your learner wants to learn, and teach that.
- Teach something new in each lesson.
- Let students progress at their own pace.
- Let the student do the work, and don't talk too much.
- Help your students to help themselves.
- Speak clearly and in a positive tone of voice.
- Begin and end on time. Even if your student is late, stop at the appointed time (and don't be late yourself).

G. Evaluating Your Student's Progress

Students participate in an intake interview and placement testing when they enroll in our program. ABL students are given a reading evaluation to determine their current reading level, and ESL students are given a placement test to determine their English level.

When you receive your student's information, a reading or English level will be included. This information is provided to assist you in planning your lessons. A continuous evaluation of your student's progress should be part of your overall tutoring effort. If mastery of the material is not complete, you should periodically review those items your student seems to be having trouble with. It is helpful to keep notes recording points that need to be practiced further. You will want to make an informal evaluation of your student's progress toward their goals and review progress about once a month.

It is always helpful and encouraging to show your student the progress they have made. An easy way to accomplish this is to review an early exercise or reading passage. For example, if your student's early goal was to read a book to their child, you might reread a book the

student practiced early in your tutoring venture to let them see that what once appeared difficult is now easy. For an ESL student, you could review an early vocabulary lesson or a list of vocabulary words to show the progress that has been made.

Another way to encourage your student and notify us of progress simultaneously is to write a "student success story" with your student for our newsletter or social media. Ask your student if this is something you could work on together, and let them do a lot of the writing. Don't forget to take a picture and email it to your program director/coordinator along with your story.

H. Reporting Your Student's Progress

Reporting your student's progress is simple. Each week, Literacy Action will send you an email with a link to an online form to complete and submit. You can also report your hours any time by going to our website. We track your student's progress and record your hours from the reports you submit each week.

These are the three main things you should report:
1. Hours you have spent tutoring and preparing, as well as other volunteer hours you have given to LACA (e.g., board meetings, workshops, office help)
2. Which course book and lesson you taught, along with any supplementary material you used (spellers, Oxford Picture Dictionary, etc.)
3. Your student's accomplishments and goals completed (e.g., got a job, got a raise, registered to vote, or passed their driver's test or citizenship test)

Please notify us when your student is ready to move up to the next textbook. We will provide you with the new books, note your student's progress in our files, and record it for state reporting purposes. Our funding depends on accountability—that is, our ability to show we are doing what we say we are doing by helping our students to improve their skills. Please remember that notifying us of your student's progress is essential to our mission.

When your student finishes an entire series of textbooks (Laubach, Challenger, or Ventures), please contact us to schedule retesting for your student so we can determine the best textbook series to continue their progress.

ADULT LEARNERS

A. Characteristics, Needs, and Goals of Adult Learners

Adult Learner General Characteristics

● Want to be treated as adults even if learning basic skills
● Are often self-directed and used to making decisions for themselves or with peers and family members
● Have specific and immediate learning needs and goals
● Are generally very busy and may have little time to participate in programs or do homework; may have many barriers to regular attendance
● Have a wealth of experiences that should be used as a resource in learning
● May be insecure about their literacy skills, learning new things, coming to program
● May have difficulty asking questions or expressing opinions about instruction

● Have values and beliefs based on their cultural and ethnic backgrounds that may be very different from their tutor's
● Learn best when a subject relates to their day-to-day lives
● Are voluntary participants and may decide to leave the program at any time

Example Goals for Adult Literacy/English Learners

Economic goals
● Gain employment
● Retain employment
● Get a promotion or better job

Educational goals
● Enter post-secondary education
● Obtain a GED or high school diploma
● Enter adult career education or training
● Obtain a license or certificate

Community/citizen/family goals
● Register to vote
● Apply for citizenship
● Communicate with teachers
● Increase involvement in child's education
● Help with child's homework
● Life-long learner goals
● Learn to read
● Improve reading skills
● Improve writing skills
● Improve speaking skills
● Improve computer skills

General goals:
● Fill out a form
● Obtain a driver's license

Characteristics of Adults with Low Literacy and Tutor Responses

Possible Student Characteristic	Recommended Tutor Responses
Lack of self-confidence	Help them to gain confidence by building on small successes. Assure your student that they can learn. Help your student to see how much they have achieved. Let your student know the choice of what to learn is theirs.
Fear of school—past unpleasant experience	Avoid sarcasm and never ridicule. Accept the student warmly and uncritically.
Unaccustomed to long, quiet concentration	Ensure variety in your methods. Make use of games. Have fun!

May have limited experiences in a different culture	Be willing to get to know your student's culture. Help to introduce your student to your culture by suggesting and/or providing experiences that may include trips to an arts center or museum.
May have attitudes, values and goals which differ from yours	Make an honest attempt to see through your student's eyes. If your student is living in poverty, understand the difference between middle class and poverty and the hidden rules that both classes have.
May have weak motivation for learning	Early in your time together, discuss and establish the learning goals with your student. Do not do this *for* them, but rather help them to articulate their own goals. Help to establish sub-goals, which are reachable in the not- too-distant future. Let there be plenty of successes and opportunities for positive experiences that will boost your student's confidence. Your goal is to find that student's motivation.
Exceedingly sensitive to nonverbal forms of communication	Watch yourself! Be very sensitive and aware of what you are revealing about your own inner attitudes, not only by your words but by your manner, expressions, or body language.
May have feelings of powerlessness	Be a mentor rather than an authority figure. Give them choices in learning; let them know that they have the power to choose in their learning.
May have hearing problems	Speak clearly and look at your student when you speak. Ask the student to repeat instructions so you can check for understanding.
May have vision problems	Work in well-lit areas. Ask the student to tell you if the print is too small. Ask your program director/coordinator for reading glasses.
May have learning disabilities	Present information in small, manageable steps. Teach new material in concrete ways and give examples. Relate material to the student's everyday life. Have lessons away from distractions.

Working with Adult Learners Living in Poverty
Adapted from *Bridges Out of Poverty* by Ruby Payne

There are two kinds of poverty: **situational** and **generational**. Situational poverty means the individual has not always lived in poverty and it is only because of certain circumstances (layoff from long-term job with no future job prospects or a health issue) that they find themselves in this situation. Generational poverty is the situation we deal with most in tutoring, defined by *Bridges out of Poverty* as having lived in poverty for at least two generations.

A student who is living in poverty faces challenges that may be hard to understand. You may need to call to remind them of your tutoring session or they may forget (and they may lose their phone periodically because they can't pay for it). They may miss appointments without notifying you because they live in the "here and now," and unexpected problems can cause them to forget everything else. They may be dealing with a lack of family support. They may feel forced to be there, depending on their specific situation, and may require lots of encouragement and patience from you.

For more information on working with individuals trying to overcome poverty, you may borrow the book *Bridges Out of Poverty* from the Literacy Action office*.*

B. Principles of Tutoring Adults that Promote Success

The following table includes principles that promote success for adult literacy students, as well as ways to implement them.

Principle	Implementation
Set short-term goals	One way to help ensure progress for students is to establish short-term goals with them. Help them see the progress they have made each session.
Set a student up for success	Don't try to "catch" students by asking what they don't know. Bolster confidence and ensure a successful experience by checking for what you are sure they *do* know. In other words, set them up for success in every lesson.
Use an ordered sequence of steps	Move from the known to the unknown using the principle of association. In this way you not only build confidence, but you encourage independence. When students hit a snag, have them go back to the known. They can usually work their way to the solution themselves. For example, if your student cannot get the beginning sound of a word, have them go back to the keyword from the charts. Our curriculum builds skills using a carefully controlled *sequential process* that allows the student to master each skill before progressing to the next level. The teachers' manuals give specific instructions for keeping the learning steps small and ordered, according to difficulty.
Establish a routine	Consistency helps students organize their thinking and predict answers.
Prevent strain	Ensure that the font size in the materials is large enough to prevent eye strain. Be sure that there is good lighting in the room where you work. Speak distinctly and loudly enough to be heard. Eliminate noise interference as much as possible. Use a chair and table or desk of suitable size. Do not over-tire your student with too long a lesson. Determine the student's comfort and energy level. Be careful not to overwhelm your student. Resist the tendency to increase the work or lengthen the lessons just because they are doing well or seem eager to make progress. Your student should leave each lesson with a sense of enjoyment and achievement.

Provide opportunities for review	Reviewing helps to ensure permanence of learning through added repetition and recall after a time lapse. It also helps evaluate what the student has learned and what areas require further study. Do not let your review turn into tedious drills. Use different materials and approaches. Remember that the student may not be able to automatically transfer knowledge gained in the lessons to other situations and may need help with this.
Have confidence in the student's ability to learn	Your student may have mixed feelings about participating in the tutoring sessions and may need your reassurance and encouragement. You should always appear confident that they will be able to learn.
Give genuine praise	Another way to help encourage progress is to frequently give praise. Find and use a variety of ways to express your praise such as a big smile, quick words of encouragement, or a favorable comment. Remember that your tone of voice goes a long way. Be careful not to overdo it, or the message may come across as "What a surprise! I didn't think you were capable of it!"
Recognize accomplishments	Be sure to give the student a certificate at the end of each skill book (available from Literacy Action). This is a tangible sign of what they have achieved. Keep a portfolio of the student's work so that they can see their progress. You might suggest that you and your student write their story together for the Literacy Action newsletter.
Be positive	Cut "no" out of your vocabulary. Focus on the student's strengths, not weaknesses. Find something good in every effort. Build on what they know. Work for improvement, not perfection! Decide how to make corrections. The manner in which you react to errors is very important. Mistakes do not indicate failure–they are a sign of risk-taking and can be a tool for further learning. Sometimes when the student makes a mistake, you will want to ask questions to lead them to correct themselves. At other times, it may be better to correct it casually yourself. If appropriate, teach and reteach the point, but do not make an issue of the error itself.
Present more difficult work that is relevant to the student's goals	By giving students material at a higher level and relevant to their goals, they will see that they are making progress and will take pride in their accomplishments.

C. Student-focused Learning Outcomes Approach

As a tutor, try to see yourself not as a presenter of content, but as a facilitator of learning for your adult student. As you learn to focus on the student rather than the content, you will begin to view yourself, your student, the subject matter, and the learning environment in a different light. Your main role is to create an atmosphere in which the student is *engaged* and where they can learn and attain their goals.

A learning outcomes approach can help the process of moving from a content focus to a student focus by shifting the focus away from teaching "content" and toward helping students to achieve "learning outcomes."

The following table presents a detailed comparison between a more traditional content-oriented approach and the learning outcomes approach, and can serve as a guide to becoming more student-focused.

	Traditional Approach	Learning Outcomes Approach
Focus	Emphasize *input* (what is deposited in the student's brain).	Emphasizes *output* (what students can do with the learning).
Objective	To teach a specific content	To empower students to use learning in real life
Foundation	Lessons are based on a set curriculum. Time-based: Teach as much curriculum as possible in a set time period. (Time is the constant; learning mastery is the variable.)	Lessons are based on what is needed to achieve the student's real-life goals. Mastery-based: Time is flexible to master needed skills before moving on. (Learning mastery is the constant; time is the variable.)
Methods	● Use of textbooks ● Lecture (one-way) ● Limited teaching techniques	● Use of real-life materials ● Active discussion (two-way) ● Variety of teaching techniques
Tutor/ student role	Tutor presents content and suggests particular views on the subject matter. Tutor is the fountain of knowledge. Tutor rarely asks for student input: "Here's what you need, and this is how you do it."	Tutor creates a learning environment by facilitating discussion and encouraging student to develop own view. Student brings prior knowledge and own experience. Tutor asks for student input: "What do you need? How can I help?"
Lesson planning and evaluation	Tutor assumes major responsibility for learning; does the lesson planning and evaluation.	Student shares responsibility and is involved in planning and evaluation; feels in control of own learning.
Assessment	Testing/grades Success = 60% Finishing units	Real-life skill assessments Success = Has goal been met? Ongoing review/portfolios

D. Tutoring Adults with Learning Disabilities (LD)

Not everyone who has problems learning to read has an LD, but research suggests that **as many as 50 to 80% of students** in adult basic education and literacy programs display characteristics typical of individuals with learning disabilities. The term *learning disabilities* refers to a broad spectrum of processing disorders that arise from problems taking in, storing, retrieving, or expressing information.

According to the Learning Disabilities Association of America, an LD is a life-long, handicapping condition of neurological origin which interferes with verbal and/or nonverbal abilities, and can vary in severity but generally affects self-esteem, education, vocation, socialization, and/or daily living activities. Learning disabilities do not include problems that are primarily the result of intellectual disabilities, emotional disturbance, or visual, hearing, emotional, or intellectual disabilities. People with learning disabilities usually have average to above-average intelligence, but they can exhibit great discrepancies between their ability or aptitude and their demonstrated achievement.

Many people with learning disabilities struggle with reading. The difficulties often begin with individual sounds, or phonemes. Students may have problems with rhyming, pulling words apart into their individual sounds (segmenting), and putting individual sounds together to form words (blending). This makes it difficult to decode words accurately, which can lead to trouble with fluency and comprehension.

About 85% of people with learning disabilities have dyslexia. Dyslexia is a language-based LD that refers to a cluster of symptoms which result in people having difficulties with specific language skills, particularly reading, spelling, writing, and/or pronouncing words. Dyslexia affects individuals throughout their lives; however, its impact can change at different stages in a person's life. Many people—perhaps as many as 15%–20% of the population as a whole—have some of the symptoms of dyslexia, including slow or inaccurate reading, poor spelling, poor writing, or mixing up similar words.

The symptoms of learning disabilities are a diverse set of characteristics that affect development and achievement. Some of these symptoms can be found in all individuals at some time during their development. However, a person with LD has a cluster of these symptoms that do not disappear with age.

Most frequently displayed symptoms of LD
- short attention span
- poor memory
- difficulty following directions
- inability to discriminate between/among letters, numerals, or sounds
- poor reading and/or writing ability
- eye-hand coordination problems; poorly coordinated
- difficulties with sequencing, and/or disorganization and other sensory difficulties

Other characteristics that may be present
- performs differently from day to day
- often responds inappropriately
- distractible, restless, impulsive
- says one thing, means another
- doesn't adjust well to change
- difficulty listening and remembering
- difficulty telling time and knowing right from left
- difficulty sounding out words
- reverses letters and numbers
- places letters in incorrect sequence
- difficulty understanding words or concepts, and/or delayed speech development; immature speech

Typical **strategies and accommodations** that may help adults with LD include reading out loud, audio texts, color-coding for organization, use of graphic organizers (charts, diagrams, etc.), having opportunities to re-state information in one's own words, and one-on-one instruction in school or job training. Assistive technology (AT) is also helpful for adults with LD—at home, school, and work. It may help daily functioning to use a text-to-speech program and/or app such as Natural Readers or Prizmo to hear printed text out loud.

Strategies that are helpful for non-ESL students with LD are usually also appropriate for ESL students with LD, including real-life, experiential, hands-on learning; using the student's learning strengths; accommodating the individual's disability as needed; and the use of assistive technology when possible.

Other strategies to try when working with a learning-disabled adult
- using a multisensory approach: see, say, hear, and touch the words)
- helping student find the top left of the page and follow the lines of text
- presenting information in small, manageable steps
- providing frequent reinforcement and feedback
- experimenting with large print and double-spacing of text
- covering unimportant text with paper to help student focus on words being read
- using graph paper to help with writing
- preparing the learner for changes in routine
- setting up instructional space away from distractions
- restating information in a variety of ways
- using a colored transparency to change the contrast between ink and paper on reading materials, or using colored paper rather than white with black print
- teaching and encouraging the use of mnemonics for memorizing information
- avoiding time constraints

(Sources: *Teaching Adults: A Literacy Resource Book* and the learning disabilities websites ldamerica.org and ldonline.org.)

> "A study partner need not be a certified educator. Dylsexic learners need someone who is first of all patient and nonjudgmental … [someone] who quietly teaches the learner who is dyslexic how to follow the markers in finding the place and working left to right through the task … a sounding board, giving feedback when the student stumbles or becomes unsure…to encourage, show the way, absorb frustration, and share the student's disappointment, but not to criticize."
>
> —*Teaching Adults with Learning Disabilities* by Dale R. Jordan, 1996

Multisensory Teaching Approaches

You may have heard of "learning styles," the idea that we each have a certain dominant sense (seeing, hearing, or doing) which is how we learn best. This theory hasn't been proven by research. Now researchers believe we all use a combination of learning styles, with some more useful than others, depending on the learning task. Your student may appear to learn best using one particular style; however, studies show that using a multisensory approach works best with most students. Trying to match certain methods to your student's perceived learning style is not recommended; instead, try using a combination of methods.

Ideas for VISUAL teaching
● Be sure your student sees all study materials
● Use charts, maps, notes, diagrams, and flashcards
● Ask your student to visualize or picture spelling words in their head
● Write out everything for frequent and quick visual review
● Use color coding or a highlighter

Ideas for AUDITORY teaching
● Use audio tapes, books on CD, or other listening tools
● Sit your student where they can hear the best
● Make audio tapes of the texts you read together for later review
● After you read something, summarize it on tape or out loud
● Model thinking out loud—i.e., talking through the steps of an activity
● Remind your student to verbally review new words or material with a friend
● Soft background music may be helpful during studying

Ideas for KINESTHETIC teaching
● Have your student trace words as you/they are saying them
● Facts that must be learned should be written several times; keep a supply of scratch paper just for that purpose. Taking notes will be helpful.
● Use concrete objects to understand abstract concepts
● Use games and puzzles for review
● Take frequent breaks to move around

> "We are all visual learners, and we all are auditory learners, not just some of us. Laboratory studies reveal that we all learn when the inputs we experience are multi-modal or conveyed through different media … Claims such that 'some students learn from words, but others from images' are incorrect, as all students learn most effectively through linking images with words … Differences between students in learning are determined strongly by their prior knowledge, by the patterns they can recognize, and not by their learning style."
>
> —*Visible Learning and the Science of How We Learn* by John Hattie and Gregory Yates, 2014

TUTORING STRATEGIES FOR ABL STUDENTS

A. Teaching an Adult to Read

The Reading Process

Reading can be defined simply as the active cognitive process of getting meaning from print. It is one of the four tools we use to communicate, along with listening, speaking, and writing.

Most of us take reading for granted, but for many people, reading doesn't come easily or naturally. If a child doesn't learn to read or is a poor reader in elementary school, they are likely to never catch up with their classmates and will continue to experience reading problems until they receive intervention. Many adult literacy students did not receive the right kind of help in school, so their problems persisted.

The reading process consists of two major components: decoding, which results in word identification, and comprehension, which is related to meaning. Breaking the reading code involves learning to read words by sounding out simple words and taking apart bigger words (decoding), and understanding what words, sentences, and paragraphs of text mean (comprehending).

Reading Instruction

The National Reading Panel issued a report in 2000 which summarized the five components of reading instruction as follows:

- **Phonemic awareness:** the ability to attend to, think about, and work with the individual *sounds* in words
- **Phonics:** the relationship between the sounds and written symbols of language, or *phoneme-grapheme correspondence*
- **Fluency:** the ability to read text quickly and accurately
- **Vocabulary:** the ability to understand the meanings of the words we use to communicate
- **Comprehension:** the ability to derive meaning from what is read, which is the reason for reading

Learning to read well includes the following:
- Developing awareness of the sounds of language (e.g., rhyme)
- Working on words by pulling them apart (segmenting) and putting them back together (blending)
- Separating words into syllables and syllables into sounds (phonemes)
- Listening to stories and visualizing or imagining
- Learning to spell
- Memorizing sight words
- Practicing oral and silent reading
- Writing, including letters and stories
- Building word (and worldly) knowledge
- Learning comprehension strategies
- Creating a sense of self-esteem as a reader

(Sources: *Overcoming Dyslexia* by Sally Shaywitz and The Center for Development and Learning website, cdl.org/language/)

Skills and Strategies Involved in Reading

Skills	Strategies Students and Tutors Can Use
Letter and sound recognition	Visual cues or puns Keywords
Word recognition	Sounding out words Identifying word patterns and parts Developing sight vocabulary using flashcards Recognizing shapes of words Using context to predict words

Fluency and expression	Phrasing Using punctuation Tutor modeling Duet reading
Comprehension	Directed reading Active reading (predicting, visualizing, etc.) Questioning Relating to experience Increasing vocabulary
Transfer to real-life situations	Using everyday materials Generalizing Scanning/skimming

Common Decoding Strategies

Even effective readers come across unknown words. When they do, there are several strategies they can use to figure out the word:
- **Graphic strategies:** Words are recognized by their length, shape, letter patterns, words within words, etc.
- **Phonetic strategies:** Words are sounded out by blending sounds together. However, one cannot get meaning using phonics alone.
- **Grammatical strategies:** Words are substituted to fit the grammatical structure of the sentence.
- **Meaning strategies**: Words are figured out by looking at the meaning of the sentence.

Helpful Strategies for Teaching Beginning Readers

Ways to read a text
- Tutor reads aloud as student listens and follows along in text.
- Tutor reads aloud, and then student reads aloud.
- Tutor and student read together. Student will likely trail slightly behind. Read at a normal rate and point to words as you read them.
- Student reads silently and then aloud.
- Student reads aloud.

What to do when your student gets stuck on a word
- If the word is phonetically regular and your student has the knowledge to do so, encourage them to sound it out. Direct their attention to root words, prefixes, suffixes, compound words, or familiar word patterns. If the word is phonetically irregular but the context makes its meaning clear, encourage the student to skip it, read to the end of the sentence, and try again. If the word is not critical to understanding the text, encourage skipping it. If the student, using these techniques, cannot determine the word and it is critical to the meaning of the text, supply the word.
- Don't allow the student too much time to decode a word, because this will interfere with comprehension, but do allow time for your student to analyze a difficult word and figure it out. Don't correct errors that do not alter the meaning of the text.
- Make a note of word difficulties while the student is reading. When the student is finished reading and you have talked about the text, conduct a mini-lesson on 3–5 of the

words that gave the student difficulty. Use these mini-lessons to review or introduce new sounds, blends, word families, suffixes, and prefixes. Review previous mini-lessons.
● Use a sight word list to develop fluency with common words using flash cards. Review these for a few minutes, but keep in mind that every time your student reads, they are practicing them in context.
● Do not spend more than 20 minutes on post-reading word skills. Monitor comprehension; if the meaning is lost, reread with purpose.

Teaching Sight Words and High-Frequency Words

Sight words are words that students recognize immediately (within three seconds) and can read without having to use decoding skills. Many sight words are also "high frequency words" that are commonly found in the English language. Amazingly, 50% of our written material is made up of 100 of these most frequently used words!

You may want to teach certain words as sight words from the beginning. You'll find a link to a list of commonly used words and social sight words and phrases in the References and Resources section at the back of this handbook, but other sight words could include:

● High-frequency words that appear in general writing (the)
● Words in material related to the student's own life or job situation (inflammable)
● Words that have sounds which the student hasn't learned yet (such as long vowel)
● Words that are irregularly spelled and are difficult to sound out phonetically (answer, psychology)
● Words that the student has difficulty remembering
● Other words that the student selects to learn. These could come from many sources, including:

Language experience stories	Addresses
Functional writing exercises	Children's stories, poems
Forms and applications	English word pyramid
Job-related materials	Social sight words
Names of family and friends	Other public signs
Road signs	

General guidelines for sight words:
● Print the words you select on flash cards. Better yet, let the student make the cards with your help.
● Introduce no more than 10 new words at each lesson. Do not drill the student for long periods.
● To make it easier for the student, introduce short vowel words first.
● Ask the student to use the word in a sentence if they have trouble remembering the word on the card. Write that sentence on the back of the flash card as a memory device.
● Have the student fill in blanks in sentences with the correct word.
● Encourage the student to practice reviewing the flash cards at home.
● Review the flashcards together often. The student should:
● Repeat each word after the tutor points to it and says it.
● Point to the word said by the tutor and then repeat it.
● Read each word as the tutor points to it.

Ways to Work with Sight Words

Teach with pictures
To help students recall sight words, add a picture to the word. When you present an illustration along with a word, it helps students connect the object and the word, and in turn help them solidify the information into their memories. You can also have students draw a picture to correlate with every new sight word they learn. This will help students link the visual with the printed word.

Use a multisensory approach
The multisensory approach helps students learn words by using a variety of their senses, either visual, auditory, kinesthetic or tactile. Students can benefit from using multisensory learning because everyone learns and processes information differently. For multisensory teaching, try having students trace the words on the flashcards, spell words with magnetic letters, or write words in a tray of sand.

Use a word bank
Keep sight word flash cards in a "Word Bank" (card file) divided into two sections: (1) Words I Know and (2) Words I'm Working On.

Keep no more than 3–10 words in the "Words I'm Working On" section. The student will feel a sense of accomplishment as the "Words I Know" section becomes larger and larger. Because words in context are generally remembered more easily than in isolation, it may help to print a sentence on the back of each card.

Use outlines, colors, and shapes
It may be helpful to outline words so that their shape is more obvious.
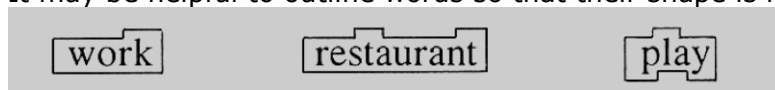
For words that look the same, it may be helpful to print them with a colored marker within a shape, or on different colored index cards.

Play games
- Play Scrabble, Bingo, or Concentration with sight words.
- Write sentences or stories containing the sight words.
- Play word find games with sight words.

Spelling sight words
88% of all words are spelled according to recognizable patterns. The other 12% are taught as sight words. Flash cards and repetition can help students remember how to spell sight words.

(Sources: Scholastic.com and TeachHub.com)

Word Patterns and Phonics Strategies

There are more than 60 easy-to-use tutoring strategies in *Teaching Adults: A Literacy Resource Book,* which is available in the Literacy Action library. Following are some useful strategies to help get you started.

Word Patterns for Kinesthetic/Tactile Learners

Purpose
To involve your student in physical activities that teach the concept of word patterns.

How
Using flashcards: Select the word endings you want to work on. Ask your student to write each ending on a separate index card. (Examples: -ash, -act, -ent, -each)

Make a list of each of the consonants, digraphs, and consonant blends you want to work with. Ask your student to copy each of these on a separate index card. Ask your student to place one of the consonant cards in front of a word pattern card and read the new word. (Nonsense words are allowed. The emphasis is on recognition, but you may want to discuss whether the new word is a real word.)
Repeat with each consonant card, digraph card, or consonant blend card.

b   r

   t   each

Teaching Phonics: Start with the Vowel Sound

Purpose
To encourage more careful reading by a student who tends to look only at the first letter in a word and guess the rest of the word.

How
1. Cover all the letters in a word except the vowel.
2. Give the vowel sound and ask your student to repeat it.
3. Uncover the letters in the following order and ask your student to add each new sound as you uncover the letters:
   a. Example 1: a, ab, grab
   b. Example 2: ou, ous, hous, house
   c. Example 3: a, ad, rad, rade, parade

Teaching Phonics: Decoding with Consonants

Purpose
To reduce the frustration created when your student is unsure of the correct vowel sound.

How
1. If your student comes to a word they can't read, ask them to underline each consonant and make the sound for each one.
2. Then ask your student to blend the sounds together and try to figure out the word. Examples: t u r t l e   c a b i n e t
3. Ask your student to read the sentence using that word and see if it makes sense in context.

Word Parts: Changing Root Words

Purpose
To help your student understand how adding a prefix or suffix to a root word can change its meaning.

How
1. Select five or six words that have both a prefix and a suffix.
2. Ask your student to underline each prefix and circle each suffix. Examples:
   - ➤ Uninterested
   - ➤ Nontraditional
   - ➤ Mismanagement
3. Ask your student to use the root word in a sentence. Write the sentence, or ask the student to write it.
4. Ask your student to use the root word with the suffix in a sentence. Write the sentence, or ask the student to write it.
5. Ask you student to use the word with both the prefix and the suffix in a sentence. Write the sentence, or ask the student to write it.
6. Discuss how adding the prefix changed the meaning of the word.
7. Discuss how adding the suffix changed the meaning of the word.
8. Do the same for each word.

Word Attack Techniques

Word families or word patterns
After developing a basic understanding of phonics, the student goes on to learn that they can make many new words simply by changing the beginning consonant sound in a word. For example, from the (-at) family he can make bat, chat, brat, or splat.

They also learn that these words rhyme. Once the particular pattern is mastered, they are able to read many new words without spending time to blend each individual sound.

This technique is also valuable with students who have difficulty pronouncing an isolated vowel sound in the middle of a word. For them, it is easier to combine the vowel sound with the word ending (-am) and then add the beginning consonant sound (Sam).

How to teach word patterns
When you introduce your student to word patterns like the "an" pattern:
1. Choose known words with rhyming end patterns (example - hand).
2. Write the word at the top of a piece of paper or use Scrabble letters.
3. Take off the beginning letter and ask the student to read the ending, (example, /and/).
4. If needed, review the sounds of consonants that could be added.
5. Ask the student to form new words by adding consonants. Say to the student: "If h-a-n-d is hand, what is b-a-n-d?"
6. If the student responds correctly, add another word in the pattern.
7. Put other rhyming words under it, adding digraphs (sh, th, ch).
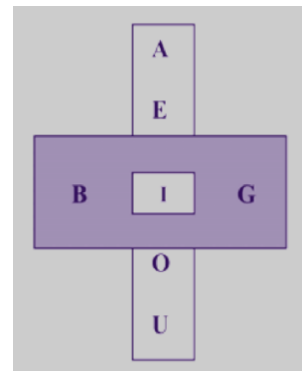
8. Take care not to confuse students with ending sounds that can be spelled more than one way (example -fix, picks, ox and locks).
9. You might use the "slip-strip" (shown above) as a visual aid.

Using Context

The student begins to use the context of a sentence or story to help figure out what the new word is. They can then confirm the guess by applying their phonics skills. For example, the student might be confronted with the following sentence and not recognize the underlined word:

"Mary gives her son some change to buy ice cream."

The student figures out from the context that the word must be "money" or something similar. They see that the word begins with the sound /ch/ and realizes that it must be "change."

A student can also use context to help read a word that isn't part of a sentence. For example, the four-letter word on a red and white six-sided traffic sign is probably going to be:

Steps to Approaching New Texts
1. Student tries to predict what the reading passage is about by:
   - Reading the title
   - Looking at any pictures
   - Looking for known words

   Discuss the subject with the student to introduce and reinforce subject vocabulary.
2. If possible, student tries to sound out unknown words that have been identified (those at the top of the page or those determined by the student). Ensure the student knows the meaning of all words. Until the student develops some sight vocabulary and some phonics skills, it may be necessary to model words or lines.
3. Direct the student's reading:
   - Line by line at first
   - Then, paragraph by paragraph
   - For the whole passage

   In time, students will learn to direct their own reading.
4. If the student makes a mistake when reading:
   - Decide if the mistake will affect the meaning.
   - Encourage the student to self-correct. Ask, "Does that make sense?"
5. If the student does not recognize a word:
   - Ask what word would make sense.
   - Direct the student's attention to beginning letter(s) or familiar word parts.
   - Suggest sounding out the word.
6. Ask comprehension questions about what was read:
   - Simple facts
   - Inferences, conclusions
   - Relate to own experiences
   - Summary, main points
7. Review:
   - Any new words
   - New punctuation
   - Reread the whole story

Duet Reading

Purpose

To give practice in fluent reading without putting your student on the spot to read difficult material alone. Duet reading also helps the new reader learn to:

- Pay attention to punctuation marks
- Develop good eye movement to keep their place
- Increase the number of sight words
- Read with expression
- Read for enjoyment

How

1. Choose material that is a little too hard for your student. Select something a bit above their independent reading level. The material should be from a magazine, book, newspaper article, or brochure and on a topic that interests them.
2. Begin reading together. Sit next to your student and read aloud together from the same selection. Read at your normal speed, using expression and observing all punctuation. Your student reads along, trying to keep up with you.
3. Use your finger and keep going. Move your finger beneath the line as you read to help your student keep up. Continue to read at a normal rate even if your student hesitates or falls behind. Stop if your student stops reading completely.
4. Don't ask questions. Do not stop to explain the meaning of a word unless your student asks you to. Do not ask any questions to check that your student understands. This is only an oral reading exercise.
5. Decide if the reading material is too hard or too easy. If your student keeps up easily, select more challenging material. If the material is too difficult, use something written more simply or that your student knows more about.

Suggestions:

- Use duet reading only for brief periods (7–10 minutes) during your lessons.
- Don't ask your student to read aloud from the material alone; since it is above their independent reading level, it could be a frustrating experience.
- If you use duet reading at the beginning of a lesson, reread part of the same selection with your student before the end of the lesson. Then they can see how much easier it gets with practice.
- You can also use this technique with your student's own writing or with stories at their level to practice fluent reading.

B. Coping with Common Reading Problems

Many adult literacy students struggle with similar reading problems. This table lists common problems you may encounter with your student, and suggests strategies to overcome the difficulties.

Reading Problems	Possible Strategies
Reversals of letters or words	Attach a visual image to the letter Emphasize left to right Use color clues to identify first letter (green for "go" for first letter) Trace with finger while sounding out word Cover end of word–reveal one letter at a time
Confusion of sounds	Use keywords—associations Practice with minimal pairs (same words except for one sound) Practice word families—slip strip Speak clearly and distinctly Say tongue twisters, make rhymes Categorize pictures or objects according to sounds Play sound games—Bingo, Rummy
Jerky reading	Use duet reading Practice phrasing using a slip strip with phrases Increase sight vocabulary Guess at words—use Cloze exercise (see Activities section) Record the reading and playback Repeat reading of passage
Frequent pauses and hesitation	Increase sight vocabulary (flashcards) Read for meaning Ask: "What would make sense?" or question to elicit the word Use easier reading material or a language experience story
Substitutions of words that don't fit the meaning/don't make sense	Use Cloze exercise (see Activities section) Ask: "Does that make sense?" Use phonic word-attack skills Use easier reading materials Finish reading the passage and then go back to look at words
Omission/addition of small words	Highlight words with color Duet reading Use Cloze method, leaving out frequently missed words Understand role of small words Slip strips of phrases
Omission of endings	Highlight endings with color Use a wheel with root words on the inside and endings on outer rim Compare word with ending to root word Understand use of endings Exercises to fill in endings
Losing place when reading (or skipping lines)	Use double-spaced, large print Make sure there are only a few sentences on a page Use ruler to underline Use finger to underline
Excessive vocalizing when reading silently	Increase amount of silent reading Discourage lip movement by putting pencil between lips Increase sight vocabulary

Reading without understanding	Prepare for reading—anticipate what text is about; identify purpose for reading Direct own reading—ask questions Predict what comes next Use Cloze exercises (see Activities section) Make margin notes (?, !, ✔) Highlight/underline important points Enlarge vocabulary meanings Read high-interest material Use easier materials Practice paraphrasing material
Difficulty in noting details	Visualize while reading Ask five W's: who, what , when, where, why Use Cloze exercises (see Activities section) Draw picture after reading Map out main ideas and details Skim for details
Hesitancy to read orally	Use duet reading Read silently and discuss the content
Never finishing a book or story	Use short materials—poems, songs, newspaper articles, etc. Use high-interest materials Skim to find parts of a book that are of interest

C. Reading Comprehension Skills for More Advanced Readers

Roadblocks to Comprehension

Readers can experience roadblocks to understanding and reacting on occasion. These roadblocks may result from various factors.

The reader may:
- have a lack of background information or experience with the topic
- have no interest in the topic
- be unfamiliar with the vocabulary
- find it difficult to change initial assumptions, biases, etc.
- have poor sight word recognition skills
- read so slowly or with such difficulty that meaning is lost
- overlook details or miss a key sentence
- get lost in detail and miss the main ideas
- have a processing disability, poor memory retention, or difficulty concentrating
- be an inactive reader

The text may confuse the reader because of:
- the page layout ("crammed")
- the length of sentences
- unfamiliar graphic elements (e.g., diagrams, charts, maps)

- lack of or too much detail
- an unfamiliar typeface or handwriting
- an unfamiliar style of writing or genre

Anticipating and Avoiding Roadblocks
For an inexperienced reader, these roadblocks can be overwhelming, so it is important for tutors to try to anticipate when they might occur. Either avoid them or teach the skills necessary to get beyond them. This should be addressed during lesson planning. For many students, the skills, strategies, and tools necessary to overcome the roadblocks are not ingrained and will need to be taught.

Developing Specific Comprehension Skills

Finding the main idea
Help the student to identify the main idea by:
- using the title
- looking at the opening paragraph or the topic sentence of each paragraph
- looking for a common thread throughout the passage (what is the story about?)
- listing all the details and generalizing
- Learning activities that may help a student to find main ideas include:
- grouping pictures according to a common element
- generalizing categories for groups of words
- mapping while reading (joining related ideas)
- reducing sentences to "bare bones" (taking away all the adjectives and adverbs to find the subject and the verb)

Sequencing events
Sequence can be based on time or cause-and-effect. Students can practice this by:
- putting steps of a daily routine or comic strip in order
- placing actual or story events on a timeline
- recognizing time cue words (e.g., first, next, then, later, before, previously, following)

Making inferences
Inferences involve determining deeper meaning by drawing conclusions based on personal experience, previous knowledge, and individual bias. Help students develop inference skills by using pictures and oral scenarios. Ask questions like, "What do you think is happening in this picture?" and "What do you think would happen if …?"

Making predictions
The best predictions are usually based on both:
- the reader's personal background knowledge and experience
- information provided in the text
Students can learn to make predictions by:
- listing information from the text and their own knowledge about a subject
- learning to generalize before making predictions
- completing Cloze exercises (filling in missing words)

Active Reading

Effective readers realize that reading is more than just being able to read words; it is being able to understand the meaning behind the words.

Active reading involves:
- imagining what is happening
- filling in missing details
- wondering what will happen next
- figuring out why something happened
- comparing to your own experiences
- asking yourself, "Does this make sense?"

To read actively, you must use your imagination. Learners may need practice this. Consider what pictures, sounds, and smells come to mind for the following situations.
- A fairground on a weekend
- A hockey arena at 4 a.m.
- A romantic dinner at a restaurant
- A courtroom before a jury verdict is given

Other ways to encourage active reading:
- Modeling active reading (read a passage aloud)
- Asking questions before, during, and after reading
- Encouraging the student to ask questions about the passage

Improving Reading Comprehension

Before reading, help the learner to overcome or avoid potential roadblocks:

–Preview text	–Notice titles, headings, subheadings
–What do you already know about this topic?	–Access prior knowledge/experiences
–Set a purpose for reading	–What do you want to find out?
–Make predictions about the text	–What might this passage tell you?

While reading, help your student to:
- Self-monitor understanding of text, as well as self-correct
- Imagine what is happening
- Fill in missing details
- Make assumptions/conclusions
- Compare prior knowledge and experience
- Predict what will happen next
- Highlight main points/summarize plot
- Guess meaning of unknown words
- Vary/adjust rate of reading
- Make connections to relate parts

After reading, help your student to:
- Ask and answer questions (narrow and broad)

- Respond personally – journals, learning logs etc.
- Create new texts – songs, poems, maps etc.
- Continue the story
- Determine importance and significance of information
- Record information
- Respond critically – summarize

Critical reading skills should be developed and used even with basic reading material.

Questioning Techniques

This chart will help you to compose questions that can improve reading comprehension.

Narrow Questions

Help student to	Purpose (first words)	Examples of questions
Focus on ideas	Recall/name, identify, yes/no answer, define	Who? What? When? Where?
Relate ideas	State relationships, compare, contrast	Why? Explain … Compare … Contrast …

These questions help with:
- Acquiring specific facts, information, or ideas
- Relating these facts to prior knowledge or to each other

Broad Questions

| Help student to	Purpose (first words)	Examples of questions
Think beyond ideas	Predict, speculate, guess, infer, find alternatives	What if …? Suppose … How do you know …? How many ways …? Can you predict …? What is the author's bias?
Evaluate ideas	Judge, give an opinion, choose, decide, place a value on	What do you think …? Do you agree …? How do you feel about …?

These questions help with:
- Predicting, speculating, or inferring beyond the facts
- Reacting to the information and evaluating it
- Applying the information to other contexts

D. Our ABL Curricula

We use two main curricula series for our reading students: *Laubach* and *Challenger*. Both are excellent resources and are widely used at literacy councils. They have helped thousands of adult students learn to read over the years.

Laubach Way to Reading

The Laubach Way to Reading series is a basic reading and writing program developed to teach adults with little or no reading skills. It is designed to teach the language the student speaks, as quickly and enjoyably as possible.
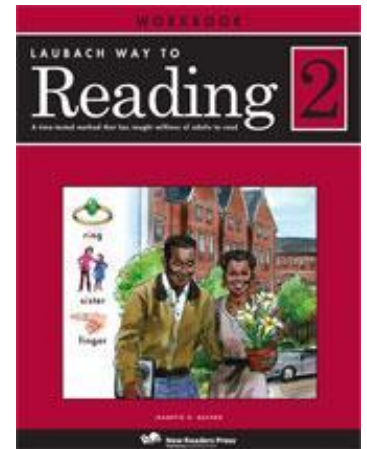
The four-book series *Laubach Way to Reading* teaches 260 basic reading skills in a structured, sequential manner, bringing the student to a grade 5–6 reading level by the end of book 4. After Book 4, the student has all of the skills required to upgrade their reading and writing skills independently. A student reading at less than a grade 3 level will need to go back to the basics (Books 1–2) to master the phonics system.

Benefits of using the *Laubach Way to Reading* series:
- Written so a volunteer with no teacher training can be a successful tutor
- Individual attention can tailor the program to each student's needs and pace
- The student masters concepts by usage, before learning rules
- Controlled vocabulary builds confidence
- Colorful skill books engage students
- Illustrations help students better understand the vocabulary and stories
- Guided skills practice includes vocabulary review and writing activities
- Sound-symbol relationships are taught in charts with key words for sound and spelling

Laubach Way to Reading series includes student books, workbooks, crossword puzzles, storybook readers, and Focus on Phonics workbooks for each level.

Challenger Adult Reading Series

Challenger is an eight-book program of reading, writing, and reasoning skills designed to meet the needs of adults and adolescents reading below 6th grade level. Each book in this controlled vocabulary program consists of 20 lessons. Each lesson includes a reading selection and a variety of exercises and activities, as well as lists of words the students have studied previously and periodic reviews.
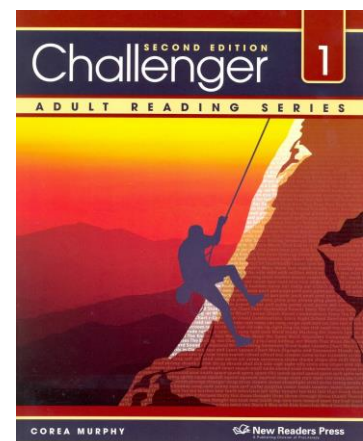
Benefits of using the *Challenger* book series:
1. High degree of responsibility for learning assumed by students.
2. Suitable for one-on-one and small-group sessions.
3. Motivating reading selections.
4. Mature presentation and diverse material.
5. Challenge of increasingly difficult material.
6. Generates success and confidence.
7. Emphasis on integrating phonics, word analysis, vocabulary, reading comprehension,

literacy understanding, writing, reasoning, and study skills.
8. Emphasis on building background in basic knowledge necessary for comprehension.
9. Comprehensive teacher's manuals that guide teachers and permit flexibility in executing the lessons.
10. Answer key, which allows students and teachers to check homework.

Supplementary Materials

We have a wide variety of materials in the Literacy Action library including:

- Driver's education manuals
- Health books
- Citizenship materials
- Fiction and nonfiction books (all levels)
- Survival English books
- Grammar, spelling, and writing guides
- Teaching guides
- Test guides
- Dictionaries
- Many other helpful resources

Please visit our office if you are in need of any supplementary materials.

INFORMATION AND STRATEGIES FOR ESL TUTORS

A. Characteristics of ESL Students

The adult English-as-a-second-language (ESL) students who come to Literacy Action for help are a diverse group. Some English learners may have never been to school, even in their own country, and have no literacy at all. Other ESL students may have had a few years of schooling in their own country before joining the working world, and now that they are here, they need to speak English to get a better job. Some of our ESL students studied English in school in their home country, and others are completely new to our language. Still others have advanced degrees from their home countries, and now that they are here, they can't work in their chosen profession until they improve their English writing, pass an English test, and/or attend college or professional training here. Some have been here for just a few months; others may have lived here for many years. In short, you can't make assumptions about an ESL student's background or abilities. Instead, be open to learning about their life, skills, and needs.

Cultural Issues

If your ESL student is new to the U.S., you may become a cultural guide for them. You will and your student will be developing an awareness of each other's culture— differences and similarities. This process can be one of the most rewarding parts of your tutoring experience.

It is vital to your success as a tutor that you understand the ways in which cultural attitudes differ from one population to another. It is even more important that you understand that cultural differences between you and your student can and will affect the way you work together.

When your student reacts differently from the way you expect, examining your own behavior and expectations can lead to a better understanding of the situation. It is also helpful to read about the student's country and culture. Be aware that awkward situations can occur when people have different attitudes about things like time, personal space or

hygiene, or gender roles. Be sensitive to these different attitudes and find "teaching moments" in conversations that arise from cultural differences.

Your student will learn that you do some things differently from the way they do in their culture, but as long as you behave in a caring manner, they will realize you do not intend to be insulting. Your student lives in the U.S. now and will need to understand cultural expectations and differences here. An inevitable part of your job is to help the student adjust to this new culture. Let your student teach you about their culture, and then both of you will learn.

B. Second Language Acquisition

Remember, no two learners are exactly alike. In your work as an ESL tutor, you will want to keep in mind the differences discussed below.

Language Skill Level
- Some learners will speak some English but not be able to read or write it.
- Some will be able to read and write English but not speak it.
- Some will not be able to read or write in their first language.
- Some will have a first language that does not use the Roman alphabet.

Degree of Comfort When Trying to Speak a New Language
- Some learners are not at all shy about speaking English, and they are not overly concerned about perfect grammar or pronunciation.
- Some become embarrassed if they think they are making too many mistakes.
- Some think they shouldn't say anything at all unless their English is perfect.

Learning Rate
- Some people can learn a language quickly; others simply don't.
- Learners who have a lot of contact with English speakers usually progress faster.

Language Learning

One definition of language is *a system of symbols that permit people to communicate or interact*. These symbols can include vocal and written forms, gestures, and body language.

Another way to describe language is in terms of the four basic language skills, generally acquired in the following order:

1. **Listening –** When people are learning a new language (or, in the case of children, their first language), they first hear it spoken.
2. **Speaking –** Eventually, they try to repeat what they hear.
3. **Reading –** Later, they see the spoken language depicted symbolically in print.
4. **Writing –** Finally, they reproduce these symbols on paper.

Implications for Teaching
- Understand that a person first learns to speak by listening. Make sure that learners have opportunities to listen to and understand the spoken language.
- Set up activities in which learners practice speaking by using language they have already heard and understood. Always introduce something new orally before asking learners to read it. For example, if you are teaching the sentence "He is running," don't

just say it and ask the learner to repeat. Provide context: run across the room or show a picture of a person running. This is especially important for learners who may be able to repeat words and sentences they hear without actually understanding what the speaker says.

- Try to relate the new language to the individual learner's current language ability as well as to their previous knowledge and experience: put new vocabulary and sentence structure into contexts that are likely to be familiar (e.g., if your student plays baseball, a picture of a player rounding the bases would help).

Four Principles of Second Language Acquisition

Principle 1: Meaningful Communication
Language learners are highly motivated when the communication is meaningful to them.

Second-language learners want and need to be able to say, understand, read, and write things that are of immediate use to them. Therefore, you should teach the things they want to learn. Find out their goals and teach the skills needed to meet them.

Principle 2: Success, Not Perfection
The ESL learner is usually more concerned about being able to communicate successfully than about being correct.

Tutors need to celebrate beginning learners' successes and not focus on failures. Understand that a beginning ESL learner moves from zero ability to near-native fluency in stages clearly marked by a gradual progression from imprecise to accurate levels of English. Encourage the learner to try to communicate in English at every stage. Recognize that comprehension always precedes production. Beginning language learners understand much more of the new language than they are able to speak. Don't think that simply because a learner makes a lot of errors when speaking that they won't be able to understand you.

Resist the temptation to correct learners constantly when they make mistakes. Follow these guidelines:
- Correct learners if you really do not understand what they are saying.
- Correct learners when you are trying to teach a specific way of saying something, as in grammar exercises or substitution drills.
- Don't correct learners during activities designed to encourage the learner to concentrate on communicating for meaning (like role playing). In these situations, let them use whatever English they have at their disposal to get ideas across.

Principle 3: Anxiety
Learners are more successful at acquiring language when their anxiety level is low. People seem to learn best when they are relaxed, when they know it's OK to make mistakes, and when reassured that they are doing well.

Never trivialize your student or the learning activities. Have fun and to let your student enjoy learning. Select activities that will allow your student to feel some success. Begin each lesson with something the learner can do well. Don't test learners or put them on the spot during the course of conversation or oral activities. Risk is already involved when people are trying out new language forms, so the learner's anxiety level should be kept to a minimum whenever possible.

Principle 4: Exposure
Progress in a second language depends in part on the amount of exposure to speakers of that language.

To move beyond very basic language ability, people must have an immediate opportunity to use the language they are studying in a natural setting where some of their basic needs aren't met if they can't communicate in the new language.

Some ESL learners have little contact with English speakers apart from their tutors. Most will naturally use their first language to communicate important things with family members. Their only practice speaking English will therefore be limited to a few hours a week.

Tutors will need to encourage and motivate their students to have more contact with other English speakers. They also need to help students identify specific things they want to be able to say or do that require better English skills. The tutor should organize role-playing activities and field trips that prepare learners to be "out there" on their own with English speakers.

C. New ESL Tutors' Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need to speak another language to teach someone English?
No. In fact, it is often better if you don't speak the same native language as your student. Conducting the entire lesson in English will facilitate and speed your student's learning. However, using gestures, drawings, picture or bilingual dictionaries, and online translation apps are often very helpful for overcoming communication breakdowns. If you do speak your student's native language, give them time to process English and provide translation help sparingly.

What instructional practices best meet the needs of adult English language learners?
- Respect the knowledge, skills, and experience of the learners in your program. Adult English language learners come to class to learn English, not because they are deficient in cognitive skills. Making overgeneralizations about learners is disrespectful and counterproductive.
- Where possible, build on learners' knowledge, skills, and experience.
- In most cases, adult English learners do not come to class with negative feelings about past education. They are excited about and committed to learning English.
- Some learners will be proficient with English in some skills and not at all in others. New ESL tutors may find it surprising to work with a learner who does not exhibit oral communicative proficiency (speaking and listening), but who can write excellent paragraphs, read a newspaper, and understand conditional clauses.
- Although learners (and the teacher) may be more familiar with traditional teacher-led classes, interactive, communicative activities and classes give learners the opportunity to use the language they need to acquire.
- Grammar instruction has an important place in adult ESL education, but grammar exercises need to be embedded in real-life contexts, not presented in isolation or memorized by learners as rules. For example, if working on how to use prepositions appropriately, practice giving directions to someone or describing where different foods can be found in the supermarket (e.g., *the tomatoes are **next to** the onions*) rather than reading a grammar book, completing exercises, and taking quizzes.
- Learning English involves four basic skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Speaking and listening are the most important skills for English learners to meet their immediate needs, but learners' proficiency in all four skills should be assessed so that the teacher and learners understand their strengths and challenges.

● The amount and type of work on pronunciation that is needed depends on the learner's native language and where they live in the U.S. Speaking with an accent in English does not necessarily mean the learner will have difficulty communicating or being understood in English. For example, a Spanish speaker may say "begetable" instead of "vegetable" ("My favorite begetable is lettuce."). This deviation from standard pronunciation will not stop listeners from understanding, and it may take several years for the learner to change the /b/ to a /v/ in certain words.

How long does it take an adult to learn English?
The amount of time it takes an adult to learn English varies from person to person and depends on such factors as the individual's age, educational background, level of literacy in the native language, and opportunities to interact with native English speakers. However, it is generally accepted that it takes from 5–7 years to go from not knowing any English to being able to accomplish most communication tasks.

What else do beginning adult ESL tutors need to know?
Here are several instructional strategies to keep in mind when working with adults:
   ● Get to know your students and their needs.
   ● Use visuals to support your instruction.
   ● Model tasks before asking your learners to do them.
   ● Foster a safe learning environment.
   ● Watch both your talk and your writing.
   ● Use scaffolding techniques to support tasks.
   ● Bring authentic materials to the classroom.
   ● Don't overload learners.
   ● Balance variety and routine in your activities.

Effective Activities for ESL Students

Following are some activities that are helpful specifically for ESL students. You will find more activities and strategies in the section *Activities for ABL and ESL Students* and in the book *Teaching Adults: An ESL Resource Book,* available in the Literacy Action office.

Dialogues with related activities Oral dialogues can be springboards for literacy-oriented activities such as Cloze or substitution, where learners supply the missing words in written dialogues or exercises or where they substitute different vocabulary words in structured dialogues, sentence strips, role plays, or dictations.

Vocabulary-building activities For beginning/literacy level English learners, matching pictures to words is key for vocabulary development. Flashcards, concentration games, labeling, vocabulary journals, picture dictionaries, and bingo activities can be used to practice vocabulary.

Phonics exercises Exercises such as minimal pairs (e.g., hat/cat, pan/fan) or identifying initial word sounds are important for beginning/literacy level ESL students and can also help with pronunciation. Relating such exercises to the vocabulary in a lesson contextualizes the learning and makes it relevant. Be sure to use actual words, rather than nonsense syllables. Whenever possible, use authentic materials (flyers, schedules, advertisements, bills) to connect literacy/English development to real-world tasks.

Source: http://www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/faqs.html)
(Note: The Center for Applied Linguistics has an excellent website, cal.org, that has lots of information for ESL tutors and teachers.)

D. Levels and Characteristics of ESL Students

The following information is provided so that you may know what to expect when you are assigned a new ESL student. Keep in mind that all students are unique and may not match the abilities on the list exactly.

Beginning Literacy ESL (TESOL Level 1-Starting Up) Book: *Ventures Basic*
Students will:
- communicate nonverbally in response to simple commands, statements, or questions
- understand little spoken English; primarily observe during instruction
- begin to repeat language used by others, individual words, or simple phrases
- display limited English reading comprehension
- rely heavily on pictures and other nonlinguistic representations for comprehension

Beginning ESL (TESOL Level 2-Beginning) Book: *Ventures Level 1*
Students will:
- use basic words, phrases, and expressions
- memorize simple phrases and sentences
- rely on some nonverbal communication
- understand phrases and short sentences; begin to follow instructions and class discussions
- begin to comprehend reading with support

Low Intermediate ESL (TESOL Level 3-Developing) Book: *Ventures Level 2*
Students will:
- occasionally join in conversations and class discussions on familiar topics
- produce longer phrases and complete sentences with some grammatical errors
- display increasing comprehension
- rely on high-frequency words and known patterns

High Intermediate ESL (TESOL Level 4-Expanding) Book: *Ventures Level 3*
Students will:
- sometimes use academic language
- engage in conversations and class discussions
- use more complex sentences and phrases with fewer grammatical errors
- begin use multiple strategies to communicate and comprehend
- compose original writing

Advanced ESL (TESOL Level 5-Bridging Over) Book: *Ventures Level 4* to *Transitions*
Students will:
- frequently use academic language
- produce language comparable to a native speaker (with a few grammatical errors and an accent)
- actively participate in all areas of literacy—speaking, listening, reading, and writing

(Sources: TESOL Language Proficiency Level Characteristics (tesol.org) and Cambridge Ventures curriculum)

E. Ventures Curriculum

Literacy Action uses the *Ventures* series of books with our English-as-a-second-language (ESL) students. Each ESL student receives a student book and workbook (both with audio CDs) to keep. The tutor receives a comprehensive teacher's edition to guide and prepare

them for the lessons. Please return the teacher's editions to Literacy Action when you are finished with them.

Benefits of Using the *Ventures* Series
- Each unit has six skill-focused lessons: (1) listening, (2) grammar focus, (3) practice and communication, (4) reading, (5) writing, and (6) life skills reading and grammar connections.
- Traditional and online workbooks keep students learning outside the classroom. We recommend that you use the workbook for homework.
- Audio CDs in both the student's book and workbook offer abundant listening practice (a link to the online audio may also be found on our website in the Tools for Tutors section).
- A free online Teacher's Resource Room provides thousands of reproducible worksheets and activities.
- An online resource called Student Arcade, which helps students practice the skills they learn in each chapter, as well as providing a fun, different approach to reviewing content. All Ventures-related online resources can be found at the web address on the back of the books.
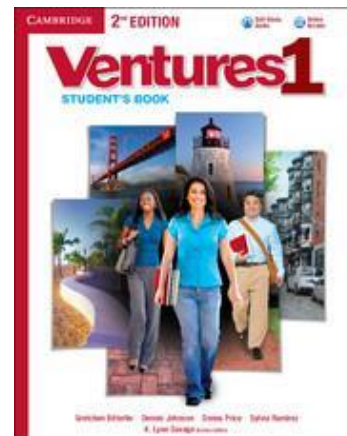
Literacy Action performs an English assessment with our ESL students along with their intake in order to determine which book level to use. When you are matched with a student, we will provide this information and give you the teacher's edition of the book. Some more advanced ESL students may test out of *Ventures*, in which case we will find other materials for them to use in tutoring sessions.

ACTIVITIES FOR ABL AND ESL STUDENTS

A. Encouraging Student Writing

Why Is Writing Important?
Adults view language as a *functional* skill—a useful means of satisfying their basic needs. When students are able to communicate personal messages and other information from early on, it is a source of motivation. It allows them to feel in control of their own learning. Writing can also enhance reading comprehension.

When Should Students Write?
Students can begin the process of learning to write as soon as they recognize the letters of the alphabet by sound and name. Students learn to write by writing, and should be encouraged to write early and often—when they need to or when they want to. Help the student to determine personal writing needs and to develop a solid understanding of the steps to writing.

Writing "Right"
Many students believe that they should not write if they cannot write without errors. Changing this attitude is the first step in helping students learn to write. They should be encouraged to take risks and to learn from mistakes.

A Functional Approach
Tutors must focus on expanding the student's awareness of the personal and social functions written language has for them. The best teacher is not the technician, but the one who encourages the student to express meaning through written language and monitors their progress toward identified goals.

Reasons for Writing
- to convey a message (note, letter)
- for enjoyment and self-awareness (journal)
- to join activities (registration form)
- to aid memory (lists, calendar appointments)
- to accomplish a specific goal (application)

Personal and Real
Tutors should encourage students to write about personally chosen experiences and topics, and their writing should be seen by real and varied audiences—such as a message on the refrigerator or an email to a friend.

Written Conversations
Occasionally, instead of talking, the tutor and the student can communicate on paper. There should be no correction of errors.

Free Writing
In free writing, the writer records thoughts without stopping to correct any errors or worry about spelling or grammar. For unknown words, they may use a dash or just write the first letter. The purpose is to encourage the free flow of ideas, so errors should not be corrected by the tutor. The student may just read the piece aloud to the tutor if they don't want to show it to anyone.

Daily Journals
Encourage the student to keep a diary or journal of daily activities including reactions to the day's events.

Sentence Completion
Give the student sentences to complete. For example:

I wish …   I'm glad I'm not …
I can …   I feel happy when …
I never …   I used to want …

Write a Description
Ask the student to write a description of "how to" or a favorite food. Make sure there is no title on the description. Have the student read the description aloud, and the tutor will try to guess what it is.

Write a Story Together
Write a story with the student, with each of you taking turns writing a sentence.

B. Cloze Procedure

Cloze is a powerful reading strategy because it forces a reader to derive meaning from what is on the page, and to make logical predictions about what is not there through contextual and grammatical clues. It is based on the theory of closure, or the desire to complete a pattern which is incomplete.

Uses for Cloze:
- To develop prediction skills.
- To teach (and to test) comprehension.
- To reinforce grammatical concepts.
- To assess the readability of material.

How to Set Up a Cloze
You can search online for Cloze generators that make it simple to create a Cloze exercise for your student, but if you prefer to make your own, follow these steps.

Step 1: Choose material at the student's reading level, geared to the student's interest, and no more than 250 words.
Step 2: If you choose a paragraph, leave the first and last lines intact. If you choose a story, leave the first and last paragraphs intact.
Step 3: Replace every "x" number of words with a blank ("x" = the number of words between blanks). Replacing every eighth word is easier for the student than every fifth.
Step 4: Do not leave blanks for colors, numbers, or proper nouns unless this information is available to the student. Ensure that each blank is independent from each other one and that sufficient information is provided to the student. Do not delete more than 50 words.

Variations
- Give the beginning letters of the missing words.
- Delete words selectively, depending on the student's needs.
- Provide choices of words for the blanks (word bank).
- Have the student fill in the blanks orally if their writing skills are poor.

Using Cloze with Songs
Cloze works great with popular songs. This activity is also called "gap songs." Check the internet for ready-made Cloze/gap song exercises. You can also create your own by looking up lyrics to any song, removing some of the words, and replacing them with blanks. This technique is fun and improves listening skills.

C. Creating an English Lesson

It is a good idea to practice some functional English activities with your ESL or inexperienced ABL student. By doing so, you are helping your student feel a closer connection between what they do while being tutored and what they do in daily life. This support can help to keep your student motivated.

Here are eight basic steps for developing an English lesson plan.

1. Select the topic.
This is not as easy as it seems. For example, it is not specific enough to select a topic such as "going to the doctor." You'll have to narrow it down. "Going to the doctor" might really mean a lesson constructed around calling for an appointment, giving a case history to a nurse, or the actual conversation the student might have with the doctor.

Determining the specific topic to use in your English lesson will be based on several considerations: your student's language ability, what they actually need to know, and how much time you will have to work with them before they need to use the skill.

If time permits and your student's language ability is not yet well developed, select several subtopics and construct a lesson around each one.

2. Brainstorm to create a vocabulary list.

Although you will not actually teach the vocabulary to the student until after you have taught them the dialog, you will want to start here when planning the lesson.
Just start writing out as many words as you can think of that relate to the topic.

Do not consider which vocabulary words your student needs most or which words are the most important for them to learn from this topic. Do not be concerned about whether each word is appropriate to teach. You will decide these things later; for now, you are trying to be imaginative and creative.

3. Create the dialog.

When deciding what to include in the dialog, keep in mind that you are not attempting to provide everything your student could possibly need for this particular situation.

It is impossible to know what will transpire in an actual conversation between your student and someone else. Also, a dialog that tries to be all-inclusive will be too long to teach and to learn.

The intent of this exercise is to teach a simple dialog to your student that the two of you will be able to use for role play. The dialog is a springboard to help your student develop conversational skills.

Dialog should be limited to three or four exchanges, for example:

Tutor:	Can I help you?
Student:	Yes, I would like to see the doctor.
Tutor:	Have you been here before?
Student:	No, I am a new patient.
Tutor:	Please fill out this form.
Student:	Thank you.

4. Select the vocabulary you will teach.

Go back and look at the list of vocabulary words you generated in step 2. Choose six to eight words to teach in the lesson. There are three categories of vocabulary words that you will teach your student:

- Words they will have today
- Words someone else may say to them
- Words they need to know in order for you to explain the setting, even if the words are not spoken aloud (you can use a picture dictionary for this)

5. Decide what visual aids you will need.

Make a list of things that will help you teach the lesson. This includes pictures as well as actual objects.

6. Select two or three structural patterns to focus on.

You might construct exercises on *have/has* (I have a fever, she has a fever) or *need/needs* (I need, he needs).

7. Decide what sounds or pronunciation you will work on.

Choose sounds that your student might have difficulty producing and might appear in the words they will need to say. An example to work on would be the final /s/ in *nurse*.

8. Determine what your student might have to read.

Choose words or phrases that your student might encounter in the setting. For a beginning student who does not read English, this might be as simple as learning to read "in" and "out" at the entrance to the post office or supermarket. For a more advanced student, it might involve reading a job application, an application for a driver's license, or a sample medical form from a doctor's office.

D. The Language Experience Approach

The Language Experience Approach (LEA) is a whole language approach that promotes reading and writing through the use of personal experiences and oral language. It can be used in tutorial or classroom settings with diverse learners (ABL or ESL). Beginning literacy learners relate their experiences to a teacher or aide, who transcribes them. These transcriptions are then used as the basis for other reading and writing activities.

Adult learners entering literacy or ESL programs may or may not have previous educational or literacy experiences; nonetheless, all come to class with a wealth of life experiences. This valuable resource for language and literacy development can be tapped by using the LEA. The approach develops literacy not only with the whole learner in mind, but also the whole language.

Features of the Language Experience Approach

The LEA is as diverse in practice as its practitioners. Nonetheless, some characteristics remain consistent:

- Materials are learner-generated.
- All communication skills–reading, writing, listening, and speaking–are integrated.
- Difficulty of vocabulary and grammar are determined by the learners' language use.
- Learning and teaching are personalized, communicative, creative.

<u>Steps in using the Language Experience Approach</u>

1. Invite the student to tell a story or personal experience.

2. Write down the story exactly as the student tells it.
   - Use printing and correct spelling and punctuation.
   - Say each word as you write it. Make sure the student can see the words.
   - Leave space between each line.
   - Make two copies.

3. Reading the story
   - Read the entire story aloud to the student while you put your finger under each line. Ask the student to correct any part that they would like to change.
   - Read one sentence at a time and ask the student to read each sentence after you, again using your finger.
   - Read the whole passage aloud together and give help where needed.

4. Building sight vocabulary
   - Have the student select 3–5 words they would like to learn to sight read. You might select other words that you think are important.
   - Print the words onto flash cards, or have the student do this.
   - Have the student match the cards to the words in the story.
   - Put additional words on cards, and have the student form sentences.
   - Mix up the cards and have the student read each one.

5. Have the student read the whole story independently.

6. Reinforce reading skills.
   - Select additional exercises to reinforce skills being learned, using the words from the student's story.
7. Review and follow up. Encourage the student to:
   - make up a title for the story
   - rewrite or type out the story
   - take the word cards home to study
   - add this story to a collection of their stories in a "personal reader"

Advantages of using the Language Experience Approach
   - helps the student see that reading and writing are not isolated skills and that they can have a direct connection to personal experiences
   - adds interest and variety to a lesson

If a topic doesn't readily come to mind or the student seems hesitant, try using one of the following topic starters.

Possible Topics	
- Their family when growing up - What they most like to do on their day off - The worst day of their life - Their ideal vacation - How they feel about learning to read - What they like to cook or how to make it	- What they would say to the mayor if they could meet with them - Their favorite television show - What they would like their children to have in the future - The job they would most like to have
Activities to Generate Discussion	
- Ask them to describe a picture you bring to class or to tell how they feel about it. - Invite them to talk about a photo they bring to class. - Read a story or magazine article to them. Have them retell it in their own words.	- Read a letter from a personal advice column in the newspaper. Let them tell how they would answer it. - Give sentence starters (I can …, I want to …, I don't ever …) to complete. Let them explain their answers.

Hints and suggestions
   - In the beginning, keep the story short, no more than four or five sentences.
   - Do not correct the student's English in early lessons.
     - ➢ If the dictation is "me and my wife …" or "I sure does …" write it that way.
     - ➢ If it is simply a mispronunciation, spell the word correctly.
     - ➢ If it is a grammatical error, do not correct it at this time. Later, you can help to correct grammar by simply saying, "Here's another way to say it."

Source: Center for Adult English Language Acquisition, www.cal.org/caela

E. Post-Reading Prompts and Questions

As students become more advanced, we want to let them choose something they want to read and help them learn to read for pleasure and with fluency. After reading part or all of a book with your student, you can use the following strategies to help them understand, remember, and relate to the story.

Help your student summarize the text. Ask questions such as:
> Who ...? What ...? When ...? Where ...? Why ...? How ...? Did you like …?

Comprehension Prompts and Questions
a) Text-to-Self (personal connections, personal opinions)
   Prompts: "This reminds me of my …"
                    "This reminds me of the time I …"
   Questions: "How was it the same?"
                    "How was it different?"
                    "What would you do if …?"

b) Text-to-World (world connections, cultural connections)
   Prompts: "This reminds me of …"
                    "In my country …"
   Questions: "How was it the same?"
                    "How was it different?"

c) Text-to-Text (connections to other books, articles, movies)
   Prompts: "I read a book (saw a movie, etc.) like this …"
   Questions: "How was it the same?"
                    "How was it different?"

d) Sensory Images (what you see, hear, smell, taste, and/or feel in your mind as you read)
   Prompts: "I see (smell, hear, taste) …"
                    "I think (character) is …"
   Questions: "What does (character) look like?"
                    "What do you see in this chapter?"
                    "What does it (sound, taste, feel, smell) like?"

e) Predictions and Inferences (based on what you know, make a guess)
   Prompts: "I think … will happen because …"
   Questions: "What do you think will happen to …?"
                    "What do you think will happen next? Why?"

f) Questions and Inferences
   - "What does … mean?"
   - "What did the author mean by …?"
   - "I wonder why …"
   - "I wonder how …"
   - "I wonder about …"

Related ideas: Listen to an audio version of the book, if available. Have your student write a book review. Have your student write down new vocabulary as they read.

Book suggestions: Penguin readers (Pearson), Bookworms and Dominoes (Oxford), Activist series (Grass Roots Press). Also check out the readers we have available in the LACA office library.

F. Sample Conversation Log and Vocabulary Chart

Students will improve their skills faster and become more connected to their new community if they practice using English in their daily lives. Assigning a chart like this as weekly or monthly homework can give them the push they need to become more confident and comfortable speaking English. Only use a chart like this when the student is at least low intermediate level so that they can feel successful with this activity.

Date	Person I Talked To	Where We Talked	What We Talked About

A chart like the one below can be made to help the student learn and remember new vocabulary words.

New Word	Meaning	Use It in a Sentence	Picture/Notes to Help Remember

REFERENCES & RESOURCES

The tutor and student agreements are included to provide a reminder about what each has agreed to do as they work with Literacy Action.

A. Tutor Agreement

As a volunteer tutor for Literacy Action of Central Arkansas, I understand and agree to the following:

1. **Confidentiality**
   I understand that Literacy Action's services to its students are provided in confidence. Therefore, I will maintain the confidentiality of my student's information at all times.
2. **Commitment**
   I will make every effort to fulfill my commitment to Literacy Action and my student. If I find that I am unable to do so, I will notify the Literacy Action office as soon as possible so that a replacement tutor may be found.
3. **Nondiscrimination**
   I accept Literacy Action's policy to provide services without regard to race, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or sexual orientation.
4. **Tutoring Sites**
   I agree to conduct my tutoring sessions in a safe, neutral, and public location such as the Literacy Action offices, a library, or a place of worship. I further understand that home tutoring is not encouraged.
5. **Tutoring Sessions**
   I understand that it is best if I meet with my student twice per week for 60–90 minutes per session. I will contact my student directly in advance of planned absences or if I expect to be late. I will also notify the Literacy Action office when my student and I will not be able to meet for a long period of time. (e.g., for extended vacations, surgeries, or family issues).
6. **Record Keeping**
   I agree to complete a weekly online report regarding my prep time, instructional hours, progress, and goals met. I agree not to unsubscribe from Literacy Action's emails. I will let Literacy Action know of any difficulties I encounter in this process. I understand that timely reporting of the hours I spend with my student/s is vital to supporting Literacy Action's mission.
7. **Termination**
   I understand that Literacy Action reserves the right to terminate my volunteer status as a result of inappropriate behavior, which may include but is not limited to the following: harassment of students, staff, or volunteers; being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs; disruptive behaviors; possession of a weapon or threatening behavior; conviction for any crime of violence; or use of offensive language. I may also be terminated as a tutor for noncompliance with the above guidelines.
8. **Release of Information**
   I authorize Literary Action to use my name and/or photo in any and all media and for reporting and advertising purposes.

B. Student Agreement

Responsibility: I understand that learning to read or speak English requires my effort and commitment. I understand that I need to meet with my tutor twice a week for one to two hours each time, as often as possible. I will do my best to be a good student. I will come to my lessons on time, do my homework, and take tests if required. I won't use drugs or alcohol during lessons or bring other people to my lessons unless I ask my tutor first.

Safety: I understand that I am responsible for my own transportation, and that Literacy Action recommends that my tutor and I meet in a public place. I understand that Literacy Action prefers that students not ask tutors for rides, or to meet them in their home, unless under special circumstances with preapproval.

Communication: I will call my tutor as soon as possible if I can't come to my tutoring session. I will talk to my tutor about what I need and want to learn so they can help me reach my goals. I will let my tutor know if I want to quit, if I move, or if my phone number changes. I understand that my tutor is a volunteer, and I will respect their time. I understand that if I don't come to lessons three times without calling first, I will lose my tutor.

Waiting: I understand that Literacy Action will try to match me with a tutor or place me in a class as soon as possible, but I may be placed on a waiting list if there is not a tutor or class space available.

Release of information: I give my permission to release the information in this form to Literacy Action and my tutor for educational purposes. I understand that my tutor will not receive all of this information, only what is necessary to communicate my needs as a student. My information will otherwise be kept confidential.

Media release (optional): I give my permission for Literacy Action to use my name, photo, or video in marketing materials and press releases, in order to share what they do and help other students.

C. Sample Literacy Action Tutoring Lesson Plan

Tutor:_____Session number: _____

Student:_____Date: _____

Lesson Objectives/Goals:

1. _____ The student will develop word knowledge/dialogue/conversation.

2. _____ The student will learn composition skills (reading/writing connection)

3. _____ The student will develop deeper reading comprehension.

4. _____ The student will improve fluency.

5. _____ Other. The student will:_____

Materials: _____

_____

Activities:

   I.   Rereading familiar material (previously read successfully with tutor)

  II.   Developing word knowledge/phonics skills and vocabulary strategies with the text

 III.   Writing/language experience activity (connecting reading and writing)

 IV.   Read aloud to student (model fluency)

  V.   Reading new material (directly teaching new strategies with text and time for practice, review and support—using real-life materials and actual reading/writing)

 VI.   Self-evaluation by the student [The student and tutor will discuss the answers to (some) of these questions: What makes a good reader? How do you feel about yourself as a reader? What was successful in this session? What did you do well? What do we need to work on?]

This lesson plan is a revision of research-based plan developed by Dr. Mary H. Mosley for UCA Reading Center and Faulkner County Literacy Council.

D. Common Phonics Elements

The English phonics system includes the sound-symbol relationships for various vowels, consonants, consonant blends, and digraphs in English, plus the letter sequences and syllable patterns that indicate how words are most commonly pronounced. This chart lists single letters and common letter combinations together with keywords that indicate how the letter or letters usually sound. When letters represent more than one sound, example words are given for each common sound. In addition, common short- and long-vowel syllable patterns are listed.

Consonants

Consonant letters that represent one sound:

b	bed		**l**	lake		**t**	ten
d	dime		**m**	man		**v**	vase
f	feet		**n**	name		**w**	woman
h	hat		**p**	pen		**y**	you
j	job		**qu**	queen		**z**	zoo
k	kite		**r**	rope			

Consonant letters with more than one sound:

s	sun, rose	Note:	s can sound like /s/ or /z/
x	six, example, xylophone		x can sound like /ks/, /gz/, or /z/
c	can, cop, cup, cent, city, icy		c followed by a, o, or u sounds like /k/ c followed by e, i, or y sounds like /s/
g	gas, got, gum, ginger, germ, gym, get give, fogy		g followed by a, o, or u sounds like /g/ g followed by e, i, or y sounds like /j/ g followed by e, i, or y can also sound like /g/
gu	guard, guess, guilt, guy		gu followed by a vowel sounds like /g/ The u is normally silent.

Consonant Blends
Consonant blends are two or three consonants (or a consonant and digraph) that commonly occur together. Each sound can be heard.

Initial Blends								
	bl	blue		**pl**	plate		**sp**	spoon
	br	bride		**pr**	price		**spl**	split
	chr	Chris		**sc**	scar		**spr**	spring
	cl	clock		**sch**	school		**squ**	square
	cr	cry		**scr**	scream		**st**	step
	dr	drop		**shr**	shrunk		**str**	street
	fl	flame		**sk**	skate		**sw**	swim
	fr	friend		**sl**	sleep		**thr**	throw
	gl	glass		**sm**	smart		**tr**	track
	gr	groom		**sn**	snow		**tw**	twin

Final Blends	ct	act		nd	hand		rm	farm
	ft	left		nge	range		rn	corn
	ld	gold		nse	sense		rp	burp
	lf	self		nt	front		rse	course
	lk	milk		pt	kept		rt	smart
	lm	film		rb	curb		sk	ask
	lp	help		rce	force		sp	clasp
	lt	melt		rd	card		st	last
	mp	lamp		rf	scarf		xt	next
	nce	chance		rk	bark			
	nch	lunch		rl	girl			

Consonant Digraphs
Consonant diagraphs are two consonants that represent one sound.

ch	chair, machine		nk	bank		th	thing, the
ng	ring		ph	phone		wh	whale
			sh	she			

Silent Consonant Combinations
These are common consonant combinations that contain one or more silent letters.

ck	clock		lk	talk		th	thyme
gh	high, ghost		lm	calm		sc	scent
ght	sight, thought		mb	climb		tch	catch
gn	sign, gnat		mn	autumn		wr	wrong
kn	know						

Vowels

Vowel Letters and the Sounds They Represent
Each vowel letter represents several vowel sounds. The most common sounds are represented in the words listed below. All vowels can represent the *schwa* sound in unstressed syllables.

	Short Sound		Long Sounds		Other Sounds		Schwa Sound
a	man		name		all, father		about
e	bed		me		cafe		open
i	six		time		ski		April
o	job		go		son, do, dog		second
u	but		rule, fuse		put		awful
y	gym		fly		any		

Vowel Combinations and the Sounds They Represent

Listed below are common vowel diagraphs or vowel-consonant combinations. Many of these combinations produce long vowel sounds. If a combination represents more than one sound, a keyword is given for each common sound.

Long Vowel Sounds											
ai	rain		**eigh**	eight		**igh**	high		**oo**	food	
ay	day		**eu**	feud		**ind**	find		**ue**	due	
ea	meat, great		**ew**	blew, flew		**oa**	soap		**ui**	fruit	
ee	feet		**ey**	key, they		**oe**	toe				
ei	either, vein		**ie**	field							
Other Vowel Sounds											
ai	against		**ea**	head		**ou**	should, could		**ow**	own	
au	auto		**oi**	boil			you, out		**ui**	build	
aw	saw		**oy**	boy		**ough**	though, cough				
augh	laugh		**oo**	book, blood			through, drought				
							thought, enough				

R - Controlled and L - Controlled Vowels

When vowels are followed by "r" or "l," the pronunciation of the vowel is usually affected.

air	fair		**err**	berry		**urr**	purr	
ar	car, dollar, warm		**ir**	girl		**al**	pal, bald	
arr	carry		**irr**	mirror		**all**	ball	
are	care		**oar**	roar		**ild**	mild	
ear	ear, earth, bear		**oor**	door		**ol**	old, roll, solve	
eer	deer		**or**	horse, word				
er	very, her		**our**	hour, journal				
ere	here, were, there		**ur**	fur, fury				

Other Vowel-Consonant Combinations and the Sounds They Represent

-dge	badge	**-ci-**	magician, social
-ed	hated, rubbed, fixed	**-si-**	session, television, Asian
-gue	league	**-ti-**	caution, question, initial
-que	antique	**su**	sugar, measure
-stle	whistle	**-tu-**	picture

E. Frequently Used Words/Sight Words

The following lists show, in order of frequency, the 25 most commonly used nouns, verbs, and adjectives in written English, which can be taught as sight words. Additional frequently used words can be found on Fry's List at https://sightwords.com/sight-words/fry/

Nouns				
1. time	6. thing	11. part	16. work	21. company
2. person	7. man	12. child	17. week	22. number
3. year	8. world	13. eye	18. case	23. group
4. way	9. life	14. woman	19. point	24. problem
5. day	10. hand	15. place	20. government	25. fact
Verbs				
1. be	6. make	11. come	16. use	21. seem
2. have	7. go	12. think	17. find	22. feel
3. do	8. know	13. look	18. tell	23. try
4. say	9. take	14. want	19. ask	24. leave
5. get	10. see	15. give	20. work	25. call
Adjectives				
1. good	6. great	11. right	16. large	21. few
2. new	7. little	12. big	17. next	22. public
3. first	8. own	13. high	18. early	23. bad
4. last	9. other	14. different	19. young	24. same
5. long	10. old	15. small	20. important	25. able

Social Sight Words/Phrases

Adults Only
Ask Attendant for Key
Avenue (Ave.)

Best
Beware
Before
Beware of the Dog
Bus Stop

Caution
Closed
Condemned

Danger
Dentist
Don't Talk
Do Not Cross
Do Not Enter

In
Inflammable
Information
Instructions
Inside

Keep Away
Keep Closed at All Times
Keep Off (the Grass)
Keep Out

Ladies
Last Chance for Gas
Listen
Live Wires
Look
Men
Men Working
Mister (Mr.)
Mistress (Mrs.)

Out
Out of Order

Pedestrians
Please Recycle
Police Station
Pop Cans Only
Post Office
Post No Bills
Private
Private Property
Prohibited
Pull
Push

Rest Rooms
Recyclable

Do Not Refreeze
Doctor (Dr.)
Down
Drive (Dr.)

Elevator
Emergency Exit
Employees Only
Entrance
Exit
Exit Only

Fire Escape
Fire Extinguisher
First aid
Flammable
Fragile

Gentlemen
Glass and Bottles Only

Handle with Care
Hands Off
Help
High Voltage

Newspapers Only
Next Window
No Admittance
No Checks Cashed
No Credit Cards Accepted
No Dogs Allowed
No Dumping
No Fires
No Fishing
No Hunting
No Loitering
No Minors
No Parking
No Smoking (area)
No Spitting
No Swimming
No Trespassing
Nurse

Office
Open

Smoking Area
Smoking Prohibited
Step Down
Stop

This End Up
This Side Up
Trespassers will be
   Prosecuted

Use Before (date)
Use Other Door

Violators will be
   Prosecuted

Walk
Wanted
Warning
Washrooms
Watch Your Step
Wet Paint
Women

F. Helpful Websites for Tutors

Our website, LiteracyActionAR.org, has a great list of resources on the Tools for Tutors page, but here are some others to help get you started.

Pronunciation:

Eva Easton.com, https://www.evaeaston.com/
Authentic American pronunciation rules, quizzes, and videos for students

Sounds of English.org, www.soundsofenglish.org
Website designed to help ESL students improve their English pronunciation, spelling, and reading; also includes research and presentations, lessons and activities, our current interests, and more

The Sounds of English and the International Phonetic Alphabet,
http://www.antimoon.com/how/pronunc-soundsipa.htm
The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is an alphabetic system of phonetic notation based that shows a standardized representation of the sounds of spoken language. It can be used to help your student learn the correct sounds of our language.

Teaching articles, ideas, & links:

ITESLJ.org, http://iteslj.org/
Articles, research papers, lesson plans, classroom handouts, teaching ideas, and links

Dave's ESL Café, www.eslcafe.com
Business English, idioms, phrasal verbs, quizzes, idea "cookbook," etc. for both teachers and students

Gap Song Creation, https://www.lyricsgaps.com/exercises/view/8394/Beginner

ESL student practice:

English Zone.com, www.english-zone.com
Lessons, activities, games, and pronunciation worksheets for students, plus class materials for teachers

A4ESL.org, http://a4esl.org
Quizzes, exercises, and puzzles to help ESL students

5 Minute English, http://www.5minuteenglish.com/
ESL lessons on grammar, reading, vocabulary, and more

USA Learns, https://www.usalearns.org/
Learn English, prepare for citizenship, and learn life and career skills.

ABL student practice:

GCF Learn Free, https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/subjects/core-skills/
Over 1100 lessons in 85 skill areas focusing on literacy, math, and digital literacy. Self-paced tutorials available anytime to help adults strengthen 21st century career and life skills.

ReadWorks.org, https://www.readworks.org/
Reading passages for many subjects and levels, including comprehension questions.

Dictionaries:

Newbury House Dictionary, http://nhd.heinle.com/
Contains over 40,000 entries; simple, clear definitions, sample sentences, and idioms for American English

Learner's Dictionary, http://www.learnersdictionary.com/
Merriam-Webster's Learner's Dictionary includes simple definitions, a word of the day, quizzes, and more

Grammar guides:

Grammarly's Grammar Tips, https://www.grammarly.com/blog/category/handbook/
Tutor or student resource for grammar and writing that provides rules of grammar and examples

Newspaper articles:

Breaking News English, https://breakingnewsenglish.com/
Over 2,500 long or short English lessons in 7 levels, including many activities

Newsela, https://newsela.com/
News articles on many different topics at different levels, including quizzes