

Acknowledgments

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Revisions to the Original Document

Pilot Program

The *ELSA 6/7 Curriculum Guidelines* was launched in the fall of 2011 to a number of ELSA providers in the Lower Mainland. Intensive training was followed up by small groups, called PODs, of ELSA 6/7 instructors. After the initial training, instructors were given the option to continue with the PODs, which many of them did, and after almost a year of piloting the program, instructors met for a final session to discuss relevant issues with the curriculum, including highlights and challenges, incorporating sociocultural elements into the teaching syllabus, and share experiences of delivering the curriculum via a blended model.

Gathering Feedback

Following the first year of the pilot, a number of tools were used to gather feedback from coordinators and instructors regarding the *ELSA 6/7 Curriculum Guidelines*, both in terms of the document itself and its delivery in the classroom context.

Using the notes from POD meetings, online surveys, focus groups, and informal conversations with instructors at Sharing Sessions and on-site visits, ELSA Net was able determine which areas of the original curriculum were in need of revisions and enhancements in order to improve the document both in terms of learners' needs and usability by instructors in their planning.

Changes to the Curriculum

Initially each unit of the curriculum was built around a key visual of Core, Project, and Strategies. This has been reduced to Core and Project, with strategies being incorporated into both, rather than being presented as separate elements. As a result, the key visual has been simplified. As well, it is believed that since Strategic Competence is an important element of the

Canadian Language Benchmarks, strategies need to be taught throughout the curriculum and not be thought of as an optional element.

The number of target CLB outcomes for each unit has been reduced. The curriculum consultants ensured that all the CLB 7 outcomes for ELSA level 6 are represented in Units 1 – 5 and again in Units 6 – 10. The same was done with regard to the CLB 8 outcomes for ELSA 7. By reducing the number of target outcomes, instructors have a concrete focus of the language skills to focus on during a unit. No doubt practice of other CLBs will continually repeat throughout the units, but with a particular focus in each unit, instructors can be sure targets have been reached by the learners. A grid illustrating the breakdown of the CLBs across each level is now included in the appendix.

As well, the CLB 6 outcomes in ELSA 6 were upgraded to CLB 7, and the CLB 7 outcomes in ELSA 7 were upgraded to CLB 8. Instructors will need to be cognizant on the occasions when a benchmark target might be too high for their learners and therefore adapt as their lessons necessary. However, it was thought to be better for everyone if the CLBs at each level were consistent.

Additional target outcomes had included other CLB and Essential Skills competencies. As these were found to be somewhat repetitive throughout the curriculum, the CLB competencies for Textual Knowledge, Functional Knowledge, Sociolinguistic Knowledge, and Strategic Competence along with the Essential Skills competencies were compiled and added to the appendix. These are important elements to be included at the ELSA 6 and 7 levels, and instructors can use their discretion about when and where to include such elements. The linguistic competencies known as Grammatical Knowledge in the CLBs were left intact for each unit, as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation are considered important elements by instructors and learners alike, and are expected elements of the language class. The CLB's Model of Communicative Language Ability has also been included in the appendices, along with the Profiles of Ability across Stage II.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Where did this curriculum come from? Who developed it?

The *ELSA 6/7 Curriculum Guidelines* were developed by ELSA Net for the British Columbia Immigration and Welcome BC Branch, Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development. The guidelines were an adaptation of the *LINC 5-7 Curriculum Guidelines*, which were developed by the Toronto Catholic District School Board for use in LINC programs; however, in the end the adaptation was of sufficient scope to make the two documents substantially different. The major adaptations were as follows:

- use of the new Revised Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB 6-8)
- re-organization of the units to link settlement contents or themes with sample tasks. This generated twenty content-based modules, ten for each of ELSA 6 and ELSA 7.

ELSA Net developed the *ELSA 6/7 Curriculum Guidelines* with help from a team of five consultants and an Advisory Committee with representatives from government, ELSA providers, and post-secondary institutions (with either TESOL training or ELSA programs). Names of contributors, including ELSA Net, consultants, and advisory committee members, appear in the opening credits, all of whom made significant and substantive contributions to the final product.

Can you tell me more about the original curriculum?

The *LINC 5-7 Curriculum Guidelines* document was developed by the Toronto Catholic District School Board in 2007 and funded by the Government of Canada (CIC) for use in LINC programs. The document is available on the Web with a series of companion documents, alongside a planning guide (*LINC 5-7 In the Classroom*), activities (*LINC 5-7 Classroom Activities*), and audio and e-resource files and activities. The *LINC 5-7 Curriculum Guidelines* document is meant to assist instructors in program planning by providing ideas for curriculum content that:

- are consistent with the Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000 (CLB 5-8)
- are task-based and learner-centred, and

- meet the objective of the LINC program, which is to provide language instruction that facilitates social, cultural and economic integration into Canada.

The *LINC 5-7 Curriculum Guidelines* also has 20 units, but they are defined around ideas for teaching language in specific communication situations, such as meetings, social interaction, and interviews. It also provides ideas for thematic content utilizing the same 12 themes as in the *LINC 1-5 Curriculum Guidelines* document, but it is up to instructors and programs to link the content with the situational tasks. The units in the *LINC 5-7 Curriculum Guidelines* document are as follows:

- Introduction and Overview
- Planning and Assessment
- LINC Level Outcomes
- Academic Skills - 2 Units
- Business Writing - 2 Units
- Interacting with Others - 4 Units
- Looking for a Job - 3 Units
- Managing Information - 4 Units
- Meetings - 3 Units
- Telephone Calls - 2 Units
- Themes
- Additional Resources

Why is the document referred to as “curriculum guidelines” rather than as a “curriculum”?

As curriculum guidelines, this document offers target outcomes, specified contents or themes, core tasks, project options, and an array of sample tasks with resources to assist the instructor in developing and implementing the curriculum. The term *curriculum* refers to a course of studies as they unfold in the classroom; therefore, the curriculum emerges when instructors interpret the guidelines through the lens of the specific interests and needs of learners, instructors, programs, and communities.

This suggests that instructors and learners are actively engaged in developing curriculum through the interpretation of the unit within the development of specific projects, lesson plans, and activities. In this way, we see this document and the curriculum it gives rise to as a creative, generative process that nonetheless offers standards of excellence and engagement to ESL learners at this level.

Do the ELSA 6/7 curriculum guidelines offer community, workplace, and/or academic ESL options?

The original *LINC 5-7 Curriculum Guidelines* offered sample tasks and options for programs to focus on community, workplace, or academic ESL outcomes based on learners' needs; therefore, the *ELSA 6/7 Curricular Guidelines* document also offers activities and sample tasks to support learners to participate in academic genres, workplace practices, and community contexts. Consequently, it is important to design the *actual* curriculum that instructors deliver based on a formal needs assessment that recognizes learners' diverse needs, aspirations, and contexts, regardless of the program they may find themselves in. We realize that ELSA learners, and in particular learners at this level who are often better educated, may have complex and diverse needs over the trajectory of their settlement processes and programs.

Despite this versatility and scope, this curriculum was explicitly developed and intended for use in community settlement ESL programs. Unlike the *LINC 5-7*, which was designed to be adapted across academic, workplace, and community ESL contexts, the B.C. government sponsored distinctive curricula for use in *ELSA 6/7* (community) programs; *ELSA for the Workplace 6/7* programs; and post-secondary ESL certificate (academic) programs at the same CLB 6-8 levels.

At the same time, because the *ELSA 6/7 Curriculum Guidelines* draw on the academic writing, business writing, meetings, job search, managing information, social interactions, and telephone call sample tasks from the original *LINC 5-7 Curriculum Guidelines*, we are confident that certain units or projects could be integrated effectively in academic or workplace ESL classrooms and programs.

Are the ELSA 6/7 curriculum guidelines a prescribed syllabus?

As is the case with the *LINC 5-7 Curriculum Guidelines*, the *ELSA 6/7 Curriculum Guidelines* document is not intended to be used as a prescribed syllabus. Instructors can select to use relevant material (units, projects, sample tasks, resources) from this document based on learners' needs and goals. Unlike the *ELSA for the Workplace 6/7* curriculum, this curriculum does not offer sequenced and prescribed activities and lessons. Instead, it offers a selection of topics to develop under the broad theme of the unit and an array of content-based sample tasks (organized under core and project) that are

presented in a scoped and sequenced manner. Instructors have to plan and select those topics, tasks and activities they wish to focus on based on learners' needs and interests.

What are mandatory are the Target Outcomes in each unit that include the relevant revised Canadian Language Benchmark performance indicators (listening, speaking, reading, writing), which are covered exhaustively for each level between Units 1-5 and again between Units 6-10. Consequently, we recommend that instructors complete a cycle of units within these ranges before moving on to cover others. That way, instructors can ensure learners are exposed to an optimal combination and range of benchmarked outcomes for their level.

Can I change the order of the units or do they have to be delivered in sequence?

Within the Units 1-5 and Units 6-10, the sequence in which the units are delivered does not matter. There are no assumptions in any unit that learners have completed any previous unit; therefore, technically, programs could start with any unit they desire, though they should complete the units in that range (e.g., Units 1-5 or 6-10) to cover off the Revised CLB performance indicators and competencies exhaustively.

What is optional and what is required in the curriculum guidelines?

The required or mandatory components of the curriculum guidelines are the Target Outcomes page, which include CLB Proficiencies. Also, the overall settlement-related theme or content is required, although there is a very broad spectrum of topics that can be covered in any one unit, as outlined in the Possible Topics page, and not all the themes or contents need to be covered in one ELSA level.

The rest of the sections of each unit in the curriculum guidelines are neither required nor mandatory; instead, they are offered as a way to support instructors and providers to deliver high-quality programs that are responsive of learners' needs and consistent across service providers. These optional sections include: Possible Topics, General and Learners' Resources, At-a-Glance, and Scope and Sequence of Sample Tasks for Core.

Have the resources been approved for copyright clearance?

We elected to go predominantly with online resources using live links and citations for non-electronic resources to avoid the necessity of soliciting copyright clearance. In Canada, the public enjoys free access to government resources, so we have tended to rely heavily on those. In addition, many of the websites intended to share educational materials for use in a classroom have an implied permission, although you should not copy anything with a copyright, unless it is Creative Commons Copyright or explicitly states it is useable for educational purposes. Learners can work with website links freely at their individual computers, and you can stream video or other texts. You cannot copy and use more than 10% of a book. For more information on copyright rules for educational purposes in Canada, visit CAUT (Canadian Association of University Teachers).

The hyperlink for a resource doesn't work. What do I do?

An unfortunate characteristic of online resources is their tendency to move around, and sometimes, disappear completely. For example, over the past two years the CBC has redesigned their website no less than three times, making it necessary to find video and article links at new web addresses. YouTube may be more reliable in terms of addresses staying constant, but on this site, videos can disappear or be discontinued without warning. This can be frustrating when trying to plan lessons and reuse material that has worked well before.

Here are some tips to help:

General Internet Resources

If the resource is on the internet at a large (and not on a well-known site like CBC or YouTube) then a Google search will usually suffice if the link does not work. Perhaps you will want to access a resource from the curriculum that looks like this:

[Danielle Duplassie, MA, PhD – The SMART Principle for Reaching Your Goals and Resolutions](#)

If the link in the curriculum does not work, find it by doing the following:

- 1) Highlight, right click, and copy the entire heading from the curriculum.
- 2) Go to www.google.ca.

- 3) Right click, and paste the heading into the search field.

The resource should be first, or near to first in the results.

Another way to find the same resource above is to do a Google search using the main content words:

- 1) Go to Google.
- 2) Type the words: *duplassie smart principle goals resolutions*.

This should yield the same results.

If these techniques do not reveal the resource, it has most likely been removed completely. In this case, remove the content words that indicate authorship, include all other content words, and search again: *smart principles reaching goals resolutions*. This usually leads to an acceptable replacement resource if the original is gone.

Site Specific Resources

Many of the resources in this curriculum are found on much larger websites like CBC, YouTube, Wikipedia, etc. If the trouble is with a resource on a site like these, Google would work the same as above, but there may be better results by going to the host website first. For example, if there is trouble with the link for a resource that looks like this:

[The Brain that Changes Itself \(Nov. 28, 2008, 43:38\) – The Nature of Things](#)

Then find the host site with a Google search:

- 1) Go to the host site. (In this case, it's www.cbc.ca.)
- 2) Find the search field on the home page.
- 3) Search for the main content words in the title of the resource: *brain changes itself*.

The resource should be first, or near to first, in the results. If this does not reveal the resource, it has likely been removed completely. In this case, return to Google and try the steps from the first example above to find an acceptable replacement resource.

The internet can be both fruitful and frustrating; always remember to keep watch for complementary or replacement resources when searching. New material is added to the web every second.

Overview of Adaptations of LINC 5-7 Curriculum Guidelines

Below is an outline of the key adaptations of the *LINC 5-7 Curriculum Guidelines* involved in preparing this document, the *ELSA 6/7 Curriculum Guidelines*.

Connecting Settlement Tasks and Contents

The most significant adaptation of the original *LINC 5-7 Curriculum Guidelines* document was to connect settlement content themes and sample tasks explicitly in units. In the original *LINC 5-7* documents, this responsibility was left up to instructors, whereas in the *ELSA 6/7*, we undertook this labour-intensive task for instructors and programs so they wouldn't have to reason through what settlement contents and resources aligned best with key sample tasks. This was possible in British Columbia because these curriculum guidelines were explicitly developed for community programs that required a content-focus on citizenship and community settlement contexts rather than having to serve an array of possible programs as is the case with the *LINC 5-7 Curriculum Guidelines*.

As a consequence of explicitly connecting settlement tasks and themes, the *ELSA 6/7 Curriculum Guidelines* offers an integrated program for combining task- and content-based ESL approaches. Task-based approaches focus language learning on target needs, on authentic materials and language, and on the application of language within real communicative contexts. Content-based approaches, in turn, support vocabulary development and thinking skills, which are very important at this level (CLB 6-8).

Original LINC Units

In the original *LINC 5-7* document, sample tasks were organized into the following seven units:

- Academic Skills
- Business Writing
- Interacting with Others
- Looking for a Job
- Managing Information
- Meetings,
- Telephone Calls

ELSA 6/7 Curriculum Guidelines – Introduction

Original LINC Themes

The 12 LINC themes below appear in a later section with subtopics for teacher to align with the above:

- At Home in Our Community and the World
- Banking and Finance
- Canada
- Canadian Culture
- Canadian Law
- Commercial Services and Business
- Community and Government Services
- Education
- Employment
- Family and Relationships
- Health and Safety
- Travel and Transportation

ELSA 6/7 UNITS

As with the *LINC 5-7 Curriculum Guidelines*, we chose to have 20 units, with 10 units per ELSA 6 and 7 levels. Rather than focusing these units on tasks as was done in the LINC approach, we elected to focus each unit on a specific settlement content topic for each of the 20 units, and to provide an overarching theme for each of ELSA 6 (Interacting in Communities) and ELSA 7 (Learning in Communities).

Overview of Unit Structure

The following outlines the key components of each unit.

Introduction: This section provides a summary of the unit with explicit outcomes for student learning. It also includes a number of teaching suggestions.

Target Outcomes: CLB, Content, and Other Outcomes: These are lists of the mandated target outcomes for the unit.

Possible Topics: This section provides a broad span of possible topics that teacher *could* cover in the unit. It reminds instructors they are free to develop the curriculum within the framework provided.

General Resources: This section offers a list of annotated general resources for instructors and learners that relate to the content of the unit. Instructors could consult these resources to develop background knowledge to teach the content or topic matter of the unit. Also, some of these resources could be used in the classroom or for learners in self-study or projects.

At-a-Glance: This section offers an overview of the Core and Project tasks on a single page.

Scope and Sequence

This section aligns proficiency indicators from the 2012 CLB document with sample tasks. The sample tasks offer examples, but instructors could develop alternative tasks that would give rise to comparable performance outcomes. There are two embedded sets of scope and sequence tasks:

- **Core Curriculum:** This component is required and includes the foundational language and content outcomes and activities of the unit.
- **Project:** This component is optional (with mandatory benchmark outcomes). It involves using team- and project-based learning as a way for learners to develop interactive, small group, organizational, and soft skills. In each unit, a final possible project is explicitly named.

CLB/LINC Alignment

The target outcomes derive from the revised Canadian Language Benchmarks document released in 2012. This document differs from the earlier CLB 2000 document in that the target outcomes are more narrowly focused, incrementally developed, and include “knowledge and strategic” competencies that include five areas: linguistic, textual, functional, sociolinguistic, and strategic competencies; however, these competencies are defined generically by skill area according to level (e.g., Level I, II, and III).

Another issue to bear in mind is that ELSA program are aligned to the CLB differently than LINC levels. In the case of ELSA, it is understood that a learner

enters an ELSA level with 70% ability at that CLB level; therefore, the curriculum targets CLB benchmark outcomes at a higher level. To progress, a learner needs to perform at 70% in the higher benchmark. So, for example, to advance from ELSA 5 into ELSA 6, a learner must have achieved 70% of the CLB 6. This formula differs significantly from LINC, which is at the equivalent CLB level for literacy skills (reading and writing) and above level for oral skills (listening and speaking.) See the following chart:

	Level 6 (Oral)	Level 6 (Lit)	Level 7 (Oral)	Level 7 (Lit)
LINC	CLB 7	CLB 6	CLB 8	CLB 7 & 8
ELSA	CLB 6/7	CLB 6/7	CLB 7/8	CLB 7/8

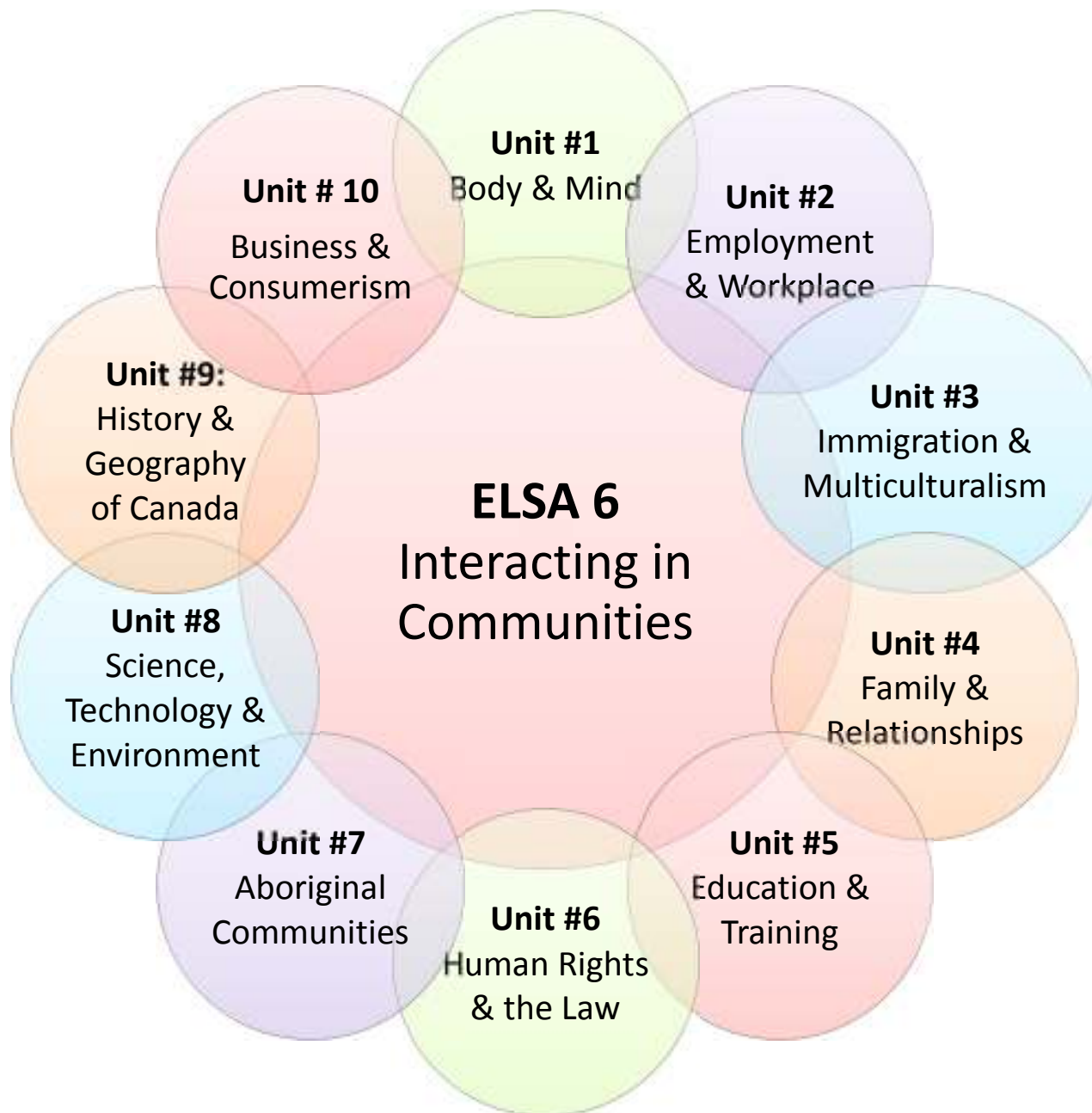
ELSA 6/7 THEMES

Each of the two ELSA levels focus on a distinctive theme of communication within communities of practice. Most of the thematic contents of the LINC 5-7 curriculum guidelines can be covered under these respective themes and related topics. Some settlement themes and topics of the LINC 5-7 curriculum that are covered currently in the ELSA 5 curriculum were not included in this curriculum.

- Theme (Title) of ELSA 6:** [Interacting in Communities](#)
- Theme (Title) of ELSA 7:** [Learning in Communities](#)

ELSA 6/7 TOPICS

The following two pages graphically depict how the units were organized and identified in ELSA 6 and 7, respectively. The topics derive from the LINC 5-7 themes, either verbatim or paraphrased; however, topics related to travel, transportation, and safety were omitted as they are covered extensively at ELSA 4/5 and were felt to be less appropriate for this level.



ELSA 6: Interacting in Communities

These 10 topics form the bases of the units for ELSA 6. These topics derive directly from the LINC 5-7 curriculum. The units are focused on supporting social interaction and other forms of communication to encourage and foster newcomers' smooth transition into Canadian communities and communities of practice. Furthermore, there is a strong emphasis on socio-cultural and soft skill competencies; for example, Education and Services or Employment and Workplace at this level focus on intercultural and interactive communicative skills rather than information *per se*.



ELSA 7: Learning in Communities

These 10 topics form the bases of the units for ELSA 7. These topics also derive from the LINC 5-7 document. These topics focus on encouraging and supporting newcomers' participation in continuous lifelong learning. Therefore, the content and associated tasks focus on language and learning strategies in formal, informal and non-formal educational contexts, including the workplace, community and NGO organizations, and career and personal planning and development. Strategies to support lifelong learning include the use of libraries (reading), the Web, and social media.

Decision-Making Steps in Planning a Unit

When planning a unit, you might ask yourself and answer the following sequence of questions.

NOTES:

Needs Assessment:

Unit #, Title, Topic(s):

Components:
Core:
Project:

Sample Tasks:

Formative Assessment:

Resources:

