



LITERACY FOR LIFE

TUTOR HANDBOOK

(Revised January 2014)

PREFACE

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information for tutors and other volunteers in the Literacy for Life program. It describes the mission of the organization and provides an overview of the available programs. It addresses the responsibilities of the training coalition—staff, volunteers, tutors and learners. And lastly, it provides assistance to the tutor in developing a program that will meet the needs of his or her adult learner.

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Literacy Overview

Definition

Most simply, *literacy* can be defined as “the ability to read and write” (*Oxford Dictionaries*). However, at Literacy for Life, we are most interested in individuals’ ability to use literacy skills to function in society, fulfill their potential, and achieve their goals. Following are definitions of literacy that more fully encapsulate the work we do:

Literacy is the ability to read, write, compute, and use technology at a level that enables an individual to reach his or her full potential as a parent, employee, and community member (ProLiteracy).

Literacy is using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one’s goals, and to develop one’s knowledge and potential (National Assessment of Adult Literacy).

Literacy is an individual’s ability to read, write, speak in English, compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual and in society (United States Workforce Investment Act of 1998).

Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute, and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization).

Literacy is more than just reading, writing, and numeracy. It's not about being literate or illiterate anymore, but having adequate skills for today's demands (Organisation of Economic Co-operation & Development).

The most recent National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) report estimated that eight percent of adults in Williamsburg City, seven percent in James City County, and six percent in York County lack “basic” literacy skills. They scored “Below Basic” on the NAAL assessment or could not be tested due to language barriers. At best, these adults can perform only the most basic and concrete tasks such as signing a form or finding easily identifiable information in a short, commonplace text.

Adults well above this “Below Basic” level may struggle with insufficient literacy skills and benefit from Literacy for Life’s services.

Further Reading:

- National Assessment of Adult Literacy: nces.ed.gov/naal/
- ProLiteracy’s fact sheets: www.proliteracy.org/news/fact-sheets
- Facts and statistics for Adult Education and Literacy in Virginia and the U.S.: literacyfacts.wordpress.com

Causes of Low Literacy

There are many causes of low literacy skills. For adults born in the United States, these can include

- incomplete education due to lack of family support, frustration, illness, pregnancy, drug or alcohol abuse, economic pressure to work, etc.
- low-literate parents being unable to meet the literacy needs of their children.
- learning disabilities, physical disabilities, or illness.

In the case of non-native English speakers, a lack of exposure to the English language can lead to low literacy regardless of the individual's educational background.

Consequences of Low Literacy

Low literacy skills adversely affect both individuals and society. For individuals, low literacy can contribute to unemployment or underemployment, poor personal health outcomes, criminal activity, social isolation, lack of civic engagement, and low self-esteem. For society, low literacy has economic, social and political consequences. According to ProLiteracy's *U.S. Adult Literacy Programs: Making a Difference*,

- 70% of adult welfare recipients function at the lowest level of literacy.
- 40% of manufacturers say they cannot implement new productivity improvements, and they cite workers' insufficient reading, writing, math, and communication skills as a principal reason.
- The National Academy on an Aging Society examined the impact of literacy on the use of health care services. Based on the findings, the report estimated that additional health care expenditures due to low health literacy skills are about \$73 billion annually.

Furthermore, according to ProLiteracy's fact sheet on adult literacy,

- 75% of state prison inmates did not complete high school or can be classified as low literate.
- The effects of low literacy cost the U.S. more than \$225 billion each year in non-productivity in the workforce and loss of tax revenue due to unemployment.
- A 1% increase in average literacy rates yields a 1.5% permanent increase in the GDP.

Further Reading:

- U.S. Adult Literacy Programs: Making a Difference: <http://literacyconnects.org/img/2011/11/US-Adult-Lit-Programs-Making-a-Difference-Research-review.pdf>
- ProLiteracy's fact sheets: www.proliteracy.org/news/fact-sheets

Literacy for Life

Mission Statement

“Literacy for Life improves lives by teaching adults literacy skills required for self-sufficiency, better health and meaningful participation in society.”

The program provides customized instruction in reading, writing, and math for native English speakers and English Literacy/Civics for non-native English speakers. Instruction in computer skills and life skills is integrated according to the learner’s needs and goals.

Program History

The Adult Skills Program (ASP) started in 1975 when the college President, Dr. Thomas Graves, faculty members at the College of William & Mary, and concerned community members recognized the need for an adult literacy program to provide one-on-one tutoring in reading for employees of William & Mary. Four years later, ASP became a United Way agency and opened its doors to adult learners throughout the community.

Rita Welsh was the first Executive Director who worked for a year without pay during state funding cutbacks in the 1970s. Upon her untimely death at a young age, the Board decided to rename the program in her honor.

In 1981, the Rita Welsh Literacy Program moved to the basement of Bryan Hall where it remained until May 2010. From 1981 to 2010, the program grew significantly as it began to serve non-native English speakers through its English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program. The computer lab was expanded during the 1990s, and is now a valuable resource available to all learners. In 2008, the program expanded its services by offering offsite classes in conjunction with area businesses, nonprofit agencies, schools, and correctional facilities.

In May 2010, the program moved into its current location in William & Mary’s School of Education and formally changed its name to **Literacy for Life**.

Current Programs

Literacy for Life’s instructional programs include one-to-one or small group tutoring by trained volunteers, drop-in groups on different topics at various levels, a learner book club, and computer-based learning (onsite or web-based). LFL also contracts with community partners to offer off-site classes with professional instructors.

Literacy for Life’s learners are enrolled in one of two programs: English Literacy and Civics (EL/Civics) or Adult Basic Education (ABE). Staff also may refer to “crossover” learners: foreign-born learners with fairly advanced spoken English who need assistance with reading and writing, GED preparation, etc.

English Literacy and Civics

The purpose of the EL/Civics program is to provide English language instruction linked to civics education, so that participants not only improve their English language skills but also become

better able to participate in American life as workers, parents, and citizens. While a traditional ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) program focuses only on language instruction, an EL/Civics program is purposeful about integrating civics instruction with language instruction. In this context, “civics” includes not only instruction on history, government, naturalization procedures, and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship—but also on integrating into American society: accessing services, navigating systems, helping a child through school, improving employment skills, etc.

Adult Basic Education (ABE)

The ABE program serves native English speakers as well as non-native speakers who have placed out of the EL/Civics program but still have literacy needs. The ABE program assists learners with a wide variety of goals such as

- learning to read, write, or do math for the first time
- completing high school, usually by obtaining a GED (General Equivalency Diploma)
- obtaining a driver’s license
- obtaining workplace certification
- passing the English or math placement tests for community college
- improving workplace skills

Other Programs

In addition to the core programming described above, Literacy for Life develops other programs to address the issue of low literacy in new, creative ways.

For example, the **Health Education and Literacy (HEAL)** program addresses Health Literacy through a two-pronged approach. The first is to educate local health service providers about the issue of health literacy and to assist them in improving their delivery of services to low-literate patients. The second is to provide health literacy classes both at Literacy for Life and in partnership with other community agencies.

Literacy for Life also partners with **Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools** to provide training to community volunteers who serve as reading tutors in K-3 classrooms.

Program Policies and Logistics

Literacy for Life is committed to providing an environment conducive to the learning process. Consequently, Literacy for Life does not permit:

- disruptive behavior
- smoking
- animals or pets other than service animals
- insufficient attire; shirts and shoes are required
- willful damage to property
- unauthorized use of equipment or property

Violation of the above policy may result in removal from the premises and/or program.

Code of Ethics

All volunteers are required to initial and sign a Code of Ethics form to indicate agreement with the following:

- **Tutor Conduct:** Tutors play a key role in fostering the educational development of learners. Therefore, it is important that tutors and learners maintain a relationship of mutual respect. Tutors will refrain from engaging in behavior with learners which constitutes verbal, emotional, sexual, or physical harassment or abuse. Tutors meeting learners offsite will meet in public places. Furthermore, tutors will avoid any actions that might impair the reputation of Literacy for Life. Finally, tutors agree not to attend tutoring sessions when they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- **Confidentiality:** Literacy for Life is committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of its learners. Volunteers agree to maintain the confidentiality of learner information. Failure to comply with this provision will result in dismissal from the volunteer program.
- **Criminal Background Check:** Volunteers may be asked to undergo a criminal background check in order to volunteer for certain positions or activities. Evidence of a criminal or sex offender history may result in subsequent dismissal from the volunteer program.
- **General Release:** The nature of volunteer activities in the Literacy for Life Program may involve related travel, contact with unidentified and/or unfamiliar persons and potential risk of bodily injury or damage to property. Knowing this, volunteers assume full and complete responsibility for any personal injury and/or property damage sustained or caused during participation as a volunteer. In addition, volunteers hereby release, hold harmless and covenant not to file suit against Literacy for Life and any of its employees, volunteers, partners, agents, sponsors, board members and successors from any and all loss, liability or claims that volunteers may have arising out of their service as a volunteer.

- **Media Release (optional):** Volunteers agree and consent that Literacy for Life may use their likeness or any photograph or reproduction (full or partial) thereof, in any form, style, or color, together with any writing and other advertising media, in connection therewith, including the use of their name, as Literacy for Life may select. Volunteers further agree that such photography and/or likeness or voice and the film, tape, plates, and negatives thereof, shall be and remain Literacy for Life’s exclusive property. Volunteers further waive any right to inspect or approve of the use of any such commercial or advertising material.
- **Tutor Compensation & Reimbursement:** As a volunteer for Literacy for Life, you will receive no compensation or reimbursement. All hours and resources given to Literacy for Life are considered a donation.
- **Cultural, religious, political beliefs:** Volunteers agree to not impose their values, politics or religion on their learners.

Office Hours

Monday through Thursday: 9:00 AM – 7:30 PM

Friday through Sunday: CLOSED

Contact Information

Phone: (757) 221-3325 Email: literacyforlife@wm.edu

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 8795 Website: www.literacyforlife.org
 Williamsburg, VA 23187

Physical Address: 301 Monticello Ave., Ste. 1076

Program Calendar

Literacy for Life is a year-round program. The office is closed on the following days:

New Year’s Day observed
 MLK Day
 President’s Day
 Memorial Day
 Summer Break (first 2 weeks in July)
 Labor Day
 Columbus Day
 Thanksgiving Day
 Winter Break (last 2 weeks in December)

Parking

Parking Services at William and Mary provides parking passes to LFL's volunteers. Be sure to ask for one at our reception desk. With this pass displayed on your dashboard, you may park in designated School of Education lots. Please read the pass carefully for parking restrictions, and note that the pass has an expiration date and will need to be replaced periodically. If you do not have a pass, we suggest parking along Mount Vernon Avenue, which is public street parking.

Inclement Weather

Literacy for Life will follow the decisions of the College of William & Mary concerning inclement weather closings. Information about weather-related closings can be found on the College's website at www.wm.edu or by calling 221-1766.

If at any time you feel it is unsafe to travel, please contact Literacy for Life and a staff member will notify your learner.

Childcare and Transportation

Unfortunately, many of Literacy for Life's learners struggle with childcare and transportation, but LFL is unable to provide these services to learners.

Literacy for Life does not allow children to attend sessions in our office suite because of space constraints and the potential for disruption. If a learner brings children to a session, we ask that the pair meet elsewhere in the building, such as the lobby, coffee shop, or back patio. When childcare is a regular problem, some pairs choose to meet at the public library, where the children can do homework or use the library's books, computers, and toys during the session.

Williamsburg Area Transportation has bus stops convenient to the School of Education. The green line stops directly in front of the building. The outbound red line stops on Treyburn Drive, near the intersection with Monticello Avenue. The blue line stops two blocks away at Monticello Shopping Center on Richmond Road (in front of Big Lots).

Referrals to Social Services

The role of LFL staff and volunteers is to assist learners with their literacy skills. We are not counselors, healthcare professionals, or social workers. We are aware, however, than many of our learners experience significant difficulties in their lives, so LFL would like its tutors to be aware of the many social services available in the area. These organizations offer low-cost medical and legal services, counseling, food relief, employment assistance, etc. LFL staff are happy to assist you in referring your learner to appropriate social services. For more information about social services in Williamsburg, see the following:

United Way of Greater Williamsburg: www.uwgv.org

City of Williamsburg Human Services: <http://www.williamsburgva.gov/index.aspx?page=35>

James City County Social Services: www.jamescitycountyva.gov/socialservices

Virginia Employment Commission: <http://www.vec.virginia.gov/>

Partnership for Learning

Literacy for Life is a partnership among professional staff, volunteers (including tutors), and learners.

Professional Staff

Joan Peterson is the Executive Director of Literacy for Life. She is responsible for overall management of the program as well as advocacy, partnerships, and fundraising.

Fiona Van Gheem is the Program Manager. She oversees all aspects of programming, including development of new programs, maintenance of continuing programs, and management of tutor training. She supports tutors and assists with tutor/learner matching.

Annie Mitchell is the Lead Teacher for the EL/Civics program. She oversees onsite and offsite EL/Civics programming, manages instructors, and supports tutors.

Mary Lynch is the Human Services Coordinator. She interviews, assesses, and places learners within LFL's programs. She conducts tutor training, assists with tutor/learner matching, and supports tutors and learners.

Peg Monahan is the Computer-Based Learning Specialist. She assists tutors and learners in the computer lab, conducts classes in computer literacy, is responsible for LFL's hardware and software, and manages the resource library.

Katie Watson splits her time, serving as both Health Education and Literacy (HEAL) Program Coordinator and Development Coordinator.

Tisha Sawyer is the Administrative Assistant. She is responsible for data collection and management and administrative tasks.

Iris Ayala is the Receptionist and Interpreter. She greets tutors and learners, relays messages, and provides Spanish translation.

Pam Farnham is the Evening Coordinator. She greets tutors and learners, relays messages, and reports on evening activity to the Program Manager.

Volunteers

Volunteers are the backbone of our organization and include both community members and students from the College of William & Mary. More than 200 volunteers provide their services not only in tutoring, but also in marketing, IT support, public outreach, office administration, tutor training, special event planning, fundraising, etc. LFL staff certainly welcome your ideas about how your talents and experience might benefit the agency!

Tutors

To qualify as a tutor, volunteers must be adults who demonstrate a native-like command of English, a patient and caring attitude, reliability, flexibility, a desire to learn, and a desire to help others. Beyond that, Literacy for Life will provide all the training and support that are necessary. Tutors must also be accessible by email.

The majority of tutoring occurs between individually matched tutor and learner pairs who meet at Literacy for Life. Pairs may choose to meet offsite at a public location such as a library, coffee shop, or bookstore. Occasionally, tutors meet with small groups of learners whose assessment scores place them at roughly the same skill level. Qualified tutors may also be invited to facilitate one of a variety of drop-in classes.

Tutors also support Literacy for Life's offsite classes. These classes are taught by professional instructors but often include volunteer tutors providing additional support so that the class can be broken into small groups and instruction can be differentiated.

Expectations of Tutors

Training—New tutors complete four modules of initial training and are expected to attend in-service workshops at least twice a year for their duration of their service. Because Adult Literacy is a unique field, and because all tutors need to learn about our procedures, resources, and expectations, experienced teachers are not exempt from tutor training.

Commitment—Tutors commit to one year of tutoring, with a minimum of 90 minutes of instruction per week. (Bear in mind that preparation and travel may significantly increase the time commitment.) Tutors are welcome to meet their learner more than once a week, and tutors may request to be matched with more than one learner. In some cases, we are able to give shorter-term assignments to highly qualified tutors who are unable to commit to a full year.

Communication—LFL staff communicate with tutors through a variety of means including periodic emails, phone calls, and signs posted in the learning center. Because we use email for important announcements, LFL requires that tutors maintain an email account that is checked regularly.

LFL has a large number of active tutoring pairs and cannot keep a close eye on all of them. Unless we hear otherwise or observe a pattern of zero hours being reported, we assume that pairs are meeting regularly and are on track. It is the tutor's responsibility to notify staff regarding challenges such as learner absences, personality conflicts, uncertainty about resources or tutoring strategies, etc. Please also be sure to inform us if you or your learner leave the program. Tutors can communicate with staff by telephone or email, by appointment, or by leaving a message

when recording their tutoring hours. Likewise, learners should feel comfortable approaching staff with their own concerns.

LFL does not give out tutor or learner contact information without express permission. If you feel comfortable exchanging phone numbers or email addresses with your learner, feel free to do so. Otherwise, the LFL receptionist is happy to relay messages as needed.

Record Keeping—In order to maintain accurate program data, LFL must document tutors’ volunteer hours, learners’ instructional hours, assessment scores, achievements, etc. Volunteers are expected to record their tutoring, preparation and travel times after each session. Tutors who come to the center should record their hours using the computer at the reception desk. A staff member can help you. Tutors who meet offsite may submit their hours through LFL’s website (using the “Easy Hours” button under the “Volunteers” tab). A staff member will follow up with any tutors not reporting hours during a particular month, to find out if there are any problems that need to be addressed.

Goal Reviews, Post-Assessments, etc.—Periodically, tutors are asked to assist staff in completing goal reviews, scheduling learners’ post-assessments, completing surveys or reports, etc. Please know that all of these procedures occur for a reason, such as adherence to best practices or compliance with a funder’s policies. We ask that tutors comply with such staff requests in a timely manner. Goal reviews and assessments are explained more fully later in this handbook.

“Let’s Celebrate!”—It is essential that we document our learners’ progress for many reasons: to acknowledge the learner’s accomplishment, to provide evidence to excite the community about our work, and to secure additional funding. If you become aware of a learner’s specific achievement, please submit a “Let’s Celebrate!” form to any staff member. These learner achievements are recorded in our database and, with learner permission, may be displayed in the reception area.

Examples of learner achievements include but are not limited to:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| registering to vote | receiving a promotion or recognition at work |
| reading aloud to a child | receiving a driver’s license |
| opening a bank account | passing the GED exam |
| obtaining a new job | applying for a library card |
| volunteering in the community | becoming a citizen |
| attending a teacher conference | leaving public assistance |

Learners

Literacy for Life’s learners represent a wide spectrum of ethnic, cultural, socioeconomic, and educational backgrounds and are motivated to improve their skills by a wide variety of goals. Some want to obtain their high school equivalency diplomas. Others want to obtain employment, secure a better job, become a U.S. citizen, obtain a driver’s license, or be able to help children with homework. Approximately 15% of our learners are native English speakers and 85% are non-native English speakers.

Learners at LFL must be adults (18 years or older) who live or work in the Greater Williamsburg area. All potential learners are assessed upon entering Literacy for Life's program and must score below a certain threshold in order to qualify for services. Any learner working toward high school completion is eligible for services, regardless of his or her assessment score.

Literacy for Life's "Ability to Benefit" policy stipulates that learners may not be eligible for services if one or more of the following criteria are met: 60 or more hours of study without attaining personal goals, formal assessment scores remaining constant at the lowest level, inconsistent attendance, or general absence of discernible progress.

Learners are asked to commit to completing 60+ hours of instruction at a rate of 2+ hours per week. They are encouraged to attend drop-in groups and/or use computer-based learning programs in addition to meeting with their tutor. Those who do not plan to live or work in Williamsburg long enough to complete 60 hours may be ineligible for services. LFL nearly always has a waiting list for tutors. Priority in matching may be given to permanent immigrants as opposed to temporary visitors. (In this case, visitors still have access to other services such as drop-in groups and computer resources.)

Expectations of Learners

Learners at Literacy for Life receive a handbook which explains Literacy for Life's policies as well as learner rights and responsibilities. Tutors are strongly encouraged to read the Learner Handbook and to review it with each new learner.

Perhaps the most important policies have to do with attendance. Learner gains can only be achieved if learners regularly attend their tutoring sessions, and poor attendance understandably frustrates tutors. After three unexcused absences, LFL reserves the right to dissolve the tutor-learner pair in order to reassign the tutor to another learner. That said, tutors who are frustrated with a learner's attendance may request to be re-matched at any time.

A learner whose match has been dissolved will be given the opportunity to work independently in the computer lab and to attend classes. He will be given another opportunity to have a tutor after demonstrating faithful attendance in the computer lab or classes.

Tutors frequently ask if LFL has a policy regarding homework. Tutors are encouraged to assign homework—as long as it is relevant and not "busy work"—but unfortunately, many adult learners do not have the time, ability, or inclination to complete homework independently. Please see staff if you are concerned about your learner's homework habits.

Learner Retention

Learner retention is a challenge in all adult literacy programs. The learner population may be transient or have unpredictable work schedules, may struggle with the challenges of poverty (including difficulties with transportation and childcare), may be easily discouraged, may lack support networks, or may lack the organizational skills to keep long-term commitments. Adult learners may also simply have other responsibilities—work, family, or other commitments—that must take priority over their learning.

Literacy for Life strives to retain its learners by

- creating a welcoming and supportive environment
- nurturing positive relationships between tutors and learners, and among learners
- training tutors to provide appropriate, relevant, high quality instruction
- assisting learners in setting and frequently reviewing goals
- celebrating learners' accomplishments, no matter how small
- providing learners with a Learner Handbook and having them sign a Learner Contract
- matching learners with tutors who can meet at a convenient time and place
- offering incentive programs such as a free book at 12 hours of instruction or a gift card as post-assessment. (Incentive programs are dependent upon funding and may be changed or discontinued at any time.)

Tutor Training

Literacy for Life requires new tutors to view our online orientation video and to attend three New Tutor Training workshops: Start-Up Training, Match-Up Training, and Just-in-Time Training.

The 16-minute orientation video is available on our website, www.literacyforlife.org, under the “Volunteers” tab.

The Start-Up session covers the Literacy for Life program background, discusses reasons why people may have literacy problems and the obstacles they face, and addresses the special needs of adult learners. This session also covers a tutor’s responsibilities and introduces prospective tutors to the resources available in the center. At the end of the session, participants ready to commit to the program are invited to fill out an application and select a potential learner from the waitlist.

In the Match-Up session, the tutor receives information about his learner, such as country of birth, educational background, and goals. The tutor also receives his learner’s assessment score, and the assessment instruments and results are explained. The session includes an overview of the *LitStart* tutor handbook, an introduction to some “tried and true” tutoring strategies, and advice for planning the first meeting.

Just-in-Time Training occurs after most pairs have met once or twice. Tutors share their experiences in their first session(s). This workshop covers goal setting, lesson planning, and tutoring strategies. Tutors have ample opportunity to ask questions about their specific tutoring situation.

After initial training, Literacy for Life provides frequent opportunities for in-service training. Tutors are strongly encouraged to take advantage of these offerings. Examples of topics include improving an ESOL learner’s pronunciation, preparing a learner for the citizenship interview, teaching math, or tutoring individuals who have learning difficulties. Tutors are encouraged to request training topics or to offer to lead workshops if they have expertise related to our program.

Working with Adult Learners

Tutoring adults is not the same as tutoring children. Adult learners bring considerable background knowledge and experience to the learning process and often have specific and practical goals. Unfortunately, along with their experience, knowledge and motivation, learners often bring “baggage” and anxiety as well. In “10 Characteristics of Adults as Learners,” Gary Kuhne describes adults as desiring control, being pragmatic, drawing upon a wealth of experiences, and being motivated—but also as lacking confidence and resisting change.

Adult literacy tutors must be aware of the advantages and challenges of adult learning. They must gain their learners’ trust and create a comfortable, mutually respectful learning environment. Effective tutors tap into a learner’s prior knowledge to create a bridge to newer

knowledge. Furthermore, they work with learners to identify what instruction will be relevant. They respect their learner's time, are well prepared, and refrain from assigning "busy work." They do not treat their learners like children.

Further Reading:

- "10 Characteristics of Adults as Learners" by Gary Kuhne:
http://www.hccs.edu/hcc/System%20Home/Departments/Teaching_and_Learning_Resources/CTLE/Faculty_Professional_Development/learner_centered_workshop/Ten_Characteristics_Adult-Learners.pdf

Learner-Driven Instruction

One-to-one instruction at Literacy for Life is learner-driven. There is no "one size fits all" curriculum. Tutors engage learners in an ongoing conversation about their personal goals and learning needs. Many learners have specific immediate goals, such as to pass a certification exam, to fill out job applications, to help a child at school, to manage a medical condition, or to prepare for a naturalization interview. Tutors help learners to identify the steps involved in reaching their goals and plan lessons accordingly. Other learners want general skill development, in which case it is appropriate to use an all-purpose curriculum, supplementing with high-interest materials when possible. Learners should feel comfortable sharing their opinions about which resource materials they prefer, which teaching/learning methods work best for them, what topics they'd like to cover next, etc.

Assessments

Every learner that enters the Literacy for Life program is given a pre-assessment to determine a baseline skill level. This assessment score assists tutors in beginning to prepare a plan for instruction. Scores are reported as an Educational Functioning Level (EFL) and/or a Student Performance Level (SPL). Charts provided in this handbook describe the skills typical of each level. (A simplified chart appears at the end of this section, while a more detailed chart including recommended resources can be found at the back of the handbook.)

LFL uses three formal assessment tools: The BEST Plus and BEST Literacy, published by the Center for Applied Linguistics, and the GAIN (General Assessment of Instructional Needs), published by Wonderlic. Learners must score below a certain threshold on one of these assessments to qualify for services at Literacy for Life.

Frequently, tutors meet their learners for the first time and are surprised by their abilities. The assessment score may seem too high or too low. It is important to remember that the assessment is really a snapshot which may or may not capture the range of the learner's abilities. Also, the learner's performance on the assessment may have been influenced by a number of factors, not the least of which is testing anxiety. Finally, the learner's abilities may seem more advanced than they are. For example, the learner might be able to read a passage aloud with little trouble, which may lead the tutor to believe that he reads perfectly well, but the learner may have understood little of what he has read. It is preferable to start "too easy" and advance quickly than to start "too hard" and have to back-pedal.

Tutors may choose to administer informal assessment tools in order to gain a better understanding of a learner's abilities or to choose the right curriculum materials. See below for additional information.

Literacy for Life pre- and post-assesses learners for a variety of reasons: to give tutors an idea of where to start with resources and tutoring strategies; to give the learner an objective measure of his progress; to collect data on the program's effectiveness; and to comply with the Virginia Department of Education's Assessment Policy.

Assessments for English Language Learners

Most EL/Civics learners that enter our program will be given the BEST Plus assessment, which is an oral assessment of listening and speaking skills. BEST Plus is an individually administered, face-to-face oral interview designed to assess the English language proficiency of adult English language learners in the United States. It is intended to assess interpersonal communication using everyday language used in practical situations—at home, at work, and in the community. Learner responses are scored in three areas: listening comprehension, language complexity, and communication. (In other words, did she understand the question? Did she use complex sentence structures in her response? How understandable was her response?)

BEST Literacy is a combined test of reading and writing skills using authentic situations as the basis of test questions. Reading tasks include reading dates on a calendar, labels on food and

clothing, bulletin announcements and newspaper want ads. Writing tasks include addressing an envelope, writing a rent check, filling out a personal background form, and writing personal notes.

To be eligible for services, LFL's learners must score below SPL 7 on the BEST Plus or below SPL 6 on the BEST Literacy. Learners who score above those levels may be re-assessed using the GAIN.

Assessment for Adult Basic Education (ABE)

Adult Basic Education learners are assessed using the GAIN. The GAIN may also be appropriate for more advanced English language learners, especially those with academic goals such as obtaining a GED or entering college. The GAIN may not be appropriate for non-readers, and a more informal assessment may be used if the GAIN seems too difficult. The GAIN is a two-part assessment (English and/or math) in a multiple choice format, administered by computer or on paper. The learner's GAIN report shows the learner's ability in specific skill areas and suggests Topics for Review and Topics for Study.

The GAIN English assessment evaluates the following areas:

<u>Reading</u>	<u>Grammar/Usage/Style</u>
Information Retrieval	Parts of Speech
Letter and Word Recognition	Proofreading for Grammatical Errors
Reading Comprehension	Punctuation/Capitalization
Words in Context	Sentence Structure

The GAIN Math assessment evaluates the following areas:

Addition	Charts and Graphs
Basic Numeracy	Fractions and Decimals
Division	Operations
Multiplication	Geometry and Trigonometry
Subtraction	Pre-Algebra and Algebra

GAIN scores correspond to six EFL levels, with the following grade level equivalents:

- 1 – Beginning ABE Literacy – grade level 0-1
- 2 – Beginning Basic Education – grade level 2-3
- 3 – Low Intermediate Basic Education – grade level 4-5
- 4 – High Intermediate Basic Education – grade level 6-8
- 5 – Low Adult Secondary Education – grade level 9-10
- 6 – High Adult Secondary Education – grade level 11-12

To be eligible for services, learners must score below level 6 on the GAIN (unless they have a goal of high school completion).

Assessment Information in a Nutshell: ESOL

BEST Plus: Speaking and Listening	
Beginning ESOL Literacy Level 0-1	Understands isolated words & phrases at most.
Low Beginning Level 2	Understands common greetings, questions, instructions. Can respond with simple learned phrases (slowly and with difficulty).
High Beginning Level 3	Understands simple sentences containing familiar vocabulary. Can respond to simple questions about everyday activities, and can express immediate needs, using simple learned phrases or short sentences.
Low Intermediate Level 4	Can participate in routine social conversations, although with some difficulty. Has some control of basic grammar.
High Intermediate Level 5	Can understand new phrases containing familiar vocabulary. Can participate in conversation using new phrases with hesitation. Inconsistent control of complex grammar.
Low Advanced Level 6	Has some basic fluency of speech. Can participate in conversation on a variety of everyday subjects, including some unfamiliar vocabulary. Can clarify own or others' meaning by rewording. Shows some ability to go beyond learned patterns and construct new sentences.
High Advanced (Completer) Level 7	Learners at level 7+ are beyond the scope of LFL's services. Those with an interest in reading and writing are assessed using BEST Literacy or GAIN.

BEST Literacy: Reading and Writing	
Beginning ESOL Literacy Level 0-2	May have no or little reading and writing skills in any language. At the top of this range, can read common signs and complete simple forms.
Low Beginning Level 2-3	Can read common sight words and write basic personal information.
High Beginning Level 3-4	Can read familiar phrases and simple sentences but may need frequent rereading. Can write simple sentences with familiar vocabulary. Writing has little control of basic grammar and has many spelling errors.
Low Intermediate Level 4-5	Can read simple material on familiar subjects. Can write simple notes and messages on familiar situations but lacks clarity. Sentence structure lacks variety but shows some control of basic grammar.
High Intermediate Level 5-6	Can read text on familiar subjects; can use context to determine meaning; can write simple paragraphs with main idea and supporting details.
High Advanced (Completer) Level 6-8	Learners at level 6+ are beyond the scope of LFL's services. Those with goals related to further education are assessed using GAIN.

Assessment Information in a Nutshell: ABE

GAIN		
Beginning ABE Literacy	Level 1 English	At the upper range of this level, can read letters and numbers and may have a limited number of basic sight words but has a limited understanding of connected prose and needs frequent rereading. Can write familiar words and phrases and basic personal information. Narrative writing is disorganized and unclear.
	Level 1 Math	May have only minimal skills, such as the ability to add or subtract single digit numbers.
Beginning Basic Education	Level 2 English	Can read simple material with familiar vocabulary. Can write simple notes and messages on familiar situations. Sentence structure lacks variety, but individual shows some control of basic grammar.
	Level 2 Math	Can count, add and subtract three digit numbers. Can perform multiplication through 12. Can identify simple fractions.
Low Intermediate Basic Education	Level 3 English	Can read text on familiar subjects that have a simple and clear structure. Can use context to determine meaning. Can write simple paragraphs with a main idea and supporting details on familiar topics. Can edit for spelling and punctuation errors.
	Level 3 Math	Can perform all four basic math operations using whole numbers up to three digits and can identify and use all basic mathematical symbols.
High Intermediate Basic Education	Level 4 English	Can read simple descriptions and narratives on familiar subjects. Can make inferences and compare/contrast information but not consistently. Can write short essays on familiar topics. Has consistent use of basic punctuation but makes grammatical errors with complex structures.
	Level 4 Math	Can perform basic math operations with whole numbers and fractions. Can solve word problems. Can convert fractions to decimals and vice versa.
Low Adult Secondary Education	Level 5 English	Can comprehend expository writing and identify spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors. Can comprehend reference materials and compose multi-paragraph essays. Can identify the main idea in reading selections and use a variety of context issues to determine meaning. Writing is organized and cohesive, with few mechanical errors. Can write personal notes and letters that accurately reflect thoughts.
	Level 5 Math	Can perform all basic math functions with whole numbers, decimals, and fractions. Can interpret and solve simple algebraic equations. Can interpret tables and graphs. Can use math in business transactions.
High Adult Secondary Education	Level 6	Learners at Level 6 are beyond the scope of LFL's services.

Informal Assessments

“Where to LitStart?”

The tutor guidebook *LitStart*, available in LFL’s library, comes with a useful and straightforward assessment tool designed to be administered by tutors. Administering this assessment gives tutors a better idea of their learners’ skill levels.

READ assessment

The Reading Evaluation Adult Diagnosis is an informal assessment which helps to pinpoint a learner’s areas of strength and difficulty. How extensive is his sight vocabulary? Can he use phonics skills to guess how to pronounce a nonsense word like “pove”? Can he listen to a story, recall details, and make inferences? Tutors with a background in assessment can administer the READ themselves, or any tutor may request assistance from staff.

Curriculum-specific assessments

Many of LFL’s curriculum materials come with pre-tests or placement tools. These materials may be shelved with the curricula (sometimes as part of the teacher’s guide) or may be available through the publisher’s website. See staff for assistance.

One-minute timed readings

Timed readings can be used to assess a learner’s fluency. LFL has a notebook containing several one-minute timed readings. Choose a level that is appropriate for your learner (on the easy side is best) and chart your learner’s progress. One-minute readings are a good way to help learners see measurable improvement in their reading fluency. An online resource for timed readings (with passages, charts, and instructions) is available at <http://www.marshalladulthoodeducation.org/index.php/reading-skills-for-todays-adult>

Goals

Ultimately, everything we do at Literacy for Life is about helping adult learners to achieve their personal goals. Tutors engage with their learners in an ongoing conversation about those goals. Tutors and learners should complete and submit a Goal Setting form within their first month together. Periodically, pairs will be asked to complete a Goal Review. The Goal Review process is an opportunity for the pair to evaluate their progress toward stated goals (and get back on track if necessary) or to agree that different goals have taken priority. Goal Reviews are also a requirement of the Virginia Department of Education. Many learners have difficulty articulating specific goals or don't have the English language skills needed to engage in this conversation. Tutors are encouraged to ask staff for assistance with Goal Reviews as necessary.

When a learner achieves a personal goal—anything from learning to write her address to passing the GED exam—the tutor or learner should report that goal achievement to staff. LFL's staff not only wants to congratulate the learner, but we also need to record the achievement in our database. Tracking goal achievement is one way that LFL demonstrates its effectiveness to its funders and the community.

A useful way to think about goal setting is to ensure that goals are SMART.

A SMART goal is

specific	What exactly do you want to accomplish? "I will be able to..."
measurable	Will you be able to demonstrate that you have met this goal? How?
attainable	Is this goal realistic given your current skills and your available time & resources?
relevant	Is this goal important to you?
time-bound	What is your target date for completing this goal? If this goal will take more than a few months, can you break it into smaller steps?

For example, a learner might have a goal of being able to communicate with his child's school. The learner and tutor might agree on the following SMART goals:

- I will be able to pronounce my child's teacher's names by the end of today's session.
- By the end of the month, I will be able to use the website Edline to look up my child's school assignments and grade reports.
- By October 15, I will be able to call the school to report an absence. (I will be able to clearly state and spell my child's name, pronounce her teacher's name, and explain common reasons for an absence such as sickness, medical appointment, and family emergency.)

Some learners want general skill improvement and have a difficult time identifying specific goals. Tutors might help such learners to set SMART goals such as the following:

- I will be able to say and spell the names of the days and months in English by the end of the March.
- For the next three months, I will read one *News for You* article each week. I will be able to summarize each article for my tutor and state my opinion about it.
- By the end of the month, I will be able to divide three-digit numbers by two-digit numbers with 80% accuracy.

Tutoring Strategies

It is beyond the scope of this handbook to describe all of the tutoring strategies that might be useful for the wide variety of learners at Literacy for Life. Even our initial New Tutor Training series only skims the surface of tutoring strategies. Most tutors will want and need to do some additional study to prepare for tutoring.

Literacy for Life's library has an extensive collection of tutor handbooks for this purpose. Also, most of our curriculum materials have excellent teachers' guides, and valuable resources are also available online. New tutors are invited to begin attending in-service workshops right away.

Tutor Handbooks available for loan at LFL include

- *LITSTART: Strategies for Adult Literacy and ESL Tutors* by Patricia Frey
- *Teaching Adults: A Literacy Resource Book* by Laubach Literacy Action
- *I Speak English: A Guide to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages—Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing* by Ruth J. Colvin

Websites with excellent training materials for tutors include

- ProLiteracy Education Network
 - www.proliteracyednet.org
 - a training resource for tutors including short online courses on a variety of topics and a collection of resources on “Techniques and Strategies”
- Adult Basic Literacy Tutor Training Workshop
 - <http://adulteracytutor.blogspot.com/>
 - a self-paced online course for literacy tutors, estimated to take approximately 14 hours total; trainees can complete the training in chunks or pick and choose which modules to view
- The Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center
 - <http://www.valrc.org/index.html>
 - a center located at Virginia Commonwealth University offering a variety of resources to tutors and programs
 - for recommended websites: Resources → Links by Topic
 - for the *Progress* newsletter: Resources → Publications
 - for six- to eight-week online training courses on topics such as “ESOL Basics,” “Adults and Learning Disabilities,” and “Numeracy in Adult Education”:
Training → Online Training → Facilitated Online Courses
- Literacy DuPage: Real Tutors, Real Learners
 - <http://www.literacyvolunteersdupage.org/RealTutorsRealLearners.html>
 - a series of tutor training videos depicting tutors and learners using specific tutoring strategies

Learning Difficulties or Disabilities

Many learners in adult literacy programs may have learning difficulties or disabilities. A learning disability (LD) is a neurological disorder that interferes with an individual's ability to take in, store, retrieve, or express information. People with learning disabilities can be quite intelligent, even gifted, but the disability creates a significant gap between the person's ability/intelligence and performance. These individuals may be very inconsistent in their performance and may demonstrate a wide variation in abilities: well above average in one area, and well below average in another. It is estimated that 50-80% of adults in ABE programs may be learning disabled.

Some learners at Literacy for Life have been diagnosed with LD by a qualified professional. Others have difficulty learning or performing but have never been diagnosed with a learning disability. Regardless, the teaching techniques recommended for learners with LD are useful for anyone who has difficulty learning. Recommended techniques include

- one-to-one instruction
- patience!
- frequent repetition
- intensive instruction (multiple sessions per week is ideal, if not often possible)
- direct instruction (see below)
- explicit instruction (systematic and logical – follow a research-based curriculum)
- multi-sensory instruction (integrating touch, movement, action, etc.)
- concrete examples and real-world applications
- use of large print with plenty of white space
- use of graph paper to help with letter spacing in writing or number spacing in math
- use of graphic organizers (see pages 65 and 112 of *Teaching Adults*)
- use of mnemonics
- limitation of distractions

Often, learners with learning difficulties or disabilities have low self-esteem and a fear of failure. Tutors must be patient and encouraging and must try to create a comfortable, low-stress learning environment. Learners should be given opportunities to demonstrate their talents. For example, the tutor might look for reading materials related to the learner's interests (dog training, cooking, interior design, home repair, etc.) While discussing the readings, the learner can share his expertise and teach his tutor a thing or two.

The Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center's website contains an excellent list of resources for tutors working with adults who may be learning disabled:

<http://www.valrc.org/resources/ld.html>

Teaching Math

Math tends to be a major hurdle for many learners. Frequently, learners come to Literacy for Life because they have passed every section of the GED exam except for the math, or they may need help with the Virginia Placement Test required by community colleges. They may have tremendous math anxiety.

Some learners are literal, concrete thinkers who have a difficult time with estimating, using fractions, understanding how a letter can represent an unknown number, understanding how to interpret graphs and charts, etc. These learners tend to respond well to using manipulatives and concrete examples. If a learner has a hard time interpreting bar graphs, take him outside to the parking lot to count cars and create a bar graph of his own. If he has a hard time visualizing fractions, use “Fraction Stacks” or measuring cups. Explain volume with sugar cubes.

Learners can also be overwhelmed by the sheer number of math problems on a page. Try writing only one or two problems on a page in large print, or write one problem at a time on a white board. Graph paper can help learners keep numbers lined up properly.

Use flow charts to show the steps involved in solving a problem. Use mnemonics to help the learner remember rules. Many people also respond well to color. Use highlighters to distinguish between different signs. For example, use a yellow highlighter over every + sign, and over every word like add, sum, and plus. Use pink for subtraction, blue for multiplication, and green for division (or whichever color scheme your learner prefers).

Changing the Way we Teach Math by Kate Nonesuch is a free online resource for tutors of learners who have difficulty learning math. A hard copy is available in LFL’s library, or it can be downloaded at <http://www.nald.ca/library/learning/mathman/mathman.pdf>.

Direct Instruction

Direct instruction is an effective teaching method, especially for individuals who have difficulty learning.

- Frame the lesson. Explain what you’re going to do. Activate the learner’s prior knowledge and explain why the lesson is relevant and important. Set goals: “After this lesson, you will be able to....”
- Model the skill while the learner watches. Think aloud.
- Next, model the skill while the learner helps by giving input.
- When the learner is ready, she models the skill (thinking aloud) while the tutor helps.
- At last, the learner attempts the skill independently.
- Reflect on what has been learned. Discuss the relevance of the skill. How is this skill useful to the learner? How might she apply it in her life? Ask the learner to reflect on what was difficult about learning the skill, or what may still be confusing. Provide opportunities for continued practice.

RESOURCES

Literacy for Life Library

The LFL Library contains curriculum materials, tutor training handbooks, leveled readers, workbooks, dictionaries, flash cards, games and more. Topics include everything from general skill development to specific areas such as preparing for citizenship, helping a child through school, finding employment, and managing one's health. Some materials are marked "for reference only" and cannot be checked out. (The bar code of those books will be obscured with a dot sticker.) Other materials may be borrowed by tutors or learners through staff in the computer lab or at the front desk. Circulating materials are loaned for two months and may be renewed. Please do not remove books from the library without borrowing them properly. Our library holdings can be browsed online at <http://opac.libraryworld.com/opac/index>. (Sign in with the Library Name Literacy4Life. A password is not required.)

At times LFL has extra copies of popular books available for purchase. Many titles are also available for sale through booksellers like Amazon on Barnes & Noble, or through the publisher's website.

Computer Lab

Literacy for Life's computer lab is available to learners and tutors whenever the center is open. Learners are strongly encouraged to supplement their tutoring sessions with time in the lab, where their hours are logged as instructional time and count toward their 60 hour goal. Tutors are encouraged to schedule a meeting with the Computer Based Learning Specialist to inquire about software and Internet resources that would be appropriate for their learner. Some of these resources are web-based and accessible from any location with Internet access. Basic computer classes offered in the lab are available to learners and tutors alike.

iPads

LFL owns several iPads loaded with educational apps and available for tutors and learners to use in the center. Please see staff to borrow an iPad or to suggest apps for download.

Internet Resources

Many excellent online resources are available to tutors and learners. Literacy for Life maintains a list of recommended links on our website. (Click on Volunteers or Students and browse the resources on the left side of the page.) LFL encourages tutors to integrate online resources not only because they can be compelling and multisensory, but also because many learners have an interest in developing their computer skills.

ESL Literacy Levels:

Beginning ESL Literacy

Level Description and Resource Suggestions

Outcome Measures Definitions			
Literacy Level	Listening and Speaking	Basic Reading and Writing	Functional and Workplace Skills
Beginning ESL Literacy Test Benchmark: BEST Plus: 88-400 (SPL 0-1) BEST Literacy: 0-20 (SPL 0-2)	Individual cannot speak or understand English, or understands only isolated words or phrases.	Individual has no or minimal reading or writing skills in any language. May have little or no comprehension of how print corresponds to spoken language and may have difficulty using a writing instrument.	Individual functions minimally or not at all in English and can communicate only through gestures or a few isolated words, such as name and other personal information; may recognize only common signs or symbols (e.g., stop sign, product logos); can handle only very routine entry-level jobs that do not require oral or written communication in English. There is no knowledge of or use of computers or technology.
Resources recommended at this level: Oxford Picture Dictionary Oxford Picture Dictionary Low Beginning Workbook Step Forward – Introductory Level Future – Introductory Level Rosetta Stone – Level 1 Flashcards, money, pictures, calendar, etc.			

Low Beginning ESL

Level Description & Resource Suggestions

Outcome Measures Definitions			
Literacy Level	Listening and Speaking	Basic Reading and Writing	Functional and Workplace Skills
<p>Low Beginning ESL</p> <p>Test benchmark:</p> <p>BEST Plus: 401– 417 (SPL 2)</p> <p>BEST Literacy: 21-52 (SPL 2-3)</p>	<p>Individual can understand basic greetings, simple phrases and commands. Can understand simple questions related to personal information, spoken slowly and with repetition. Understands a limited number of words related to immediate needs and can respond with simple learned phrases to some common questions related to routine survival situations. Speaks slowly and with difficulty. Demonstrates little or no control over grammar.</p>	<p>Individual can read numbers and letters and some common sight words. May be able to sound out simple words. Can read and write some familiar words and phrases, but has a limited understanding of connected prose in English. Can write basic personal information (e.g., name, address, telephone number) and can complete simple forms that elicit this information.</p>	<p>Individual functions with difficulty in social situations and in situations related to immediate needs. Can provide limited personal information on simple forms, and can read very simple common forms of print found in the home and environment, such as product names. Can handle routine entry level jobs that require very simple written or oral English communication and in which job tasks can be demonstrated. May have limited knowledge and experience with computers.</p>
<p>Resources recommended at this level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oxford Picture Dictionary Oxford Picture Dictionary Low Beginning Workbook Step Forward – Level 1 Future – Level 1 Rosetta Stone – Level 1 Flashcards, money, pictures, calendar, etc. 			

High Beginning ESL

Level Descriptions & Resource Suggestions

Outcome Measures Definitions			
Literacy Level	Listening and Speaking	Basic Reading and Writing	Functional and Workplace Skills
<p>High Beginning ESL</p> <p>Test benchmark:</p> <p>BEST Plus: 418–438 (SPL 3)</p> <p>BEST Literacy: 53-63 (SPL 3-4)</p>	<p>Individual can understand common words, simple phrases, and sentences containing familiar vocabulary, spoken slowly with some repetition.</p> <p>Individual can respond to simple questions about personal everyday activities, and can express immediate needs, using simple learned phrases or short sentences. Shows limited control of grammar.</p>	<p>Individual can read most sight words, and many other common words. Can read familiar phrases and simple sentences but has a limited understanding of connected prose and may need frequent re-reading. Individual can write some simple sentences with limited vocabulary. Meaning may be unclear. Writing shows very little control of basic grammar, capitalization and punctuation and has many spelling errors.</p>	<p>Individual can function in some situations related to immediate needs and in familiar social situations. Can provide basic personal information on simple forms and recognizes simple common forms of print found in the home, workplace and community. Can handle routine entry level jobs requiring basic written or oral English communication and in which job tasks can be demonstrated. May have limited knowledge or experience using computers.</p>
<p>Resources recommended at this level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oxford Picture Dictionary Oxford Picture Dictionary Low Beginning Workbook Step Forward – Level 1 Future – Level 1 Rosetta Stone – Level 1 USA Learns (online) Flashcards, money, pictures, calendar, etc. 			

Low Intermediate ESL

Level Descriptions & Resource Suggestions

Outcome Measures Definitions			
Literacy Level	Listening and Speaking	Basic Reading and Writing	Functional and Workplace Skills
<p>Low Intermediate ESL</p> <p>Test Benchmark:</p> <p>BEST Plus: 439-472 (SPL 4)</p> <p>BEST Literacy: 64-67 (SPL 4-5)</p>	<p>Individual can understand simple learned phrases and limited new phrases containing familiar vocabulary spoken slowly with frequent repetition; can ask and respond to questions using such phrases; can express basic survival needs and participate in some routine social conversations, although with some difficulty; and has some control of basic grammar.</p>	<p>Individual can read simple material on familiar subjects and comprehend simple and compound sentences in single or linked paragraphs containing a familiar vocabulary; can write simple notes and messages on familiar situations but lacks clarity and focus. Sentence structure lacks variety but shows some control of basic grammar (e.g. present and past tense) and consistent use of punctuation (e.g. periods, capitalization).</p>	<p>Individual can interpret simple directions and schedules, signs, and maps; can fill out simple forms but needs support on some documents that are not simplified; and can handle routine entry level jobs that involve some written or oral English communication but in which job tasks can be demonstrated. Individual can use simple computer programs and can perform a sequence of routine tasks given directions using technology (e.g., fax machine, computer).</p>
<p>Resources recommended at this level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oxford Picture Dictionary Oxford Picture Dictionary High Beginning Workbook Step Forward – Level 2 Future – Level 2 News for You Leveled readers Rosetta Stone – Level 2 USA Learns (online) 			

High Intermediate ESL

Level Descriptions & Resource Suggestions

Outcome Measures Definitions			
Literacy Level	Listening and Speaking	Basic Reading and Writing	Functional and Workplace Skills
<p>High Intermediate ESL</p> <p>Test Benchmark:</p> <p>BEST Plus: 473-506 (SPL 5)</p> <p>BEST Literacy: 68-75 (SPL 5-6)</p>	<p>Individual can understand learned phrases and short new phrases containing familiar vocabulary spoken slowly and with some repetition; can communicate basic survival needs with some help; can participate in conversation in limited social situations and use new phrases with hesitation; and relies on description and concrete terms. There is inconsistent control of more complex grammar.</p>	<p>Individual can read text on familiar subjects that have simple and clear underlying structure (e.g. clear main idea, chronological order); can use context to determine meaning; can interpret actions required in specific written directions; can write simple paragraphs with main idea and supporting details on familiar topics (e.g. daily activities, personal issues) by recombining learned vocabulary and structures; and can self and peer edit for spelling and punctuation errors.</p>	<p>Individual can meet basic survival and social needs, can follow some simple oral and written instruction, and some ability to communicate on the telephone on familiar subjects, can write messages and notes related to basic needs; can complete basic medical forms and job applications; and can handle jobs that involve basic oral instructions and written communication in tasks that can be clarified orally. Individual can work with or learn basic computer software, such as word processing, and can follow simple instructions for using technology.</p>
<p>Resources recommended at this level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oxford Picture Dictionary Oxford Picture Dictionary High Beginning Workbook Step Forward – Level 3 Future – Level 3 News for You Leveled readers Rosetta Stone – Level 3-5 USA Learns (online) 			

Advanced ESL

Level Descriptions & Resource Suggestions

Outcome Measures Definitions			
Literacy Level	Listening and Speaking	Basic Reading and Writing	Functional and Workplace Skills
<p>Advanced ESL</p> <p>Test Benchmark:</p> <p>BEST Plus: 507-540 (SPL 6)</p> <p>BEST Literacy: 76-78 (SPL 6-8)</p>	<p>Individual can understand and communicate in a variety of contexts related to daily life and work. Can understand and participate in conversation on a variety of everyday subjects, including some unfamiliar vocabulary, but may need repetition or rewording. Can clarify own or others' meaning by rewording. Can understand the main points of simple discussions and informational communication in familiar contexts. Shows some ability to go beyond learned patterns and construct new sentences. Shows control of basic grammar but has difficulty using more complex structures. Has some basic fluency of speech.</p>	<p>Individual can read moderately complex text related to life roles and descriptions and narratives from authentic materials on familiar subjects. Uses context and word analysis skills to understand vocabulary, and uses multiple strategies to understand unfamiliar texts. Can make inferences, predictions, and compare and contrast information in familiar texts, individual can write multi-paragraph text (e.g. organizes and develops ideas with clear introduction, body and conclusion), using some complex grammar and a variety of sentence structures. Makes some grammar and spelling errors. Uses a range of vocabulary.</p>	<p>Individual can function independently to meet most survival needs and to use English in routine social and work situations. Can communicate on the telephone on familiar subjects. Understands radio and television on familiar topics. Can interpret routine charts, tables, and graphs and can complete forms and handle work demands that require nontechnical oral and written instructions and routine interaction with the public. Individual can use common software, learn new basic applications, and select the correct basic technology in familiar situations.</p>
<p>Resources recommended at this level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Step Forward – Level 4 Future – Level 4 High interest reading materials Rosetta Stone – Levels 3-5 ITTS (need GAIN score for appropriate level) 			

ABE Literacy Levels

Beginning ABE Literacy

Level Descriptions & Resource Suggestions for GAIN score 1

Outcome Measures Definitions			
Literacy Level	Basic Reading and Writing	Numeracy Skills	Functional and Workplace Skills
<p>Level 1 Beginning ABE Literacy</p> <p>GAIN Benchmark: English: 200-406 Math: 200-314</p> <p>(Grade Level 0-1.9)</p>	<p>Individual has no or minimal reading and writing skills. May have little or no comprehension of how print corresponds to spoken language and may have difficulty using a writing instrument. At the upper range of this level, individual can recognize, read, and write letters and numbers but has a limited understanding of connected prose and may need frequent re-reading. Can write a limited number of basic sight words and familiar words and phrases; may also be able to write simple sentences or phrases, including very simple messages. Can write basic personal information. Narrative writing is disorganized and unclear, inconsistently uses simple punctuation (e.g., periods, commas, question marks), and contains frequent errors in spelling.</p>	<p>Individual has little or no recognition of numbers or simple counting skills or may have only minimal skills, such as the ability to add or subtract single digit numbers.</p>	<p>Individual has little or no ability to read basic signs or maps and can provide limited personal information on simple forms. The individual can handle routine entry level jobs that require little or no basic written communication or computational skills and no knowledge of computers or other technology.</p>
<p>Recommended resources at this level:</p> <p>Laubach Way to Reading 1 Challenger 1-2 Sam and Pat</p> <p>Foundations: Math Voyager 1-2</p> <p>“Flipping Phonics” Lexia software</p>			

Beginning Basic Education

Level Descriptions & Resource Suggestions for GAIN score 2

Outcome Measures Definitions															
Literacy Level	Basic Reading and Writing	Numeracy Skills	Functional and Workplace Skills												
<p>Level 2 Beginning Basic Education</p> <p>GAIN Benchmark: English: 407-525 Math: 315-522</p> <p>(Grade Level 2-3.0)</p>	<p>Individual can read simple material on familiar subjects and comprehend simple and compound sentences in single or linked paragraphs containing a familiar vocabulary; can write simple notes and messages on familiar situations but lacks clarity and focus. Sentence structure lacks variety, but individual shows some control of basic grammar (e.g., present and past tense) and consistent use of punctuation (e.g., periods, capitalization).</p>	<p>Individual can count, add, and subtract three digit numbers, can perform multiplication through 12, can identify simple fractions, and perform other simple arithmetic operations.</p>	<p>Individual is able to read simple directions, signs, and maps, fill out simple forms requiring basic personal information, write phone messages, and make simple changes. There is minimal knowledge of and experience with using computers and related technology. The individual can handle basic entry level jobs that require minimal literacy skills; can recognize very short, explicit, pictorial texts (e.g., understands logos related to worker safety before using a piece of machinery); and can read want ads and complete simple job applications.</p>												
<p>Recommended resources at this level:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Laubach Way to Reading 2-3</td> <td>Foundations: Math</td> <td>News for You</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Challenger 3-4</td> <td>Voyager 2-3</td> <td>Lexia software</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ITTS Level E</td> <td>Word Power</td> <td>Foundations in Spelling</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Leveled Readers</td> <td>Junkyard Dan</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>				Laubach Way to Reading 2-3	Foundations: Math	News for You	Challenger 3-4	Voyager 2-3	Lexia software	ITTS Level E	Word Power	Foundations in Spelling	Leveled Readers	Junkyard Dan	
Laubach Way to Reading 2-3	Foundations: Math	News for You													
Challenger 3-4	Voyager 2-3	Lexia software													
ITTS Level E	Word Power	Foundations in Spelling													
Leveled Readers	Junkyard Dan														

Low Intermediate Basic Education

Level Descriptions & Resource Suggestions for GAIN score 3

Outcome Measures Definitions			
Literacy Level	Basic Reading and Writing	Numeracy Skills	Functional and Workplace Skills
<p>Level 3 Low Intermediate Basic Education</p> <p>GAIN Benchmark: English: 526-661 Math: 523-669</p> <p>(Grade Level 4-5.9)</p>	<p>Individual can read text on familiar subjects that have a simple and clear underlying structure (e.g., clear main idea, chronological order); can use context to determine meaning; can interpret actions required in specific written directions; can write simple paragraphs with a main idea and supporting details on familiar topics (e.g., daily activities, personal issues) by recombining learned vocabulary and structures; and can self and peer edit for spelling and punctuation errors.</p>	<p>Individual can perform with high accuracy all four basic math operations using whole numbers up to three digits and can identify and use all basic mathematical symbols.</p>	<p>Individual is able to handle basic reading, writing, and computational tasks related to life roles, such as completing medical forms, order forms, or job applications; and can read simple charts, graphs, labels, and payroll stubs and simple authentic material if familiar with the topic. The individual can use simple computer programs and perform a sequence of routine tasks given direction using technology (e.g., fax machine, computer operation). The individual can qualify for entry level jobs that require following basic written instructions and diagrams with assistance, such as oral clarification; can write a short report or message to fellow workers; and can read simple dials and scales and take routine measurements.</p>
<p>Recommended resources at this level:</p>			
<p>Challenger 5-6 Lexia software Word Power</p>	<p>News for You ITTS Level M</p>	<p>Patterns in Spelling Leveled Readers</p>	

High Intermediate Basic Education

Level Descriptions & Resource Suggestions for GAIN score 4

Outcome Measures Definitions			
Literacy Level	Basic Reading and Writing	Numeracy Skills	Functional and Workplace Skills
<p>Level 4 High Intermediate Basic Education</p> <p>GAIN Benchmark: English: 662-746 Math: 670-775</p> <p>(Grade Level 5-8.9)</p>	<p>Individual is able to read simple descriptions and narratives on familiar subjects or from which new vocabulary can be determined by context and can make some minimal inferences about familiar texts and compare and contrast information from such texts but not consistently. The individual can write simple narrative descriptions and short essays on familiar topics and has consistent use of basic punctuation but makes grammatical errors with complex structures.</p>	<p>Individual can perform all four basic math operations with whole numbers and fractions; can determine correct math operations for solving narrative math problems and can convert fractions to decimals and decimals to fractions; and can perform basic operations on fractions.</p>	<p>Individual is able to handle basic life skills tasks such as graphs, charts, and labels and can follow multi-step diagrams; can read authentic materials on familiar topics, such as simple employee handbooks and payroll stubs; can complete forms such as a job application and reconcile a bank statement. Can handle jobs that involve following simple written instructions and diagrams; can read procedural texts, where the information is supported by diagrams, to remedy a problem, such as locating a problem with a machine or carrying out repairs using a repair manual. The individual can learn or work with most basic computer software, such as using a word processor to produce own texts, and can follow simple instructions for using technology.</p>
<p>Recommended resources at this level:</p> <p>Challenger 7-8 ITTS Level D</p> <p>Pre-GED or GED materials High-interest reading materials</p>			

Low Adult Secondary Education

Level Descriptions & Resource Suggestions for GAIN score 5

Outcome Measures Definitions			
Literacy Level	Basic Reading and Writing	Numeracy Skills	Functional and Workplace Skills
<p>Level 5 Low Adult Secondary Education</p> <p>GAIN Benchmark: English: 747-870 Math: 776-854</p> <p>(Grade Level 9-10.9)</p>	<p>Individual can comprehend expository writing and identify spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors; can comprehend a variety of materials such as periodicals and nontechnical journals on common topics; can comprehend library reference materials and compose multi-paragraph essays; can listen to oral instructions and write an accurate synthesis of them; and can identify the main idea in reading selections and use a variety of context issues to determine meaning. Writing is organized and cohesive with few mechanical errors; can write using a complex sentence structure; and can write personal notes and letters that accurately reflect thoughts.</p>	<p>Individual can perform all basic math functions with whole numbers, decimals and fractions; can interpret and solve simple algebraic equations, tables, and graphs and can develop own tables and graphs; and can use math in business transactions.</p>	<p>Individual is able or can learn to follow simple multistep directions and read common legal forms and manuals; can integrate information from texts, charts, and graphs; can create and use tables and graphs; can complete forms and applications and complete resumes; can perform jobs that require interpreting information from various sources and writing or explaining tasks to other workers; is proficient using computers and can use most common computer applications; can understand the impact of using different technologies; and can interpret the appropriate use of new software and technology.</p>
<p>Recommended resources at this level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GED materials High-interest reading materials Study guides for specific exams ITTS Level A 			

High Adult Secondary Education

Level Descriptions & Resource Suggestions for GAIN score 6

(Literacy for Life accepts learners at this level only for high school completion.)

Outcome Measures Definitions			
Literacy Level	Basic Reading and Writing	Numeracy Skills	Functional and Workplace Skills
<p>Level 6 High Adult Secondary Education</p> <p>GAIN Benchmark: English: 871-1000 Math: 855-1000</p> <p>(Grade Level 11-12)</p>	<p>Individual can comprehend, explain, and analyze information from a variety of literacy works, including primary source materials and professional journals, and can use context cues and higher order processes to interpret meaning of written material. Writing is cohesive with clearly expressed ideas supported by relevant detail, and individual can use varied and complex sentence structures with few mechanical errors.</p>	<p>Individual can make mathematical estimates of time and space and can apply principles of geometry to measure angles, lines, and surfaces and can also apply trigonometric functions.</p>	<p>Individual is able to read technical information and complex manuals; can comprehend some college level books and apprenticeship manuals; can function in most job situations involving higher order thinking; can read text and explain a procedure about a complex and unfamiliar work procedure, such as operating a complex piece of machinery; can evaluate new work situations and processes; and can work productively and collaboratively in groups and serve as facilitator and reporter of group work. The individual is able to use common software and learn new software applications; can define the purpose of technology and software and select appropriate technology; can adapt use of software or technology to new situations; and can instruct others, in written or oral form, on software and technology use.</p>
<p>Recommended resources at this level: GED materials ITTS Level A</p>			