

Interacting in
communities: Unit 10
**BUSINESS &
CONSUMERISM**



ELSA 6
CLB 6/7

Introduction

In this unit, learners learn about the relationship between businesses and consumers. As with other human relationships, businesses and consumers are responsible both for themselves and to each other. This unit proposes to help learners reflect on their roles as consumers and negotiate their relationships with the businesses they patronize.

The **Core Curriculum** focuses on being a smart consumer and accessing processes for consumer protection. Learners also practice customer service scenarios, and writing complaints and recommendations for local businesses.

The **Project** focuses on starting a small business. Learners research steps to starting a business and accessing small business programs. Learners also invite a small business owner to speak to the class.






Teaching Suggestions

- Send learners on a contact assignment to enumerate and categorize businesses in the area.
- Invite a small business person as guest speaker.
- Have learners bring various receipts into the class for analysis.
- Have learners research various types of credit cards and compare and contrast interest rates, services, etc.
- Encourage learners to research stories of new Canadians who have become successful business owners.
- Discuss cultural differences in dealing with customers or clients and the effect these differences may have on face-to-face or phone interactions.
- Encourage learners to practice active listening techniques in the classroom in the context of customer relations.
- Discuss tips and strategies for negotiating the price of an item or service (e.g., a car, a piece of furniture, a home renovation).

Target OUTCOMES

CLB Outcomes

The following are the mandatory outcomes to be covered in this unit:

Listening	
 CLB 7-I:	Understand moderately complex social exchanges (such as expressions of and responses to gratitude, hopes, appreciation, complaints, disappointment, satisfaction, dissatisfaction, approval and disapproval).
Speaking	
 CLB 7-I:	Participate in routine phone calls.
Reading	
 CLB 7-I:	Understand moderately complex personal and public social messages (such as those conveying appreciation, complaints, hopes, satisfaction and dissatisfaction). (FATK)
Writing	
 CLB 7-I:	Convey personal messages in formal and informal correspondence for an expanding range of social purposes (such as expressing and responding to appreciation, complaints, disappointment, satisfaction, dissatisfaction or hope).
 CLB 7-III:	Write business or service correspondence for a range of routine and less routine purposes (such as passing on information, and making and responding to requests, recommendations and warnings).

Content and Other Outcomes

Learners will

- increase their understanding of consumer protections
- practice telephone and email skills
- practice strategies to compensate for or prevent communication breakdown
- access, analyze, and summarize information to start a small business
- identify steps to complete formal complaints
- evaluate the effectiveness of formal complaint letters
- develop checklists to respond to suggestions and complaints

POSSIBLE TOPICS

Topic	This unit explores the language, tasks, and services relevant to conducting business in Canada, from the perspective of both business owners and consumers. The unit focuses on processes for the development of learners as informed consumers and ethical business owners in British Columbia through research and discussions about laws and regulations related to consumer protections and business practices.
Cross-cultural Perspectives	Values about business and consumerism vary from country to country. It is perhaps worthwhile then to focus on cross-cultural perspectives by comparing and contrasting Canada with learners' home countries and cultures vis-à-vis the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• types of businesses and business regulations• pricing and purchasing customs and practices• the language and etiquette used in making a formal or informal complaint• gender and small business ownership or shopping practices• children's relationships to money, banking, and shopping• advertising• levels of profitability among various kinds of businesses
Systems and Practices in BC and Canada	The following are topics instructors could explore with learners: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• real-estate, housing and mortgage businesses, regulations, financing, and practices• the responsibilities of municipal, provincial, and federal governments that regulate business practices• legal consumer protections• organizations that help protect consumers such as the Better Business Bureau• organizations and social networks for small business owners, such as the Chamber of Commerce• qualities associated with initiative, entrepreneurship, and success in business• profiles of successful business people• business ethics• borrowing and investing• resources to inform consumers about products• factors to consider in making consumer choices• marketing strategies and ethics

PLANNING GUIDELINES

Linguistic Competencies

Vocabulary

- words and expressions relating to business and consumerism
- an expanding range of abstract, technical, idiomatic, and conceptual vocabulary to report and discuss personal and factual information and to express ideas, opinions, and feelings about familiar topics and issues

*start up, entrepreneur, downsize, blow out, bankrupt, just in time, bottom line
Better Business Bureau, Board of Trade, Chamber of Commerce, patron, client, customer*

Grammar

- conditionals for requests and complaints
- spelling, punctuation, and capitalization conventions

*I was wondering if...; It would have been nice, if
softeners: just, actually, well*

Pronunciation

- speak clearly on the phone
- clarify miscommunication, especially due to pronunciation difficulties both as speaker and listener

*produce intelligible and communicatively effective pronunciation:
Could you spell that? Did you say 15 or 50? One five or five zero?*

RESOURCES

Business

[Business Development Bank of Canada \(BDC\)](#)

This website offers financial and consulting services to Canadian small businesses through an advice centre, videos, current news, and more.

Uses: Learners access information about small businesses online.

[Business Planning Basics \(2010, 2:58\) – Answers.com Videos](#)

This short video discusses the various legal aspects of starting a business.

Uses: Learners take notes and summarize the main points in the video.

[Canada Business Network](#)

This government website is for start-up businesses and entrepreneurs and features checklists for starting a business, finance planning, permits and licences, service standards, current blog posts, and more.

Uses: Learners access checklists and guides for starting a small business.

[The Canadian Intellectual Property Office](#)

This website has online forms, FAQs, information about Canadian patents, trademarks, copyrights, industrial designs, and more.

Uses: Learners access information online and view and fill out forms.

[Community Futures British Columbia](#)

This website offers a variety of entrepreneurial programs, business advice, loan programs, best practices, success stories, and more.

Uses: Learners access a given section and summarize the information to relate to others.

[The Cult of the Customer by Shep Hyken \(Aug. 29, 2009, 6:17\) – YouTube](#)

This well-spoken author introduces his book and offers his tips for the five steps to customer loyalty.

Uses: Learners summarize the five steps to customer loyalty.

[Customer Engagement Strategies](#)

This 12 page pdf outlines the four stages of customer interaction through text, graphic images, company attribute lists, customer experience categories, corporate solutions, and more.

Uses: Learners take notes about the stages of customer experience and levels of interaction.

[Government of BC Import/Export Guide 2011](#)

This 16-page pdf document includes starting and running an import/export business, promotion, and Canada's Pacific Gateway.

Uses: Learners summarize a given section of the reading and discuss.

[How to Prepare a Business Plan \(2007 3:47\) – Answers.com Videos](#)

This short video outlines the basic steps of preparing a business plan.

Uses: Learners reduce the video to notes organized by the steps.

[How to Choose a Business Entity \(2010,7:15\) – Answers.com Videos](#)

This video looks at the advantages and disadvantages of various business types.

Uses: Learners take notes and discuss the information and tips in the video.

[Identifying Potential Target Markets – Statistics Canada](#)

This downloadable lesson plan has a ready-made vocabulary list, activities, worksheets, and classroom instructions that help learners identify target markets by using Statistics Canada resources and tools.

Uses: Learners can complete lesson independently online, or as a group in the classroom.

[Industry Canada](#)

This government website has an extensive drop-down menu organized by topics, businesses, consumers, and forms, reports, and guides. This menu is a portal to business and consumer information including starting a business, industry statistics, financing, bankruptcy, effective complaints, and more.

Uses: Learners can access this site throughout the unit as required for information on a wide variety of topics.

[Scott Meyer on Trends in Online Advertising \(2013, 6:47\) – About.com](#)

This video has an accompanying transcript and discusses changes and trends in online advertising.

Uses: Learners summarize the video and discuss the implications for small businesses.

RESOURCES

Business (cont.)

[Small Business BC](#)

This website helps small-business owners access government programs, services, information, and data. It offers articles, blogs, success stories, videos, and more.

Uses: Learners access information and videos online.

[Small Business – Canadian Immigrant Magazine](#)

This page has a wealth of information on business and consumerism for newcomers to Canada.

Uses: Learners access a given article online and discuss the tips and advice.

[Top 5 Business Trends 2012 – About.com Small Business Canada](#)

This website provides an interesting list and includes information about

Consumerism Resources

[10 Secrets for Writing Killer Complaint Letters – Writing Help Central](#)

This article has a nice summary of the steps to effective complaint letters with a link to a sample template.

Uses: Learners use the steps and template to write complaint letters.

[Autoblog Canada](#)

This automobile blog is organized by automakers and includes reviews, events, social media links, and more.

Uses: Learners navigate the menus to follow reviews of a particular car or event.

[Better Business Bureau](#)

This website has extensive information for consumers and businesses including tips, warnings, scams, complaints, and more.

Uses: Learners access information about given topics and summarize it.

[Blog: News and Notes – Marketplace CBC](#)

This blog has a wide range of topics relating to consumer protection in Canada and also has links to episodes of the investigative journalism program on CBC.

corporate social responsibility, mobile marketing, phone apps, and social media.

Uses: Learners participate in a five-part jigsaw to share the information and discuss opinions on the list.

[Best Business Opportunities 2013 – About.com](#)

This site offers 10 innovative business opportunities for starting a small business related to organic food, bike stores, hot lunch delivery, and more.

Uses: Learners participate in a jigsaw activity to share information and discuss the ideas presented.

Uses: Learners understand moderately complex public social messages conveying warnings, recommendations, and advice.

[Business English ESL Lessons for Writing Emails – YouTube Course](#)

This collection of eight videos includes writing external request emails, making requests, improving email mechanics, tone, style, and more.

Uses: Learners access videos online, take notes, do the activities, and use the information to write emails.

[The Canadian Consumer Handbook](#)

This website has a variety of resources to build consumer awareness including the complaint process, a sample complaint letter, spam protection, identity theft, and more.

Uses: Learners follow the complaint process and letter template to write complaint letters, or summarize a given article for discussion.

[Complaint Letter Templates – HowtoComplain.com](#)

This page has detailed complaint letter templates with links to letters organized by type of complaint. General tips are included as well.

Uses: Learners access and choose a suitable template for writing a complaint letter.

RESOURCES

Consumerism (cont.)

[Complaints and Requests Lesson Plans – ESLFlow.com](#)

This page has numerous links to ready-made worksheets and lesson plans that centre around complaints and requests. There are dialogues, complaint letter samples, polite request worksheets, exercises to describe problems, and more.

Uses: Learners complete selected relevant worksheets and lessons in class.

[Consumer Protection BC](#)

This site offers information for businesses and consumers including consumer tips and rights, how to make complaints, business tips and practices, legislation, forms, extensive links to other resources, and more.

Uses: Learners can access this site throughout the unit as required for information on a wide variety of topics.

[Correspondence Style Guide – The Ontario Public Service](#)

This extensive style guide includes guidelines for letter format, honorifics, capitalization, numerical expressions, punctuation, style, and more.

Uses: Learners use guidelines to write business or service correspondence.

[Customer Service Training Video \(Aug. 6, 2007, 4:00\) – YouTube](#)

This video follows an insensitive hotel manager through a series of poor customer service situations.

Uses: Learners take note of bad customer service points and discuss better solutions.

[Dave Carroll Music](#)

This engaging website features the complaint video *United Breaks Guitars*, a song that launched a consumer protection sensation online. The website features videos, music, public speaking samples, various social media feeds, a “gripevine,” and more.

Uses: Learners access information online and take notes about the use of social media to get results in customer complaint situations.

[Front Desk Impressions: The Unprofessional \(Aug. 4, 2010, 6:45\) – YouTube](#)

This funny and engaging video follows a front desk clerk through a series of unprofessional actions. The video starts by challenging the viewer to spot all the infractions and finishes by reviewing them all with text on screen.

Uses: Learners take note of customer-service interactions and make notes for discussion.

[Making and Handling Complaints – Word Power](#)

This page has a list of useful expressions for complaints with links to vocabulary matching and gap filling exercises for practice.

Uses: Learners access the list and complete the exercises online to build complaint vocabulary for role-plays and letters.

[Seinfeld Soup Nazi Best Bits \(Mar. 27, 2011, 7:43\) – YouTube](#)

This collection of clips from the popular sitcom has humorous examples of poor customer service..

Uses: Learners take note of customer-service interactions and make notes for discussion.

[WineAlign Blog](#)

This blog has extensive archives, a twitter feed, and links to other blogs about wine quality, wine prices, wine growers, and more.

Uses: Learners navigate the links to follow reviews of a particular wine or wine-tasting event.

[Yelp](#)

This website helps consumers find a wide variety of local businesses, reviews, events, neighbourhood listings, and more.

Uses: Learners understand moderately complex personal and public social messages conveying complaints, satisfaction, and dissatisfaction.

RESOURCES

CLB Aligned Resources

[ELSA Assessment – ELSA Net](#)

This page has essential materials for every instructor including the [Formative Assessment Toolkit \(CLB 7\)](#) and the [Learner’s Self-Assessment Toolkit \(CLB 7\)](#). There are links to Instructor/Student Guidelines, Progress and Exit Testing Guidelines, and ready to use templates to complement the exercises and techniques.

Uses: This page is rich with excellent resources for CLB aligned formative assessment, student reflection, and portfolio work.

[LINC 5-7 Classroom Activities, Volumes 1 & 2 – Toronto Catholic District School Board](#)

This is one of the best resources for an ELSA teacher and is highly recommended for this curriculum. All of the activities are CLB aligned, although ELSA teachers should be aware of the differences between LINC levels and ELSA levels when using this resource. The website offers pdf copies of Volumes 1 & 2 with audio files and online activities associated with various chapters.

Uses: The following chapters are particularly useful for this unit:

Chapter 1, Volume 1: Academic Skills

Chapter 2, Volume 1: Business Writing

Chapter 3, Volume 1: Interacting With Others

Chapter 7, Volume 2: Telephone Calls

[LINC 5-7 Classroom Activities \(Vol. 1 and 2\) e-Resources – Toronto Catholic District School Board](#)

This website has quick links to pdf files for chapters 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7 in the LINC 5-7 document and online activities that align with the curriculum.

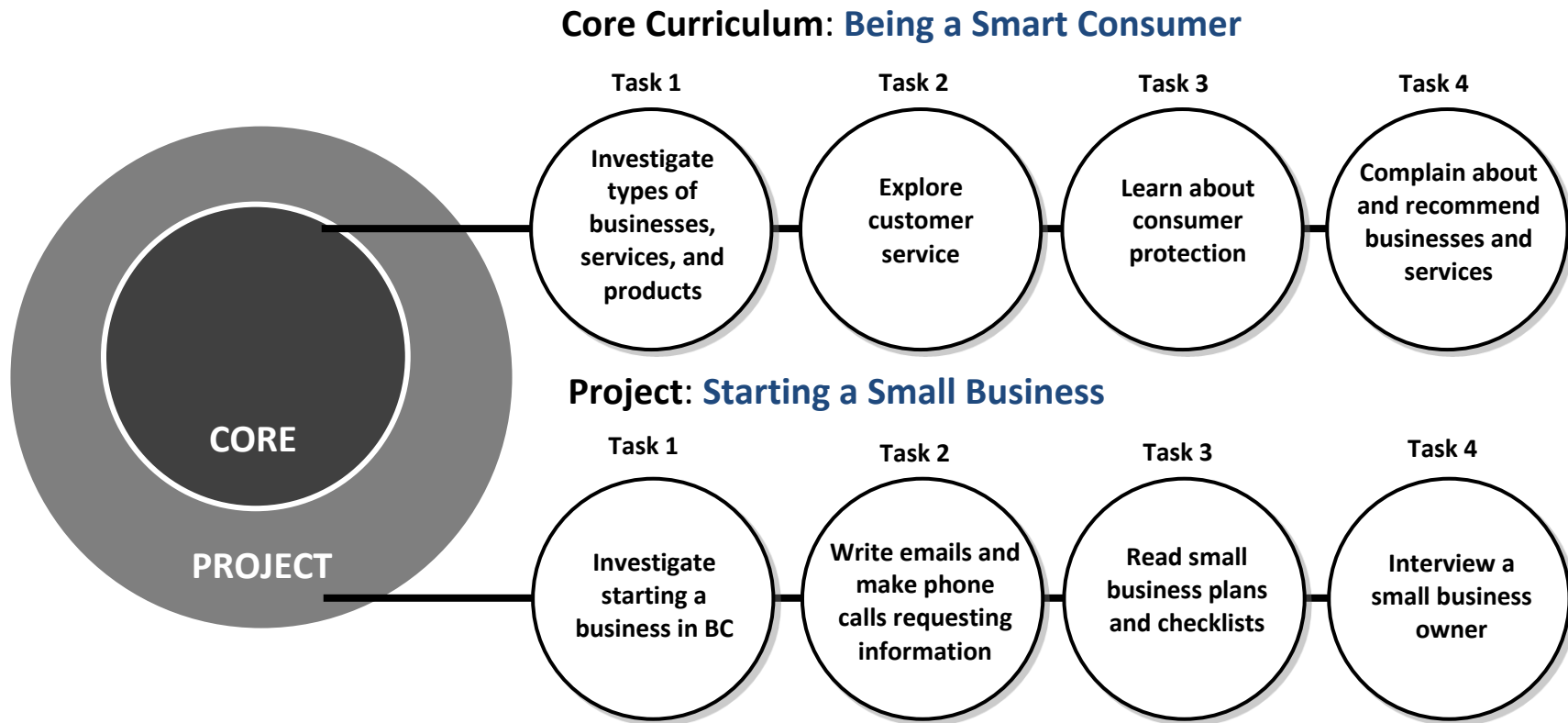
Uses: The following chapters are well-suited to this unit:

[Chapter 1, Volume 1: Academic Skills](#)

[Chapter 2, Volume 1: Business Writing](#)

[Chapter 7, Volume 2: Telephone Calls](#)

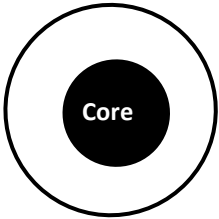
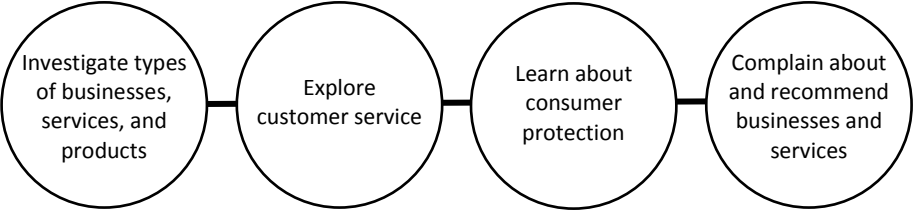
At a glance: BUSINESS & CONSUMERISM







SCOPE & SEQUENCE

ELSA 6

of Sample Tasks

UNIT 10: Business & Consumerism	CORE CURRICULUM: Being a Smart Consumer PROJECT: Starting a Small Business	
		
CLB OUTCOME 🗣️👂📞	SAMPLE TASK	RESOURCES
🗣️ CLB 7-I: Participate in routine phone calls.	Task 1: Investigate types of businesses, services, and products <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access and read information about types of businesses (e.g., manufacturing, retail, wholesale, service, online, restaurant, consultancy) and the services and products they offer • discuss personal experiences with different types of businesses and services, either in their home country or in Canada • select a local business to investigate, viewing its website and looking for reviews • phone businesses for more information (e.g., hours, fees, years in business, owner) and role-play requesting an appointment for a service, ordering a product: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ answer the phone, greet a caller, and close conversation using appropriate conventions and expressions ○ provide information or leave accurate messages in some detail ○ clarify and confirm information 	LINC 5-7 Classroom Activities, Chapter 7, Volume 2: Telephone Calls Small Business BC Canada Business Network Better Business Bureau Yelp! Autoblog Canada WineAlign Blog Blog: News and Notes – Marketplace CBC


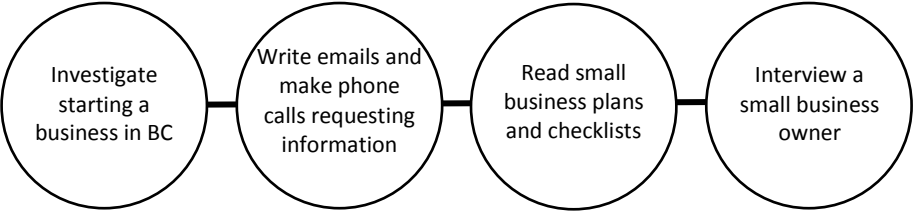
UNIT 10: Business & Consumerism		CORE CURRICULUM: Being a Smart Consumer PROJECT: Starting a Small Business
CLB OUTCOME 	SAMPLE TASK	RESOURCES
<p>CLB 7-I: Understand moderately complex social exchanges (such as expressions of and responses to gratitude, hopes, appreciation, complaints, disappointment, satisfaction, dissatisfaction, approval and disapproval).</p>	<p>Task 2: Explore customer service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • view various videos and audio recordings about customer service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ identify implied meanings and stated and unspecified details ○ identify language functions ○ understand the intent of the expressions and the responses ○ identify formal and colloquial style and register ○ identify emotional state, mood, and attitude from tone and intonation ○ interpret feelings such as gratitude, hope, and appreciation ○ identify the context and relationship between speakers • discuss experiences with good and poor customer service • identify expectations of customer service and compare cross-culturally • role-play customer service situations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ordering food in a restaurant ○ discussing needs with a hairdresser ○ booking a plumber to fix a plugged sink ○ discussing car maintenance with a mechanic 	<p>Seinfeld Soup Nazi Best Bits (Mar. 27, 2011, 7:43) – YouTube</p> <p>Customer Service Training Video (Aug. 6, 2007, 4:00) – YouTube</p> <p>Front Desk Impressions: The Unprofessional (Aug. 4, 2010, 6:45) – YouTube</p> <p>Complaints and Requests Lesson Plans – ESLFlow.com</p> <p>Making and Handling Complaints – Word Power</p> <p>Customer Engagement Strategies</p>
<p>CLB 7-I: Understand moderately complex personal and public social messages (such as those conveying appreciation, complaints, hopes, satisfaction and dissatisfaction). (FATK)</p>	<p>Task 3: Learn about consumer protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify situations of consumer-business conflict using personal experience brainstorm potential courses of action • investigate the recommended steps for protecting yourself as a consumer on the Consumer Protection BC website • read various customer complaint letters and emails from the Consumer Protection site and other sites • analyze a letter or email of complaint: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ identify specific factual details and implied meanings ○ identify the purpose of the message ○ identify the reader/writer relationship ○ identify the mood and attitude of the writer ○ identify the context, register, and style 	<p>Formative Assessment Toolkit (CLB 7)</p> <p>Consumer Protection BC</p> <p>The Canadian Consumer Handbook</p> <p>10 Secrets for Writing Killer Complaint Letters – Writing Help Central</p> <p>Complaint Letter Templates – HowtoComplain.com</p> <p>Correspondence Style Guide – The Ontario Public Service</p>


UNIT 10: Business & Consumerism	CORE CURRICULUM: Being a Smart Consumer PROJECT: Starting a Small Business	
CLB OUTCOME 	SAMPLE TASK	RESOURCES
<p> CLB 7-III: Write business or service correspondence for a range of routine and less routine purposes (such as passing on information, and making and responding to requests, recommendations and warnings).</p> <p> CLB 7-I: Convey personal messages in formal and informal correspondence for an expanding range of social purposes (such as expressing and responding to appreciation, complaints, disappointment, satisfaction, dissatisfaction or hope).</p>	<p>Task 4: Complain about and recommend businesses and services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write a letter or email of complaint for a faulty product or service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ convey a clear message with details of the date and type of service, description of the problem, request for restitution ○ demonstrate an understanding of audience in language and format • write a review, commendation or recommendation for a business or service as an email, facebook post, yelp! post, tweet, or blog post: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ convey the intended meaning ○ use language, format, and content appropriate and relevant to the situation and audience ○ express main ideas and support them with details ○ use complex structures and vocabulary • read and react to classmates’ reviews 	<p>Making and Handling Complaints – Word Power</p> <p>Business English ESL Lessons for Writing Emails – YouTube Course</p> <p>Yelp!</p>

SCOPE & SEQUENCE

ELSA 6

of Sample Tasks

UNIT 10: Business & Consumerism	CORE CURRICULUM: Being a Smart Consumer PROJECT: Starting a Small Business	
		
CLB OUTCOME 🧠 🗣️ 📖	SAMPLE TASK	RESOURCES
<p>✍️ CLB 7-I: Convey personal messages in formal and informal correspondence for an expanding range of social purposes (such as expressing and responding to appreciation, complaints, disappointment, satisfaction, dissatisfaction or hope).</p>	<p>Task 1: Investigate starting a business in BC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> locate and access information about starting a small business in BC summarize recommended steps for starting a business in an email to a friend or relative investigate government programs to support entrepreneurship and assist in setting up a small business tweet, or post information about small business programs in BC intended for other newcomers to Canada 	<p>Small Business BC Community Futures British Columbia Canada Business Network Small Business – Canadian Immigrant Magazine</p>
<p>✍️ CLB 7-III: Write business or service correspondence for a range of routine and less routine purposes (such as passing on information, and making and responding to requests, recommendations and warnings).</p> <p>🗣️ CLB 7-I: Participate in routine phone calls.</p>	<p>Task 2: Write emails and make phone calls requesting information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> write an email requesting information about financial support for new businesses write an email to a small business or entrepreneurship program requesting to meet with an advisor write a letter of intent to a financial institution in support of a business loan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> phone Small Business BC to ask for information phone a local small business program to request an appointment with an advisor invite the owner of a local small business to come and speak to the class 	<p>Business English ESL Lessons for Writing Emails – YouTube Course</p> <p>LINC 5-7 Classroom Activities, Chapter 7, Volume 2: Telephone Calls</p>

UNIT 10: Business & Consumerism	CORE CURRICULUM: Being a Smart Consumer PROJECT: Starting a Small Business	
CLB OUTCOME 	SAMPLE TASK	RESOURCES
CLB 7-I: Understand moderately complex personal and public social messages (such as those conveying appreciation, complaints, hopes, satisfaction and dissatisfaction).	Task 3: Read small business plans and checklists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • investigate various checklists for starting a small businesses • read various sample business plans • evaluate viability of the businesses described in the plan • evaluate the business plans 	Small Business BC Community Futures British Columbia Top 5 Business Trends 2012 – About.com Small Business Canada Canada Business Network Small Business – Canadian Immigrant Magazine
CLB 7-I: Understand moderately complex social exchanges (such as expressions of and responses to gratitude, hopes, appreciation, complaints, disappointment, satisfaction, dissatisfaction, approval and disapproval).	Task 4: Interview a small business owner <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • invite and welcome a local small business owner to speak to the class • prepare questions about the process of establishing the business, the challenges, motivations, and benefits of business ownership • welcome the guest, ask questions, thank the guest for attending • write a thank-you note to the guest 	Contact your local Chamber of Commerce or Business Improvement Association